

**IPS-ONEPEOPLE.SG INDICATORS OF RACIAL AND
RELIGIOUS HARMONY: COMPARING RESULTS
FROM 2018 AND 2013**

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**IPS-ONEPEOPLE.SG INDICATORS OF RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS
HARMONY: COMPARING RESULTS FROM 2018 AND 2013¹**

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IPS-ONEPEOPLE.SG INDICATORS OF RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS HARMONY: COMPARING RESULTS FROM 2018 AND 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper provides an update of the state of racial and religious relations in Singapore using a series of indicators created by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) and OnePeople.sg in 2013. A set of 10 indicators (such as the absence of minority discrimination in using public services; the presence of close inter-racial friendships, and levels of inter-racial and inter-religious social trust) were used to provide a comprehensive gauge on inter-racial and religious harmony in Singapore. The indicators were derived from a series of questions posed to respondents in the large-scale IPS Race, Religion and Language (RRL) Survey in 2013.

The second wave of the IPS Race, Religion and Language (RRL) Survey conducted between August 2018 and January 2019, provided a follow-up to the first study. Altogether, 4,015 Singaporeans and Permanent Residents were polled on issues ranging from aspects of their racial and religious identity, to their experiences of living in a multi-racial society, and their attitudes towards social and political issues. Minority races were over-sampled so that their responses could be better analysed.

This current paper provides data on these indicators as well as additional survey questions and indicators, which might be useful to better understand race relations in Singapore.² Results in 2018 showed racial and religious relations to be positive. There continued to be very low proportions of minorities who perceived discrimination in using public services such as hospitals or social service agencies (nine in 10 said they did not feel they were treated differently because of their race in such instances). About 90 per cent of Singaporeans also reported that they were comfortable with someone of another race being their colleague or neighbour. Compared to 2013, there were also areas of improvement. For instance, higher proportions of Singaporeans had close friends of another race and social trust levels between races have increased.

One area of concern however is the marginal rise in perception of work-related discrimination (such as in applying for jobs) among Malays and Indians. This may partly be due to greater awareness of the presence of discriminatory behaviour in the workplace and how this might have affected some minorities.

² Of the 10 indicators, six could be compared across the 2018 and 2013 waves of the survey. Because of slight changes to the survey scaling, meaningful comparisons were unable to be made for four indicators. These four are listed at the end of Section 4 (specifically under Sections 4.7 to 4.10) for ease of reference. The indicators are: inter-racial and religious tension; attitudes towards diversity; having a colour-blind ideology; and inter-cultural understanding and interaction. The change to scaling questions in 2018 was to allow for a more balanced response option following feedback after the release of the 2013 survey. Responses were on a five-point scale (ranging from the choices “strongly disagree”, “somewhat disagree”, “somewhat agree”, “agree” and “strongly agree”) in 2013, and changed to a six-point scale (the addition of “disagree” to the initial responses) in 2018.

Overall, the findings in this report bode well for racial and religious harmony in Singapore in general, though the issues pertaining to perceptions of workplace discrimination indicate that it remains a work-in-progress.

2. METHODOLOGY

The data for this study is derived from two waves of the IPS Survey of Race, Religion and Language. The first was conducted in December 2012 to April 2013, while the second commenced in August 2018 and was completed in January 2019.³

The methodology for the two waves was similar. A sampling frame comprised of a listing of 5,000 random household addresses was obtained from the Department of Statistics. Three thousand respondents were successfully interviewed from this listing. In addition to the main sample, an additional 1,000 Indians and Malays were also surveyed to provide a booster sample. In total, 4,015 Singaporean citizens and permanent residents provided their responses to the survey.

The respondents for the booster sample were selected based on a predefined strategy — they lived in close proximity to households identified in the Department of Statistics sampling frame. The fieldwork for the 2018 survey was conducted by IPS Social Lab. For

³ Notwithstanding the fact that some data was collected in December 2012 and January 2019, for ease of subsequent mentions of this survey we denote the different waves based on when the bulk of responses were collected, i.e., 2013 wave and the 2018 wave.

both waves, the deviation in views of minorities in the booster and main sample were rather small and similar. As such, the data obtained from both these sampling methods have been combined and subsequently weighted to resemble the demographics of the national population on race and age. Respondents who were identified for the study were visited by an interviewer from IPS Social Lab and briefed about the study. If they agreed to participate in the study, they received a booklet, which they had to complete on their own. This was to reduce biases, which could arise when responses were recorded by an interviewer.

The survey booklets were made available in Singapore's four official languages. Among those who were 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 this survey, where nearly 70 per cent of eligible respondents completed the study.

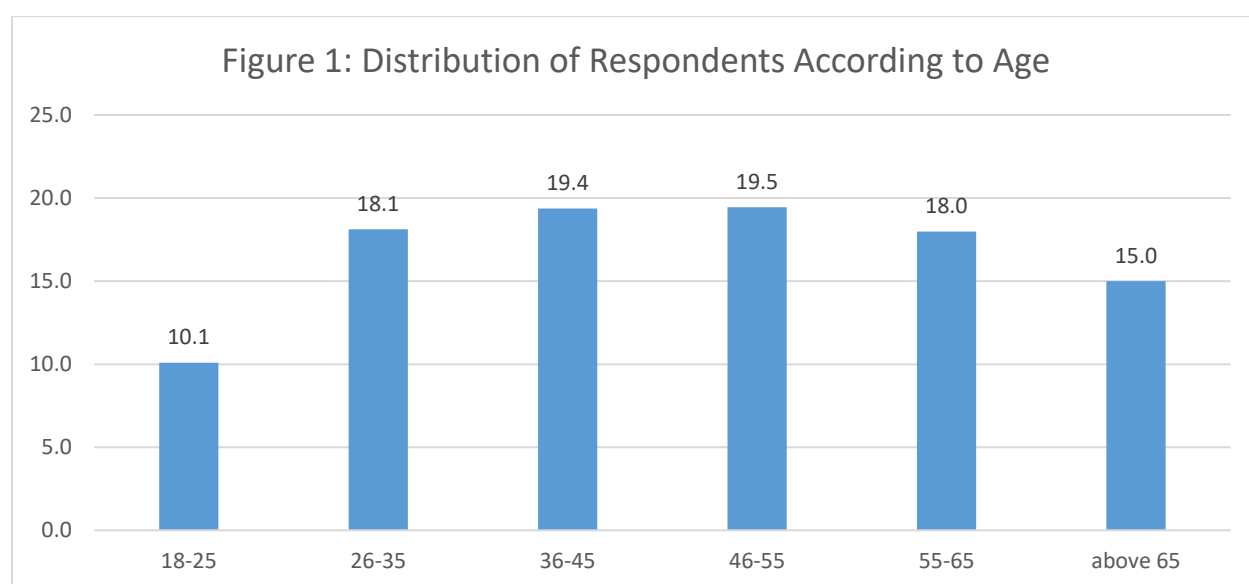
Findings were weighted by respondents' race and age group, to ensure that the sample demographics closely mirror population demographics.⁴

⁴ There are very slight differences between figures presented in 2013 and how they are represented in this report. This is due to weights being applied to the sample to ensure that the findings are generalisable to the Singapore resident population.

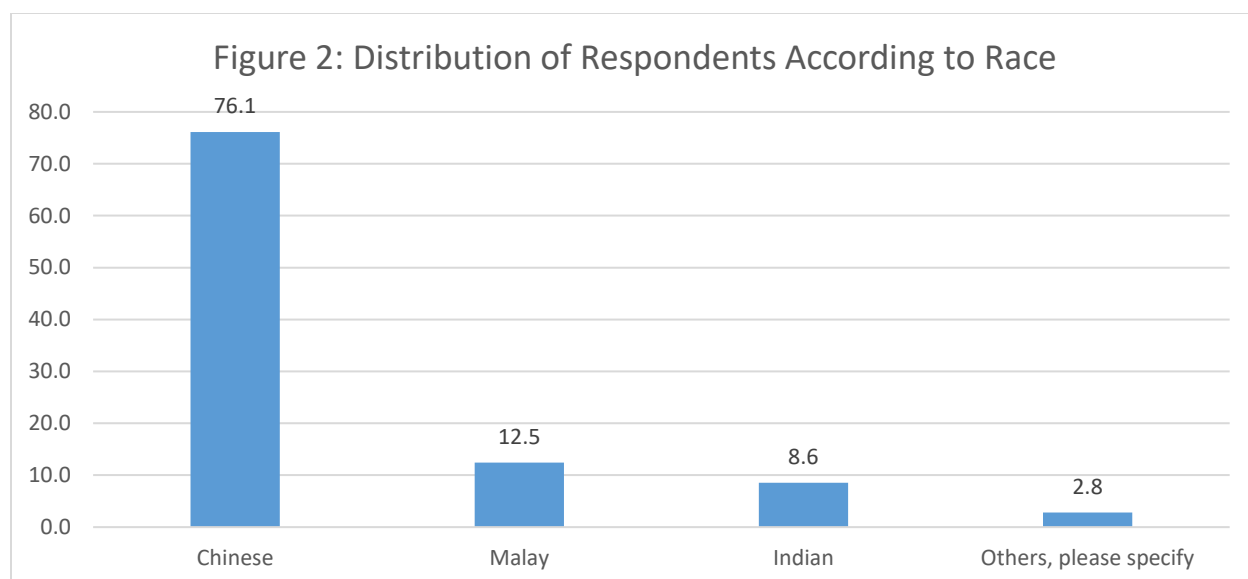
3. DEMOGRAPHICS

As our sample included a booster sub-sample of Malays and Indians, we weighted our data to ensure the profile of our sample closely mirrored the general population, especially for age, race and gender. Our data was weighted by race and age.

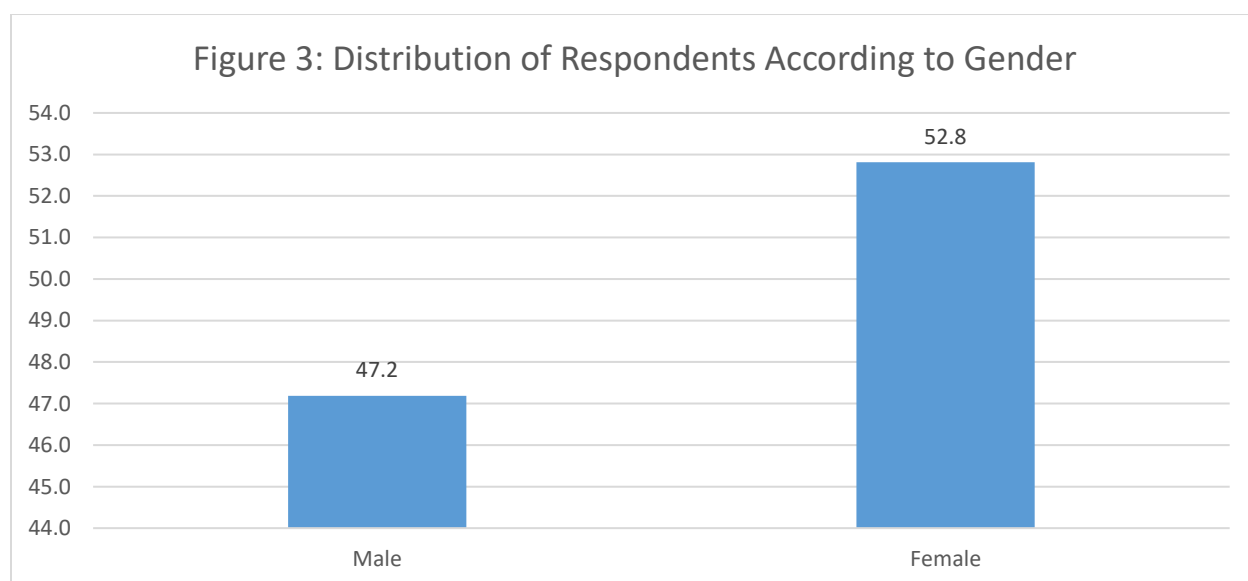
Different age groups were well represented in our sample, with 28.2 per cent between 18 and 35 years of age, 38.9 per cent between 36 and 55 years of age, and 33 per cent above 56 years old (see Figure 1).



After weighting, racial profiles in our sample closely mirrored that of the population with 76.1 per cent identifying as Chinese, 12.5 per cent Malay, 8.6 per cent Indian and 2.8 per cent others (see Figure 2).

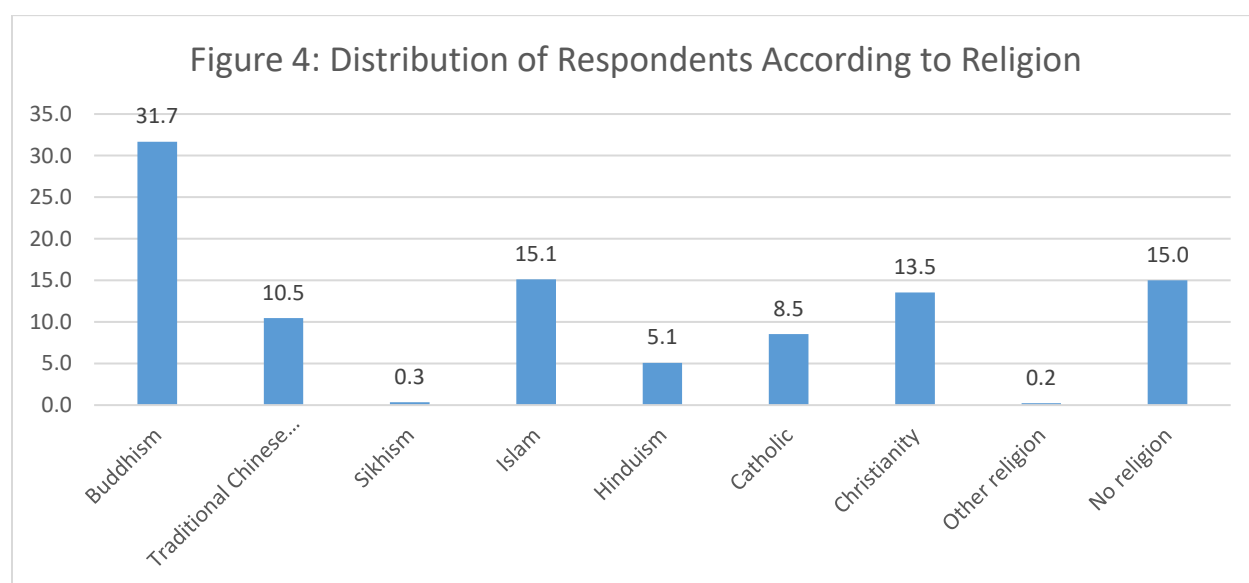


Our sample consisted of 47.2 per cent of respondents who identified as male and 52.8 per cent who identified as female (see Figure 3).

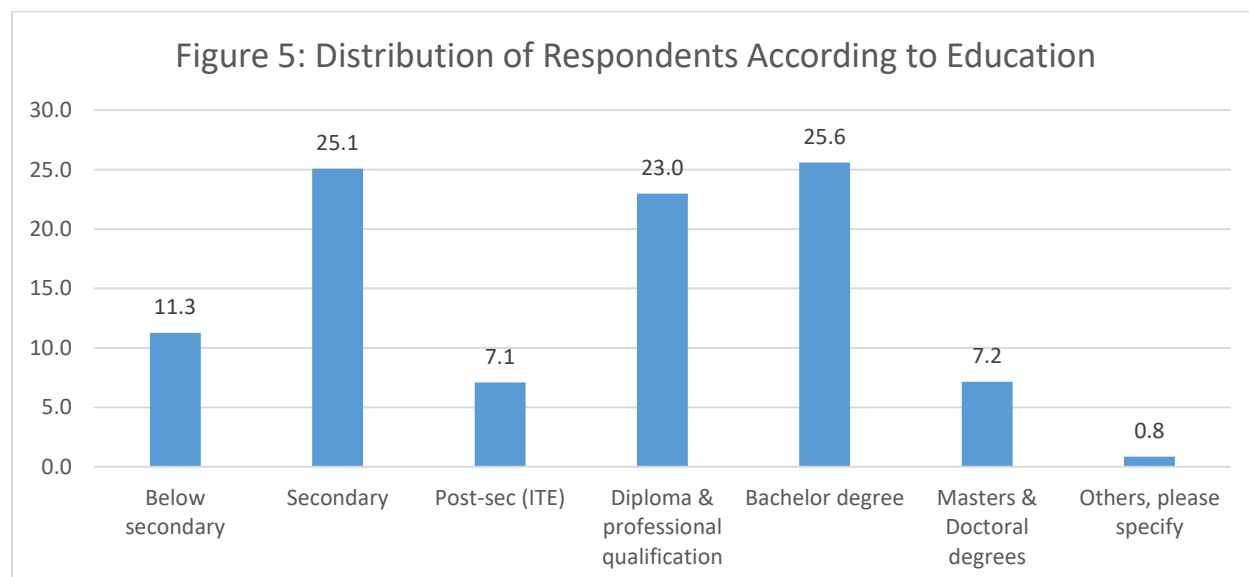


There was also good representation of a range of religions commonly practiced in Singapore, including respondents with no religion. There were 42.2 per cent of respondents who identified as Buddhist or Taoist, 15.1 per cent who identified as Muslim, 5.1 per cent who identified as Hindu, 22 per cent who identified as Christian or Catholic

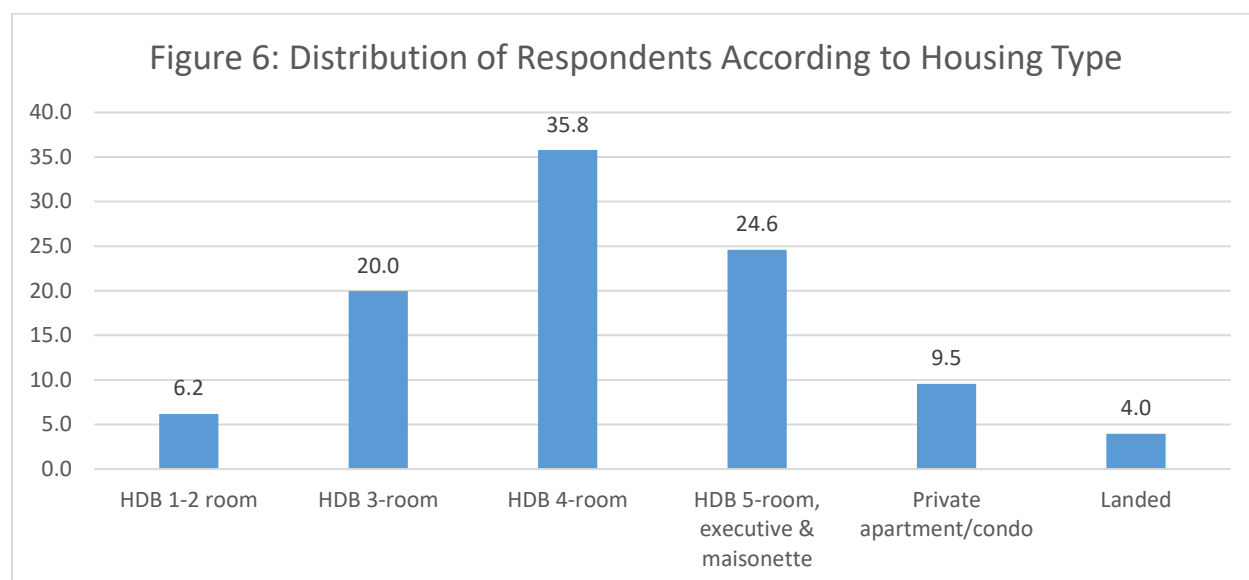
and 15 per cent who identified as having no religion (see Figure 4). For the purposes of meaningful analyses, the Sikh and “Other religion” categories were excluded given their extremely small numbers.



The proportion of degree holders (25.6 per cent), diploma holders (23.0), and those with secondary school qualifications (25.1 per cent) were similar (see Figure 5).



In our sample, slightly more than half of the respondents (60.4 per cent) resided in HDB 4-5 room or executive flats (see Figure 6).



4. TOPLINE FINDINGS

4.1 Level of racial and religious harmony

As a start, the survey asked respondents their thoughts on the level of harmony in the country. Singaporeans generally have positive views about the state of Singapore's racial and religious harmony. More than nine in 10 said the level of racial and religious harmony currently was either moderate, high or very high (see Table 1).

Table 1: Respondents' views towards levels of racial and religious harmony in Singapore

What would you say is the level of racial and religious harmony in Singapore currently?	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
Overall	0.9	2.6	39.4	46.2	10.9

There were some differences when the results were analysed by respondents' racial group. The Chinese were more likely to have a very positive view of racial and religious harmony (see Table 2). Nearly six in 10 said Singapore's racial and religious harmony was either high or very high. There were more among Indians and Malays who viewed that racial and religious harmony in Singapore was at moderate levels. A very small proportion of respondents across racial groups characterised the level of harmony in Singapore as low.

Table 2: Respondents' views towards levels of racial and religious harmony in Singapore, by race

What would you say is the level of racial and religious harmony in Singapore currently?	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
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

4.2 Inter-racial and religious social trust

This first indicator demonstrates Singaporeans' trust of fellow Singaporeans from different racial and religious groups in a possible national crisis. There continued to be high levels of inter-racial and religious trust in 2018, where trust levels increased when compared to 2013.

At least six in 10 respondents (more than 58 per cent) said they would trust either more than half, or all or mostly all, Singapore Chinese, Singapore Malays or Singapore Indians to help if the country faced a national crisis (see Table 3). The highest proportions were for Singapore Chinese; 71.3 per cent of respondents said they felt all or mostly all, or more than half, of Singapore Chinese could be trusted to help in a crisis.

Table 3: Respondents' levels of inter-racial trust in times of crisis in Singapore (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

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)? 2018 (2013)	Singapore Chinese	Singapore Malay	Singapore Indian	Singapore Eurasian
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 members of a particular racial group were excluded in calculating trust levels for that particular race*

Compared to 2013, trust in all races increased in the 2018 wave. For instance, 61.3 per cent of respondents trust all or mostly all, or more than half, of Singapore Malays to help in a crisis. This was an increase from the 52.7 per cent of respondents who expressed such sentiments in 2013. This trend was reflected in the case of trusting Singapore Indians to help in a crisis as well; the proportion of respondents who trust all or most all, or more than half, of Singaporean Indians to help rose from 54.1 per cent in 2013, to 63.1 per cent in 2018.

Analysing the results by respondents' race, we again found high levels of inter-racial trust as well as higher trust levels compared to 2013 (see Table 4). Racial minorities were, however, more likely to trust Singapore Chinese than vice versa. For example, 68.1 per cent of Malay respondents and 76.2 per cent of Indian respondents said they could trust either more than half, or all or mostly all, Singapore Chinese to help in such a crisis. About six in 10 Chinese respondents, meanwhile, said they could trust either more than half, or all or mostly all, Singapore Malays or Singapore Indians to help.

Table 4: Respondents' levels of inter-racial trust in times of crisis in Singapore, by (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

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)? (All or Mostly All/More than half) 2018 (2013)	Chinese Respondents	Malay Respondents	Indian Respondents	Other Respondents
Singapore Chinese	79.2 (73.0)	68.1 (64.6)	76.2 (69.8)	70.2 (57.0)
Singapore Malay	59.1 (51.3)	63.3 (72.1)	78.2 (64.4)	61.6 (53.3)
Singapore Indian	60.1 (51.3)	77.1 (58.5)	69.0 (71.3)	61.4 (53.3)
Singapore Eurasian	57.2 (50.0)	61.9 (56.9)	67.6 (59.8)	62.8 (52.9)

Analysing the results by respondents' age bracket, we found that those aged between 18 and 25 were more likely to have higher inter-racial trust compared to those aged 56 and above (see Table 5). For instance, two-thirds of respondents aged between 18 and 25 would trust all or mostly all, or more than half, of Singapore Malays or Singapore Indians to help. The corresponding proportion of those aged 56 and above who would trust Singapore Malays or Singapore Indians to help ranged from 54.3 per cent to 56.6 per cent.

The fact that those who are older have lower levels of inter-racial trust seemingly contradicts the *kampung* narrative in Singapore, which alleges high levels of inter-racial interaction and tolerance between different racial groups in pre-independent Singapore. While it is very possible that such trust was commonplace, it is important to consider that the older generation of Singaporeans did not have the same access to racially integrated settings as younger Singaporeans. Many older Singaporeans attended vernacular schools and quite a number of *kampungs* were predominantly single race. This is in contrast to more integrated living after the implementation of the Ethnic Integration Policy in 1989.

Trust levels between the different communities could also have been affected because of the communal tensions such as the racial riots of the 1950s. This may have left some older respondents having negative views of the different racial communities. A qualitative study of older respondents' recollection of their *kampung* experiences revealed the themes of inter-racial "helpfulness and cooperation" but also noted that there were sentiments of distrust amongst older respondents, as a result of the riots that took place.⁵

⁵ Adeline Low Hwee Cheng, "The Past in the Present: Memories of the 1964 "Racial Riots" in Singapore," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 29, no. 3 (2001): 431–455.

Table 5: Respondents' levels of inter-racial trust in times of crisis in Singapore, by age (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

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)? (All or Mostly All/More than half) 2018 (2013)	18–25	26–35	36–45	46–55	56–65	Above 65
Singapore Chinese	75.6 (69.7)	80.1 (73.5)	77.4 (74.6)	79.9 (71.6)	73.1 (66.3)	76.7 (68.9)
Singapore Malay	67.3 (59.4)	65.0 (61.8)	64.2 (56.6)	63.4 (56.9)	54.3 (45.9)	54.4 (45.2)
Singapore Indian	67.3 (58.4)	67.1 (58.9)	66.2 (56.0)	64.5 (55.7)	56.4 (46.3)	56.6 (43.7)
Singapore Eurasian	64.1 (56.2)	60.1 (57.2)	61.1 (53.3)	61.0 (52.7)	53.5 (45.7)	53.8 (40.9)

Apart from inter-racial trust, trust in all major religious communities was also higher in the 2018 wave (see Table 6). In 2018, more than 59 per cent of respondents said they could trust either more than half, or all or mostly all, Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, or those with no religion, to help if there was a crisis. For Muslims, Hindus and those with no religion, only close to half of respondents said in 2013 they would trust either more than half, or all or mostly all, to help in a crisis.

The nature of the national crisis (e.g., a terrorist attack that claims to represent the interests of a religion) might have a powerful effect in reducing inter-racial and inter-religious trust. Nonetheless, based on the above results, which show increasing social trust in Singapore, we can be assured that our multi-racial and multi-religious society operates from a place of strength to face these national-level crisis.

Table 6: Respondents' levels of inter-religious trust in times of crisis in Singapore (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

What proportion of people with the following religion do you think can be trusted to help you if Singapore faced a national crisis (e.g. SARs)? (All or Mostly All/More than half) 2018 (2013)	Buddhism	Taoism	Islam	Christianity	Hinduism	No religion
All or mostly all	40.7 (32.8)	39.3 (32.8)	33.7 (26.6)	38.0 (32.0)	35.3 (27.6)	36.7 (28.9)
More than half	31.6 (32.4)	31.6 (29.8)	25.9 (24.4)	33.4 (31.5)	25.6 (25.6)	26.3 (24.9)
About half	19.5 (25.1)	20.4 (26.9)	23.5 (28.6)	20.3 (26.4)	22.8 (27.9)	23.2 (28.6)
Less than half/ None or mostly none	8.2 (9.7)	8.8 (10.5)	16.9 (20.5)	8.3 (10.1)	16.3 (18.9)	13.8 (17.6)

**Responses of members of a particular religious group were excluded in calculating trust levels for that particular religion*

4.3 Inter-racial and religious acceptance

This second indicator is conceptualised by how comfortable⁶ Singaporeans of different racial and religious groups are of one another, in both the private and public sphere. This ranges from their comfort level for someone of a different background marrying into their family or being their next-door neighbour, or someone from a different background being their boss or employee. Our results in this sub-section have excluded own-group (racial or religious) responses. For instance, in tabulating responses for the comfort level of a local-born Chinese as one's boss, the responses of Chinese respondents have been excluded.

⁶ Respondents were simply posed the statement "Are you comfortable with members of each racial group?" They were then shown a list of different relationships (e.g., neighbour, close friend, boss) and groups (e.g., Singaporean Chinese, Singaporean Eurasian, new Singaporean Indian originally from India) and asked to tick either "Yes" or "No". Due to the nature of the options given ("Yes" or "No") it may not be easy to detect nuanced positions of discomfort that respondents might feel and which may have a bearing on their behaviour.

In the public sphere, there were generally high levels of comfort across the board for workplace and neighbourhood relationships (see Table 7). For instance, more than eight in 10 respondents were comfortable with a local-born Chinese, Malay or Indian in such settings (with the exception of other racial groups as the majority of the people in Singapore). The comfort levels were expectedly higher for local-born Chinese, Malays or Indians, compared to a new Singapore citizen from these racial groups.

Table 7: Respondents' levels of comfort towards people of other ethnicities/nationalities, in the case of relationships in the public sphere (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Level of comfort 2018 (2013)	Local-born Chinese	Local-born Malay	Local-born Indian	Local-born Eurasian	New Singaporean Chinese originally from China	New Singaporean Indian originally from India	New Singaporean Malay originally from the region
As your colleague in the same occupation	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 members of a particular racial group were excluded in calculating acceptance levels for that particular race*

Compared to 2013 however, there was slightly less comfort for those of different backgrounds in 2018 in these *public sphere* relationships. For example, for a Singapore-born Chinese/Malay/Indian colleague in the same occupation, the proportion of respondents who would be comfortable with someone of such a background was 93.7 per cent, 91.5 per cent and 90.4 per cent, respectively, in 2018. In 2013, the corresponding proportions who would be comfortable with someone of such a background were marginally higher, at 96.5 per cent, 92.9 per cent and 92.9 per cent,

respectively. The dips were very small for comfort with local-born Singaporeans in most cases, except when regarding comfort with local-born Malays and Indians constituting the majority of the people in Singapore, where there was 4–6 percentage point difference.

For instance, while 72.1 per cent of respondents in 2013 were comfortable with local-born Malays and 71.1 per cent with local-born Indians being the majority race, the corresponding proportions in 2018 were 67.1 per cent and 65.8 per cent, respectively, indicative of a continued internalisation of the status quo of the racial balance in Singapore. However, overall, the majority of respondents were still open to people of other ethnicities being the majority in Singapore. Similar to our 2013 results, the comfort levels for *private sphere* relationships with people of various backgrounds were *lower* across the board when they were compared to comfort levels in public sphere relationships.

Analysing the 2018 results in detail, there were distinct differences in preferences for a local-born Chinese marrying into one's family, compared to a local-born Malay or Indian marrying into one's family. For instance, slightly less than six in 10 respondents would be comfortable with a local-born Indian or Malay as a brother or sister-in-law (see Table 8). Nearly eight in 10, however, would be comfortable with a local-born Chinese as a brother- or sister-in-law. The levels of comfort for new Singaporean Chinese, Malays and Indians were also lower across the board, compared to the corresponding levels of comfort for someone of that racial group who was a born-and-bred Singaporean.

Table 8: Respondents' levels of comfort towards people of other ethnicities/nationalities, in the case of relationships in the private sphere (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Level of comfort 2018 (2013)	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
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 members of a particular racial group were excluded in calculating acceptance levels for that particular race*

Comparing the private sphere results across survey waves, however, we found slightly higher levels of comfort for people of a different background marrying into one's family in 2018. For example, for a Singapore-born Chinese/Malay/Indian spouse, the proportion of respondents who would be comfortable with someone of such a background was 66.8 per cent, 35.7 per cent and 36.3 per cent, respectively, in 2018. In 2013, the corresponding proportions who would be comfortable with someone of such a background were generally marginally lower, at 61.9 per cent, 35.5 per cent and 36.0 per cent, respectively.

When it came to having close friends, there was a marginal decrease in 2018 in the level of comfort for people of different backgrounds for such relationships. For example, in 2013, 82.2 per cent and 73.5 per cent of respondents would be comfortable with a local-born Indian and new Singaporean Indian, respectively. In 2018, however, the

corresponding proportion of respondents who would be comfortable with people from such backgrounds fell slightly to 79.4 per cent and 69.2 per cent, respectively.

We also asked respondents if they were comfortable with people of various religious backgrounds in the public sphere. The vast majority (at least nine in 10 in most instances) were comfortable with Buddhists, Muslims, Catholics, Christians, Taoists and Hindus, as colleagues, bosses, employees and next-door neighbours (see Table 9). This high level of comfort for someone of a different religion bodes well for cross-cultural relations in the workplace.

Table 9: Respondents' levels of comfort towards people of other religions, in the case of relationships in the public sphere (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Level of comfort 2018 (2013)	Buddhism	Islam	Catholicism	Christianity	Taoism	Hinduism
As your colleague in the same occupation	95.9 (97.0)	91.1 (93.3)	94.7 (95.2)	93.7 (94.4)	94.0 (94.4)	90.0 (92.4)
As your boss	95.2 (96.4)	86.2 (87.9)	94.0 (94.6)	93.1 (94.0)	93.2 (93.5)	86.2 (87.6)
As your employee	95.1 (96.9)	89.7 (91.5)	94.4 (95.2)	93.6 (94.6)	93.7 (94.0)	89.6 (91.0)
As your next-door neighbour	95.7 (96.6)	90.2 (92.6)	94.8 (95.3)	93.7 (94.5)	93.4 (93.2)	88.1 (90.1)
As the majority of people in Singapore	85.7 (90.7)	62.5 (68.7)	82.2 (85.6)	81.7 (85.0)	81.1 (83.9)	66.7 (70.3)

**Responses of members of a particular religious group were excluded in calculating acceptance levels for that particular religion*

There was more variation when it came to private sphere relationships with someone of a different religion. For instance, seven in 10 respondents were comfortable with a Buddhist, Catholic, Christian or Taoist being their brother- or sister-in-law (see Table 10). Only half of the respondents expressed similar sentiments for a Muslim or Hindu being their brother- or sister-in-law. This difference was replicated for spouse, son- or daughter-

in-law, and close friend relationships. Almost all respondents (80 to 90 per cent) also reported being comfortable having close friends from all other religions.

Table 10: Respondents' levels of comfort towards people of other religions, in the case of relationships in the private sphere (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Level of comfort 2018 (2013)	Buddhism	Islam	Catholicism	Christianity	Taoism	Hinduism
Brother/ sister-in-law	75.2 (77.6)	53.8 (50.7)	75.7 (74.6)	73.8 (73.5)	74.5 (72.6)	53.2 (48.8)
Son/ Daughter-in-law	67.7 (72.6)	43.4 (41.1)	70.9 (71.1)	70.8 (70.8)	68.0 (67.1)	43.4 (40.7)
Spouse	60.8 (67.1)	29.7 (33.2)	59.8 (60.4)	60.5 (61.2)	59.6 (59.9)	32.2 (33.4)
Close friend	93.4 (94.4)	81.6 (84.4)	91.4 (91.7)	90.3 (90.9)	90.2 (90.1)	80.8 (83.1)

**Responses of members of a particular religious group were excluded in calculating acceptance levels for that particular religion*

In the 2018 wave of the survey, an additional question was included to better understand the level of comfort respondents had for various places of worship near their home. Around half or more of respondents were moderately or very comfortable with a church, Buddhist or Hindu temple, or a mosque in close proximity to their residence (see Table 11). The general acceptance of various religious buildings being situated in close proximity to Singaporeans' homes is testament to the racial and religious harmony and inter-cultural acceptance and understanding that has been built up among citizens over the years.

However, it is undeniable that close to half of respondents in some cases were uncomfortable or only slightly comfortable with a place of worship near their place. While the survey did not probe as to the source of this discomfort, the disamenities related to places of worship (such as religious music, festivities, chanting, and incense that the

respondents might find too loud or pungent) might have weighed on respondent's mind. The discomfort could also stem from a lack of understanding of the different religious rituals and celebrations that are conducted at these religious sites.

Table 11: Respondents' levels of comfort towards having places of worship located near their homes

How comfortable are you if the following places of worship are close to your home?	Very Uncomfortable	Moderately Uncomfortable	Slightly Uncomfortable	Slightly Comfortable	Moderately Comfortable	Very Comfortable
Church	5.3	3.6	10.8	18.8	34.9	26.6
Buddhist temple	7.5	5.8	13.6	16.7	29.3	27.1
Mosque	9.3	8.7	18.5	16.9	26.0	20.6
Hindu temple	8.8	8.1	17.7	19.2	26.5	19.7

**Responses of members of a particular religious group were excluded in calculating acceptance levels for that particular religion's place of worship*

4.4 Social connectedness between racial groups

This third indicator measures the prevalence of close friendships⁷ that Singaporeans have with those of other races. In 2018, Malays and Indians were more likely as in 2013 to have at least one Chinese friend than not. For instance, in 2018, 77.2 per cent of Indians had a Chinese friend, as compared to a quarter of Chinese respondents having an Indian friend (see Table 12).

⁷ The survey defined close friends as "people who are NOT your relatives, but who you feel at ease with, can talk to about what is on your mind, or call on for help". Respondents were then posed the statement "Thinking of about *close friends*, how many of them are: ____ (please enter 0 where you do not have friends in any of these categories)". They were then shown a list of different racial groups (Singaporean Chinese, Singaporean Malay, Singaporean Indian, Singaporean Eurasian, and Other Race). Respondents had to note in writing, how many close friends from a particular racial group they had.

Table 12: Respondents' inter-racial friendship networks, by race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

	2018 (2013)				
Friend's race (y) /Respondent's race (x)	Chinese friend	Malay friend	Indian friend	Eurasian friend	Friend of "other" races
Chinese	93.8 (94.8)	30.0 (23.0)	25.0 (19.5)	10.1 (6.9)	13.2 (8.8)
Malay	67.2 (60.3)	88.6 (90.6)	50.0 (40.8)	16.3 (11.2)	19.1 (7.4)
Indian	77.2 (63.0)	66.6 (50.2)	86.9 (87.4)	23.1 (12.0)	28.0 (16.0)
Others	78.4 (68.4)	51.4 (58.8)	52.3 (42.1)	36.9 (24.8)	65.8 (44.2)

It was however encouraging to note that respondents were generally more likely to have close friends of another race in 2018 compared to 2013. For instance, while 23 per cent of Chinese respondents had a close Malay friend in 2013, this proportion rose to 30 per cent in 2018, indicative of increasing levels of racial harmony and inter-racial interaction.

This finding was replicated when we analysed the results by respondents' age bracket (see Table 13). For instance, 51.4 per cent of respondents aged between 18 and 25 had a close Malay friend in 2018, up from 42.2 per cent in 2013. Among those aged 66 and above, a third had a close Indian friend in 2018, up from a fifth in 2013. Millennials (aged 18 to 25) were, however, much more likely to have a close Malay or Indian friend, compared to older respondents.

Table 13: Respondents' inter-racial friendship networks, by age (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

	2018 (2013)				
Friend's race (y) /Respondent's age (x)	Chinese friend	Malay friend	Indian friend	Eurasian friend	Friend of "other" races
18–25	92.7 (90.3)	51.4 (42.2)	37.2 (33.0)	11.5 (9.9)	13.5 (10.6)
26–35	88.9 (85.1)	39.3 (35.7)	31.8 (29.6)	10.0 (8.5)	19.4 (15.7)
36–45	90.0 (88.2)	38.9 (33.1)	33.8 (32.6)	12.7 (9.3)	20.7 (13.5)
46–55	89.0 (88.3)	42.2 (36.1)	34.1 (28.0)	13.3 (9.5)	17.6 (8.0)
56–65	86.3 (84.9)	37.9 (33.1)	35.8 (25.4)	14.6 (7.1)	15.1 (6.8)
Above 65	86.2 (84.1)	39.8 (27.1)	33.7 (20.7)	14.6 (4.6)	10.9 (3.5)

We also analysed the data by *both* respondents' race and age. Younger Chinese respondents were as likely as older Chinese to have Malay and Indian close friends. Around 20 per cent of each group had close Malay or Indian friends. Meanwhile, younger Malays were more likely to have close Chinese friends, compared to older Malays. Among Indians, older respondents were as likely to have close Chinese friends as their younger counterparts. Close to 80 per cent of each group had close Chinese friends.

This wave of the survey also sought to ascertain whether respondents, even if they did not have a close friend of another race, kept in touch occasionally with someone of another race.⁸ At least a third to two-thirds of respondents — while having no close friends of another race — reported that they kept in touch occasionally with someone of another

⁸ This question was not in the 2013 wave of the survey.

race (who was not necessarily close to them) (see Table 14). A larger proportion of Malays and Indians had such ties with the Chinese than vice-versa. For instance, while nearly seven in 10 Malay respondents said they had a Chinese person they kept in touch with occasionally, under half of Chinese respondents said they had a Malay person they kept in touch with occasionally.

Table 14: Respondents' likelihood of occasionally keeping in contact with someone of another race who is not a close friend, by respondents' race

Do you know at least one person of another race who, while not a close friend ⁹ , is someone you keep in touch occasionally with?	Chinese respondents	Malay respondents	Indian respondents
Chinese person you keep in touch with occasionally	x	69.5	65.4
Malay person you keep in touch with occasionally	46.9	x	55.6
Indian person you keep in touch with occasionally	36.0	56.9	x

Respondents were also asked if they knew someone from another community whom they could clarify concerns about customs with. The majority of respondents knew a Buddhist, Catholic, Christian, Muslim or Taoist whom they could ask about such concerns (see Table 15).

⁹ "Close friend" follows the same definition as stated for the previous question.

Table 15: Respondents' likelihood of knowing someone of another religion with whom they can clarify concerns about religious practices

Suppose you have concerns of a practice, customs, or teachings of a certain religion. Do you know a person from that religion you can speak with to clarify the issue?	Yes
Buddhist	66.0
Catholic	63.2
Christian	60.0
Muslim	52.6
Taoist	52.5
Hindu	39.8
Sikh	22.4

**Responses of members of a particular religious group were excluded in calculating interreligious interaction levels for that particular religion*

Analysing the responses by respondents' religious background, we found that most knew someone from their own community they could clarify such concerns with (see Table 16). When it came to Muslims and Hindus however, there were noticeably lower opportunities both for them to seek clarification about issues related to another religion, and for those of other religions to seek clarification about Islam or Hinduism. For instance, between 50 to 60 per cent of non-Muslim respondents knew a Muslim they could approach to clarify concerns related to Islam. Less than 54.3 per cent of Muslim respondents, meanwhile, knew a Buddhist, Catholic, Christian, Taoist or Hindu they could approach to clarify concerns related to those religions.

Table 16: Respondents' likelihood of knowing someone of another religion with whom they can clarify concerns about religious practices, by respondents' religion

Suppose you have concerns of a practice, customs, or teachings of a certain religion. Do you know a person from that religion you can speak with to clarify the issue? (Yes)	Buddhist respondents	Taoist respondents	Muslim respondents	Hindu respondents	Catholic respondents	Christian respondents	Respondents with no religion
Buddhist	86.1	80.5	47.5	57.0	73.8	67.0	71.6
Taoist	65.2	77.3	33.4	38.5	54.2	46.8	53.2
Muslim	50.7	49.9	95.0	60.1	55.9	52.7	53.8
Hindu	38.2	31.8	47.7	86.5	44.3	41.1	37.5
Catholic	62.4	60.3	54.3	63.9	93.6	75.6	63.9
Christian	60.7	56.3	47.7	56.3	81.2	91.8	62.5
Sikh	19.5	14.2	27.6	51.6	24.1	20.8	20.2

These opportunities to clarify concerns with someone of a different background was replicated when we analysed the findings by respondents' racial group. It was encouraging that at least 55 per cent of respondents knew a Chinese, Malay or Indian with whom they could clarify concerns about customs. However, Chinese respondents had less opportunity to clarify their concerns with someone of a different race (see Table 17). For instance, while seven in 10 Indian respondents knew a Chinese person they could approach for such clarifications, fewer Chinese respondents (53.9 per cent) knew an Indian person they could similarly approach.

Table 17: Respondents' likelihood of knowing someone of another race with whom they can clarify concerns about ethnic practices, by respondents' race

Suppose you have concerns of a practice or customs of a certain community. Do you know a person from that community you can speak with to clarify the issue?	Chinese respondents	Malay respondents	Indian respondents	Other respondents
Chinese	85.5	70.7	72.0	82.0
Malay	60.5	94.1	71.6	74.3
Indian	53.9	63.5	85.3	77.1

The survey also examined the extent to which Singaporeans are open to meeting those of different racial and religious backgrounds, and their interest in understanding the beliefs and practices of different cultures. While only a third of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they liked meeting and getting to know people from different races and religions (see Table 18), overall at least seven in 10 were at least somewhat open to meeting and getting to know people from other racial groups. Around half, however, were ambivalent (saying they either “somewhat agree” or “somewhat disagree”) regarding the issue.

Table 18: Respondents' views of meeting and getting to know people of other races and religions

2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I like meeting and getting to know people from racial groups other than my own	4.0 (2.5)	6.5	13.2 (9.8)	35.3 (33.3)	30.9 (41.5)	10.0 (12.9)
I like meeting and getting to know people from religious groups other than my own	5.9 (3.7)	9.0	15.9 (12.6)	33.5 (32.6)	27.6 (39.5)	8.1 (11.6)

Analysing the results by respondents' race, we found that Malays and Indians were more likely to say they liked meeting and getting to know people from other races or religions. Around six in 10 Malays or Indians expressed such sentiments, compared to around a third of Chinese respondents (see Tables 19 and 20).

Table 19: Respondents' views of meeting and getting to know people of other races, by respondents' race

I like meeting and getting to know people from racial groups other than my own 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	4.4 (2.7)	7.7	15.5 (11.0)	37.5 (35.5)	27.9 (41.6)	6.9 (9.2)
Malay	1.8 (1.0)	2.0	5.3 (5.2)	28.9 (27.5)	41.8 (40.8)	20.2 (25.4)
Indian	3.5 (2.9)	3.8	6.5 (7.0)	27.4 (25.5)	36.8 (40.0)	22.1 (24.6)
Others	5.5 (2.4)	2.7	6.4 (5.6)	27.3 (24.2)	45.5 (46.0)	12.7 (21.8)

Table 20: Respondents' views of meeting and getting to know people of other religions, by respondents' race

I like meeting and getting to know people from religious groups other than my own 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	6.5 (4.1)	10.5	18.3 (14.4)	35.2 (34.4)	24.1 (39.2)	5.4 (7.8)
Malay	2.4 (1.5)	3.2	7.4 (5.2)	30.6 (27.9)	38.6 (42.0)	17.7 (23.5)
Indian	4.7 (3.5)	5.0	8.5 (7.8)	25.1 (25.8)	37.1 (39.1)	19.6 (23.8)
Others	8.8 (3.2)	5.3	11.5 (11.3)	26.5 (24.2)	43.4 (38.7)	4.4 (22.6)

When it came to respondents' age, millennials were found to be more open to inter-racial interaction (see Table 21). Slightly more than half of those aged 18 to 25 agreed or strongly agreed that they liked to get to know people from other races, compared to around a third of those aged 55 and above.

Table 21: Respondents' views of meeting and getting to know people of other races, by respondents' age

I like meeting and getting to know people from racial groups other than my own 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18-25	2.7 (2.5)	1.7	8.6 (7.5)	32.3 (31.2)	32.8 (40.1)	21.7 (18.7)
26-35	3.5 (2.7)	3.9	11.9 (7.8)	36.6 (34.8)	32.0 (40.0)	12.2 (14.7)
36-45	3.0 (3.4)	5.8	13.3 (8.9)	34.5 (30.8)	33.3 (43.4)	10.1 (13.5)
46-55	4.7 (1.8)	6.7	14.4 (9.6)	32.7 (35.5)	32.1 (42.3)	9.4 (10.7)
56-65	3.9 (2.5)	8.9	14.6 (12.3)	38.5 (32.6)	29.0 (40.6)	5.1 (12.0)
Above 65	6.2 (1.8)	10.9	14.6 (14.8)	36.7 (33.8)	25.8 (42.2)	5.7 (7.4)

4.5 Perception of discrimination

These fourth and fifth indicators measure perceived discrimination. We examine whether Singaporeans, especially minorities feel that they receive differential treatment as a result of race in their usage of public services (such as at police stations) as well as in public spaces such as public transport. A separate indicator examines whether discrimination is experienced at work.

4.5.1 Perception of discrimination in public services and spaces

This first sub-section examines perceived discrimination when using public services, such as hospitals and courts. About nine in 10 respondents felt they were treated the same as other races when they had to deal with various public institutions such as hospitals, schools, social service agencies or the police (see Table 22). There was little change in the 2018 results compared to 2013, though the proportions who felt they were treated about the same as other races was slightly higher in 2018.

Table 22: Respondents' perception of discriminatory treatment in relation to other ethnicities when using public services (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

How well do you think you are treated when using these public services in comparison with other races? 2018 (2013)	Much worse/Worse	About the same	Much better/Better
When using hospital services	2.5 (2.7)	90.9 (88.0)	6.5 (8.3)
At school or an educational institution	3.1 (3.5)	89.4 (87.8)	7.5 (8.7)
At a social service agency if you needed financial assistance	4.1 (4.8)	89.5 (86.3)	6.3 (8.8)
At the courts	2.5 (3.2)	91.6 (88.1)	5.9 (8.7)
By the police if you reported a crime or were suspected of having committed an offence	3.2 (4.0)	89.8 (86.1)	7.0 (9.8)

Analysing the results by race, we find that overall perception of discrimination when using public services is still low. Less than ten per cent of Malay and Indian respondents reported feeling that they were treated worse than other races when using a range of public services (see table 23). The slight differences in proportions between the two waves are not meaningful.

Table 23: Respondents' perception of discriminatory treatment in relation to other ethnicities when using public services, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

How well do you think you are treated when using these public services in comparison with other races? (Much worse/worse) 2018 (2013)	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
When using hospital services	1.9 (2.3)	5.0 (4.0)	4.7 (5.3)	1.8 (1.6)
At school or an educational institution	1.8 (2.7)	7.5 (5.8)	8.2 (5.9)	3.7 (5.8)
At a social service agency if you needed financial assistance	2.8 (3.7)	9.9 (8.7)	7.4 (9.2)	3.7 (8.5)
At the courts	1.6 (2.8)	6.2 (5.3)	4.8 (4.6)	5.1 (2.6)
By the police if you reported a crime or were suspected of having committed an offence	2.1 (3.0)	8.2 (8.7)	6.3 (5.8)	3.0 (5.2)

More than half of respondents, meanwhile, said they had never been discriminated against in daily activities such as on public transport, while shopping, eating or enjoying leisurely activities (see Table 24). About a quarter said they rarely experienced discrimination in these places, while less than 3 per cent said they experienced discrimination often, very often or always.

Table 24: Frequency of respondents perceiving discriminatory treatment in public spaces (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

How often do you feel racially discriminated in these areas of your everyday life? 2018 (2013)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often or always/Often
When using public transport	61.4 (59.3)	26.4 (23.4)	9.5 (13.3)	2.7 (4.0)
When shopping, eating or enjoying leisurely activities	57.7 (57.4)	28.4 (24.0)	11.2 (14.5)	2.6 (4.1)

A breakdown of the trends by race found that while Malay and Indian respondents were more likely than Chinese respondents to sometimes perceive discrimination when using public transport or enjoying leisurely activities, overall only 6 to 8 per cent of Malay and Indian respondents reported often, very often or always perceiving discrimination on public transport and when enjoying leisurely activities (see tables 25 and 26).

Table 25: Frequency of respondents perceiving discriminatory treatment in public spaces, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

How often do you feel racially discriminated when using public transport? 2018 (2013)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often or always/Often
Chinese	65.7 (62.7)	26.5 (23.8)	6.3 (10.8)	1.5 (2.7)
Malay	46.7 (49.4)	26.1 (20.9)	20.8 (22.2)	6.4 (7.6)
Indian	44.2 (48.4)	26.6 (21.4)	21.3 (20.8)	7.9 (9.4)
Others	62.7 (47.5)	26.4 (31.1)	9.1 (18.9)	1.8 (2.5)

Table 26: Frequency of respondents perceiving discriminatory treatment in public spaces, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

How often do you feel racially discriminated when shopping, eating or enjoying leisurely activities? 2018 (2013)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often or always/Often
Chinese	61.6 (61.0)	29.1 (24.3)	7.9 (11.9)	1.5 (2.9)
Malay	42.9 (46.4)	27.3 (21.3)	23.4 (24.9)	6.4 (7.4)
Indian	42.7 (46.8)	27.0 (22.9)	22.1 (20.6)	8.1 (9.7)
Others	62.7 (43.8)	20.0 (29.8)	13.6 (22.3)	3.6 (4.1)

4.5.2 Perception of work-related discrimination

This second sub-section examines perceived work-related discrimination, such as when at work, when applying for a job or when being considered for a job promotion. As compared to perceived discrimination in public spaces like transport, respondents were more likely to perceive workplace discrimination. However, overall, perceived workplace discrimination was still relatively low. Just under 7 per cent of respondents perceived often, very often or always that they had been discriminated when applying for a job. These proportions expectedly were higher for racial minorities.

Table 27: Frequency of respondents perceiving discriminatory treatment for the following work-related issues (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

How often do you feel racially discriminated in these areas of your everyday life? 2018 (2013)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often or always/Often
When at work	58.4 (57.5)	25.9 (22.9)	11.9 (14.7)	3.8 (4.9)
When applying for a job	54.4 (55.2)	25.0 (21.7)	13.7 (15.8)	6.8 (7.3)
When seeking a job promotion	54.6 (55.1)	23.8 (21.6)	15.3 (16.3)	6.3 (7.0)

Analysing the results by race, we found that, about 9 per cent of minorities often, very often or always perceived discrimination at work compared to 2 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Table 28). The proportions increased considerably for minorities when we included those who sometimes perceived discrimination. Around a third of Malays and Indians perceived discrimination at work sometimes, often, or very often or always. Conversely, one in 10 Chinese respondents expressed similar sentiments.

Table 28: Frequency of respondents perceiving discriminatory treatment when at work, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

How often do you feel racially discriminated when at work? 2018 (2013)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often or always/Often
Chinese	62.8 (61.9)	26.5 (22.5)	8.5 (12.2)	2.2 (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)	8.9 (5.8)

Specifically, the perception of discrimination when applying for jobs was also higher among Malays and Indians (see Table 29). The proportions who perceived such discriminatory behaviour often, very often or always was also marginally higher in 2018 compared to 2013. For instance, 22.3 per cent of Malays in 2018 felt discriminated, often, very often or always when applying for a job, an increase from the 19.4 per cent who felt similarly in 2013.

Table 29: Frequency of respondents perceiving discriminatory treatment when applying for a job, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

How often do you feel racially discriminated when applying for a job? 2018 (2013)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often or always/Often
Chinese	61.6 (61.1)	26.2 (22.4)	9.7 (12.7)	2.5 (3.8)
Malay	26.8 (33.9)	21.5 (18.9)	29.3 (27.8)	22.3 (19.4)
Indian	31.8 (40.3)	21.2 (18.2)	26.2 (23.3)	20.8 (18.2)
Others	51.3 (36.1)	19.5 (23.5)	15.9 (25.2)	13.3 (15.1)

These trends were replicated in the area of seeking job promotions. While around 3 per cent of Chinese said they experienced discrimination in this area sometimes, often, very often or always, at least 18 per cent of Malays 20 percent of Indians expressed similar sentiments (see Table 30).

Among racial minorities there were more who reported perceiving discrimination sometimes when seeking a job promotion in the 2018 wave of this study compared to 2013. For instance, 32.4 per cent of Malays reported this in in 2018, an increase from the 26.7 per cent who felt similarly in 2013.

Table 30: Frequency of respondents' perceiving discriminatory treatment when seeking a job promotion, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

How often do you feel racially discriminated when seeking a job promotion? 2018 (2013)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often or always/Often
Chinese	61.0 (60.3)	25.3 (22.3)	11.0 (13.6)	2.7 (3.9)
Malay	29.6 (37.5)	19.6 (18.7)	32.4 (26.7)	18.4 (17.1)
Indian	34.3 (41.7)	20.5 (18.5)	25.5 (22.3)	19.7 (17.5)
Others	51.8 (38.7)	13.2 (23.5)	24.6 (25.2)	10.5 (12.6)

In the 2018 wave of the survey respondents were also asked how important several items (such as ability, race, religion, language, gender and education) were in hiring someone¹⁰.

¹⁰ Respondents were posed the statement, "if you were an employer, how important are each of the items in deciding whether to hire someone to work for you?". Respondents could choose from five options, ranging from "never important" to "always important" for these items: their ability (i.e. their track record or performance in such work), their race (i.e. if they are Chinese, Malay, Indian, or Others), their religion (i.e. if they are Buddhist, Taoist, Christian, Muslim, Hindu etc.), the language they use most frequently (i.e. English, Mandarin, Malay, Tamil etc.), their gender (i.e. male or female), their educational level (i.e. if they have high or low education), and their sexual orientation (i.e. if they are heterosexual or homosexual).

There was universal consensus that ability, rather than factors such as race, were important in hiring decisions (see Table 31). More than half said ability was always important and a third said it was important most of the time, far higher proportions than for any other factor. However, a substantial proportion of respondents still perceived other attributes such as education, language and race of the job applicant as important. For instance, over four in 10 said language was either always important, or important most of the time.

Table 31: Respondents' perception of the importance of the following attributes when it comes to hiring someone to work for them

How important are each of the items in hiring someone to work for you?	Never Important	Rarely Important	Sometimes Important	Important most of the time	Always Important
Ability	1.7	1.5	10.6	31.3	54.9
Race	26.4	30.2	30.8	9.5	3.2
Religion	37.4	34.2	19.9	6.1	2.5
Language	8.9	12.6	36.1	29.5	12.8
Gender	30.6	27.9	29.6	8.6	3.3
Education	6.1	9.3	38.0	32.8	13.9
Sexual Orientation	29.5	24.5	20.7	13.1	12.2

Analysing the results by respondents' race, we found that the applicant's race was sometimes more important to Chinese respondents. The proportion of Chinese respondents who felt that race was either important most of the time or always important (13.1 per cent), was similar in size to the proportions of Malay (12.8 per cent) and Indian respondents (10.0 per cent) who felt the same way about race and hiring (see Table 32). However, the proportion of Chinese respondents who felt that race was sometimes important in hiring (34.6 per cent) was substantially higher than the proportions of Malay

(21.5 per cent) and Indian (15.9 per cent) respondents who felt the same way (see Table 33).

Table 32: Respondents' perception of the importance of the following attributes when it comes to hiring someone to work for them, by respondents' race

How important are each of the items in hiring someone to work for you? (Sometimes Important/Important most of the time/Always Important)	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
Ability	97.2	95.5	95.9	96.2
Race	47.8	34.2	25.9	19.8
Religion	29.3	29.8	20.8	22.6
Language	80.2	71.5	73.2	76.6
Gender	42.9	39.4	36.9	26.2
Education	85.0	80.3	87.9	84.9
Sexual Orientation	46.7	47.7	39.6	37.7

Table 33: Respondents' perception of the importance of race when it comes to hiring someone to work for them, by respondents' race

How important is race in hiring someone to work for you?	Never Important	Rarely Important	Sometimes Important	Important most of the time	Always Important
Chinese	22.0	30.3	34.6	10.2	2.9
Malay	37.7	28.1	21.5	7.7	5.1
Indian	45.3	28.8	15.9	7.4	2.6
Others	38.7	41.5	12.3	3.8	3.8

The survey also asked respondents how important these qualities were in hiring a caregiver for their child, a role involving much more physical proximity and a higher level of trust, compared to a general employee in the workplace¹¹.

¹¹ Respondents were posed the statement, "If you have to find a caregiver for your child, how important are each of the items in deciding whom to choose?". The options were the same as the previous variable on attributes important when hiring, according to respondents.

Ability was again ranked highly, but the caregiver's race, language, gender and sexual orientation also figured more prominently (either important most of the time, or always important) compared to a general employee (see Table 34). For instance, while 44.9 per cent of respondents said the caregiver's race was always important or important most of the time, the corresponding proportion for this attribute in deciding whether to hire someone to work for them was 12.7 per cent.

Table 34: Respondents' perception of the importance of the following attributes when it comes to finding a caregiver for their child

How important are each of the items in finding a caregiver for your child?	Never Important	Rarely Important	Sometimes Important	Important most of the time	Always Important
Ability	1.1	1.3	7.2	25.2	65.2
Race	10.2	14.4	30.5	25.8	19.1
Religion	15.2	22.5	27.9	18.6	15.8
Language	4.0	6.2	26.8	36.7	26.3
Gender	7.5	7.9	20.4	29.3	34.9
Education	7.7	18.5	39.9	22.6	11.3
Sexual Orientation	13.3	12.1	17.8	19.4	37.4

Analysing the results by respondents' race, we found similar trends. Ability was ranked the highest, but a caregiver's language and race also figured prominently across Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents (see Table 35).

Table 35: Respondents' perception of the importance of the following attributes when it comes to finding a caregiver for their child, by respondents' race

How important are each of the items in finding a caregiver for your child? (Sometimes Important/Important most of the time/Always Important)	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
Ability	97.8	97.6	96.8	96.2
Race	76.9	78.1	65.4	54.7
Religion	60.0	81.5	57.5	51.9
Language	90.5	88.9	85.6	86.9
Gender	85.8	84.5	80.1	65.1
Education	73.7	73.7	73.9	76.4
Sexual Orientation	75.4	75.4	69.6	63.6

4.6 Perception of social exclusion

This sixth indicator examines whether Singaporeans perceive that particular segments of the population have to work harder to achieve a decent life in Singapore, and whether access to top positions are more difficult for them to achieve.

At least two-thirds of respondents believed that all races must put in the same effort to have a decent life (see Table 36). However, respondents were more likely to think that Singaporean Malays and Singaporean Indians had to work harder, or much harder than a Singaporean Chinese to have a decent life. At least a fifth of respondents thought this was so for Malays and Indians, compared to 13.1 per cent for Chinese.

Table 36: Respondents' perception of how hard they felt the following ethnicities had to work in relation to other ethnicities, to have a decent life in Singapore (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

How hard do you think the following racial groups have to work in order to have a <i>basic, decent life</i> in Singapore? 2018 (2013)	Much less than/Less than	The same as	Much harder than/Harder than
Singaporean Chinese	18.6 (15.8)	68.3 (73.0)	13.1 (11.2)
Singaporean Malay	12.4 (10.5)	65.2 (70.0)	22.4 (19.5)
Singaporean Indian	9.3 (7.6)	70.4 (74.5)	20.4 (17.8)
Singaporean Eurasian	20.7 (19.3)	68.9 (71.2)	10.3 (9.5)

Compared to 2013, slightly more respondents felt in 2018 that all racial groups of Singaporeans (i.e., Chinese, Malays, Indians and Eurasians) had to work harder than other races for a decent life.

Analysing the results by race, Malay and Indian respondents were more likely than Chinese respondents to feel that someone from a minority background had to work harder (see Table 37). For instance, among Malay respondents, 40.6 per cent felt Singaporean Malays had to work harder, while 36 per cent felt Singaporean Indians had to work harder. In comparison, 18.8 per cent and 17 per cent of Chinese respondents felt Singaporean Malays and Singaporean Indians respectively, had to work harder for a decent life. Meanwhile, less than 15 per cent of Chinese respondents felt a Singaporean Chinese had to work harder for a decent life.

Table 37: Respondents' perception of how hard they felt the following ethnicities had to work in relation to other ethnicities to have a decent life in Singapore, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

How hard do you think the following racial groups have to work in order to have a basic, decent life in Singapore? (Harder than others/Much more than others) 2018 (2013)	Chinese Respondents	Malay Respondents	Indian Respondents
Singaporean Chinese	14.2 (11.3)	9.4 (10.6)	10.3 (12.6)
Singaporean Malay	18.8 (16.2)	40.6 (33.2)	28.7 (26.4)
Singaporean Indian	17.0 (14.8)	29.8 (27.0)	36.0 (28.7)
Singaporean Eurasian	9.5 (8.0)	11.8 (13.5)	15.0 (15.1)

Compared to 2013, racial minorities were also more likely in 2018 to feel that someone of their background had to work harder. For instance, 36 per cent of Indians in 2018 felt a Singaporean Indian had to work harder than other races for a decent life, an increase from the 28.7 per cent who expressed similar sentiments in 2013.

The survey also asked respondents how hard they felt someone had to work compared to people of other races, to reach top positions in their organisations or companies. About two-thirds felt the same amount of work was needed for someone to reach such positions, regardless of one's race (see Table 38). However, significant proportions (31.9 per cent and 26.7 per cent, respectively) felt that Singaporean Malays and Singaporean Indians had to either work harder than, or much harder than, someone of another race to reach top positions. These figures were much higher compared to those who felt a Singaporean Chinese had to work harder than someone of another race (13.9 per cent).

Table 38: Respondents' perception of how hard they felt the following ethnicities had to work in relation to other ethnicities to reach top positions in their companies (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Which of the following groups do you think would have to work harder in order to reach top positions in their companies/organisations? 2018 (2013)	Much less than/Less than	The same as	Much harder than/Harder than
Singaporean Chinese	18.4 (15.9)	67.7 (66.3)	13.9 (17.8)
Singaporean Malay	7.6 (5.0)	60.4 (59.3)	31.9 (35.7)
Singaporean Indian	8.5 (5.8)	66.3 (63.3)	26.7 (30.9)
Singaporean Eurasian	20.2 (21.9)	66.6 (61.8)	13.2 (16.3)

In 2018, there was a slight fall in the proportion of respondents who felt Singaporean Chinese, Malays and Indians had to work harder than, or much harder than, other races to reach top positions (as compared to 2013). For instance, 35.7 per cent thought Singaporean Malays had to work harder in 2013, compared to 31.9 per cent who expressed similar sentiments in 2018. This was the case for Indians as well; 30.9 per cent thought Singaporean Indians had to work harder in 2013, compared to 26.7 per cent who felt the same way in 2018.

4.7 Inter-racial and religious tension

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

The majority of respondents (about two-thirds) agreed or strongly agreed that they do not experience racial or religious tension in their lives (see Table 39). Around 5 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 39: Respondents' views of experiencing racial and religious tension (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In general, I do not experience any form of racial tension in my daily life	1.5 (2.0)	3.6	7.6 (6.5)	20.9 (22.1)	45.4 (47.5)	20.9 (18.3)
In general, I do not experience any form of religious tension in my daily life	1.4 (1.9)	3.3	7.2 (5.2)	20.4 (21.6)	45.7 (49.0)	22.0 (22.3)

Analysing the results by respondents' race, we found that the majority of Chinese, Indians and Malays agreed or strongly agreed that they do not experience such tension in their daily lives (see Tables 40 and 41).

Table 40: Respondents' views of experiencing racial tension, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

In general, I do not experience any form of racial tension in my daily life 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	0.9 (1.6)	3.3	6.7 (6.1)	20.5 (21.3)	48.8 (49.3)	19.7 (21.6)
Malay	2.6 (3.5)	4.4	10.7 (6.5)	22.9 (26.3)	37.2 (42.5)	22.1 (21.3)
Indian	5.3 (3.2)	6.1	9.6 (7.6)	20.2 (22.5)	31.3 (40.1)	27.5 (26.6)
Others	1.8 (3.2)	0.0	12.8 (11.2)	25.7 (23.2)	30.3 (44.8)	29.4 (17.6)

Table 41: Respondents' views of experiencing religious tension, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

In general, I do not experience any form of religious tension in my daily life 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	1.0 (1.7)	3.1	6.8 (4.9)	20.0 (21.1)	48.7 (50.6)	20.5 (21.7)
Malay	2.2 (2.7)	4.0	8.9 (5.2)	22.7 (26.5)	38.0 (43.2)	24.1 (22.3)
Indian	3.8 (2.3)	5.0	8.2 (5.2)	19.8 (20.1)	33.5 (43.7)	29.7 (28.6)
Others	1.8 (3.2)	0.0	7.3 (7.3)	22.9 (19.4)	35.8 (50.8)	32.1 (19.4)

The majority of respondents also feel that the country is free from racial or religious tension (see Table 42), and this was replicated across the races (see Tables 43 and 44).

Table 42: Respondents' views of Singapore being free from racial and religious tension (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall, I feel Singapore is free from racial tension	2.3 (3.0)	6.2	11.0 (9.9)	25.5 (25.7)	40.8 (45.2)	14.1 (16.2)
Overall, I feel Singapore is free from religious tension	2.0 (2.2)	5.5	9.9 (8.2)	26.5 (27.4)	41.6 (43.9)	14.4 (18.3)

Table 43: Respondents' views of Singapore being free from racial tension, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Overall, I feel Singapore is free from racial tension 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	1.6 (2.7)	6.0	11.0 (9.8)	24.9 (25.5)	43.8 (46.9)	12.6 (15.2)
Malay	4.2 (4.4)	6.0	11.6 (8.7)	27.6 (27.7)	33.4 (42.6)	17.2 (16.6)
Indian	5.2 (4.4)	8.7	11.4 (9.3)	22.4 (24.7)	30.9 (37.5)	21.3 (24.1)
Others	2.8 (4.0)	7.4	8.3 (15.3)	39.8 (27.4)	22.2 (38.7)	19.4 (14.5)

Table 44: Respondents' views of Singapore being free from religious tension, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Overall, I feel Singapore is free from religious tension 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	1.4 (2.1)	5.3	9.9 (8.5)	26.7 (27.3)	44.0 (44.9)	12.7 (17.2)
Malay	3.6 (2.3)	5.8	10.8 (6.5)	25.7 (27.9)	36.7 (43.3)	17.4 (20.0)
Indian	4.7 (3.2)	7.3	9.0 (7.6)	23.9 (25.9)	32.9 (36.6)	22.2 (26.7)
Others	1.8 (3.2)	2.8	9.2 (8.9)	36.7 (31.5)	24.8 (43.5)	24.8 (12.9)

The survey further sought to present examples of racial or religious tension that respondents may have experienced. More than half of respondents said they had never experienced such instances of tension, which included someone insulting their race or racial customs, and someone insulting their religious beliefs (see Table 45). There was also little change in the 2018 results compared to the 2013 ones. Two new items were included in the 2018 wave of the study to examine whether respondents had been upset by people making fun of their religious beliefs or customs or whether they had watched something on social or mainstream media which insulted their racial or religious customs. The proportion that reported being at least sometimes upset about these incidents was about 18 per cent for the case of “someone made fun of my religious beliefs or customs” and 26 percent for “something you watched on social or mainstream media insulted your racial or religious customs.”

Table 45: Frequency of respondents being upset as a result of the following negative experiences (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

In the last year, how often have you felt upset because of the following? 2018 (2013)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often or always/Often
Someone insulting my race or racial customs	55.3 (57.4)	26.6 (24.2)	13.0 (13.1)	5.0 (5.3)
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

Neighbourhoods could be a potential setting for some types of tensions to arise. At least four in 10 respondents said they sometimes, often or very often or always *encountered and got upset* at the burning of religious items in their estate (see Table 46). This was the highest proportion among several items in the survey. Others included loud events at void decks or common areas, religious chanting or praying, and neighbours cooking ethnic food.

Close to half of respondents said that they had never encountered and got upset at their neighbours cooking ethnic food, at common corridors being blocked by neighbours' religious items and by neighbours having noisy gatherings in their homes, which is a promising sign. There were fewer respondents however who said that they had never encountered and got upset at burning incense, loud events at void decks and religious

chanting, singing or praying. This indicates that despite the generally harmonious communal relations in the neighbourhood, there are instances where religious practices can lead to some level of unhappiness. If not managed well, such upset can lead to tense inter-religious and racial relations. This finding also highlights that the building of multi-racial and multi-religious understanding and tolerance in society is still continuing.

Table 46: Frequency of respondents encountering and getting upset at the following events in their neighbourhoods

In the past year, how often have you encountered and gotten upset by the following in your estate? 2018 (2013)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often or always
Burning of incense/joss sticks/other religious items	31.8	26.5	25.7	9.9	6.1
Loud events at your void deck/common areas	31.1	32.9	26.7	5.8	3.5
Religious chanting/singing/praying	36.1	35.2	22.1	4.1	2.5
Neighbours cooking ethnic food	47.7	33.0	14.6	3.1	1.6
Common corridors being blocked by neighbours' religious items	48.6	32.1	13.9	3.5	2.0
Neighbours having noisy gatherings in their homes	42.0	34.3	18.3	3.5	1.9
Neighbours telling their children to avoid your children at common areas (e.g., playground)	66.7	21.4	8.6	2.0	1.4

Analysing the results by respondents' race, we found that respondents, regardless of race, were not likely to get upset with high frequency (often, very often or always) at such practices. Only a quarter of Malay and Indian respondents often, very often or always encountered and got upset with the burning of incense/ joss sticks/other religious items in their estate. However, when we analyse the proportions of Malay and Indian respondents who sometimes encountered and got upset at the burning of incense, the

proportions increased to 67.3 per cent of Malay and 57.6 per cent of Indian respondents (see Table 47). The corresponding proportion of Chinese who expressed similar sentiments was 35.7 per cent.

These trends were reflected in the cases of encountering loud events at void deck or common areas, as well as neighbours telling their children to avoid respondents' children at common areas (e.g., playground) (see Tables 48 to 49). The bulk of respondents do not encounter and get upset at such practices frequently. Nevertheless, it must be noted that a substantial portion of respondents had occasionally gotten upset because of different cultural practices. This indicates the need for management of these issues to reduce the possibility of ill-will between communities.

Table 47: Frequency of respondents encountering and getting upset at the following events in their neighbourhoods, by respondents' race

In the past year, how often have you encountered and gotten upset by the burning of incense/joss sticks/other religious items, in your estate?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often/Always
Chinese	34.5	29.8	23.0	8.2	4.5
Malay	17.7	15.1	39.4	15.3	12.7
Indian	26.0	16.4	30.1	16.1	11.4
Others	39.1	18.2	24.5	10.9	7.3

Table 48: Frequency of respondents encountering and getting upset at the following events in their neighbourhoods, by respondents' race

In the past year, how often have you encountered and gotten upset by loud events at your void deck/common areas, in your estate?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often/Always
Chinese	31.9	34.9	25.5	4.8	2.9
Malay	23.7	28.4	34.6	8.5	4.8
Indian	29.5	23.1	29.2	11.4	6.7
Others	46.4	30.0	15.5	4.5	3.6

Table 49: Frequency of respondents encountering and getting upset at the following events in their neighbourhoods, by respondents' race

In the past year, how often have you encountered and gotten upset by neighbours telling their children to avoid your children at common areas (e.g., playground), in your estate?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often/Always
Chinese	67.4	22.5	7.6	1.5	0.9
Malay	64.8	18.0	11.3	3.2	2.6
Indian	61.4	17.0	13.7	4.4	3.5
Others	69.1	21.8	5.5	1.8	1.8

4.8 Attitudes towards diversity

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

The majority of respondents valued racial diversity, as seen from the 56.4 per cent who agreed or strongly agreed they can learn a lot from other racial groups, and the 66.7 per cent who said it is good for Singapore to be made up of people from different races (see Table 50). A substantial portion were however ambivalent about racial diversity, saying they somewhat agreed with both statements.

Table 50: Respondents' views of embracing racial diversity (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
You can learn a lot from other racial groups	0.9 (0.8)	2.4	5.7 (5.6)	34.6 (32.4)	40.6 (47.0)	15.8 (14.2)
It's a good thing for Singapore to be made up of people from different racial groups	1.0 (1.1)	1.5	4.6 (3.9)	26.2 (23.4)	42.9 (47.3)	23.8 (24.2)

Analysing the results by respondents' race, we found that Malays and Indians were more likely to agree or strongly agree they could learn a lot from other races, and that it was good for Singapore to be made up of people from different races (See Tables 51 and 52). For instance, while 69.5 per cent of Malays and 71.4 per cent of Indians agreed or strongly agreed they could learn a lot from other races, just 52.1 per cent of Chinese thought so.

Table 51: Respondents' views of whether you can learn a lot from other racial groups, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

You can learn a lot from other racial groups 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	1.1 (0.7)	2.8	6.2 (6.4)	37.9 (34.2)	39.5 (46.8)	12.6 (11.8)
Malay	0.6 (1.2)	0.8	3.8 (1.7)	25.3 (25.7)	45.2 (49.2)	24.3 (22.2)
Indian	0.6 (0.6)	1.5	3.2 (4.3)	23.3 (29.0)	44.0 (45.2)	27.4 (20.9)
Others	0.0 (0.8)	1.8	7.2 (3.2)	19.8 (24.2)	41.4 (48.4)	29.7 (23.4)

Table 52: Respondents' views of embracing racial diversity, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

It's a good thing for Singapore to be made up of people from different racial groups 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	1.1 (1.1)	1.7	4.8 (4.3)	29.0 (24.6)	43.5 (49.0)	19.9 (21.0)
Malay	0.2 (1.0)	1.0	2.8 (3.1)	20.5 (21.2)	45.8 (41.7)	29.6 (33.0)
Indian	0.6 (1.7)	1.2	3.8 (2.9)	15.6 (19.0)	35.7 (39.7)	43.1 (36.7)
Others	1.8 (0.8)	0.0	8.0 (0.8)	10.7 (15.3)	35.7 (49.2)	43.8 (33.9)

Analysing the results by respondents' age, millennials were found to be more welcoming of racial diversity. Nearly three quarters agreed that they could learn a lot from other races, compared to less than half of those aged 55 and above (see Table 53).

Table 53: Respondents' views of whether you can learn a lot from other racial groups, by respondents' age (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

You can learn a lot from other racial groups 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18–25	0.0 (1.1)	0.7	3.0 (5.2)	26.0 (25.9)	42.1 (49.2)	28.2 (18.6)
26–35	1.0 (0.8)	0.7	4.1 (3.2)	35.9 (37.7)	38.7 (43.3)	19.7 (15.0)
36–45	0.4 (1.0)	1.6	6.0 (5.0)	32.2 (32.5)	41.5 (45.8)	18.4 (15.6)
46–55	0.6 (1.0)	2.6	6.6 (3.6)	33.7 (31.5)	42.0 (50.2)	14.5 (13.6)
55–65	1.1 (0.2)	4.6	7.1 (8.2)	37.9 (33.0)	39.7 (47.2)	9.6 (11.5)
Above 65	2.5 (0.3)	4.0	6.2 (11.8)	38.9 (29.8)	39.9 (48.3)	8.5 (9.8)

The survey next sought to ascertain if respondents felt enough accommodation had been made for various customs of the different races and religions. More than eight in 10 felt just enough accommodation had been made in various issues, including dietary restrictions of guests at government functions, grassroots events, and work gatherings, as well as cultural celebrations in public that may involve road closures or noise (see Table 54). No more than 10.8 per cent felt not enough accommodation had been made in these areas and fewer felt that too much accommodation had been made.

Table 54: Respondents' views of levels of racial and religious accommodation in Singapore

How much accommodation do you think Singaporeans have made for various customs and practices by the different races and religions?	Not enough	Just enough	Too much
Dietary restrictions of guests at government functions/grassroots events	7.7	86.0	6.3
Dietary restrictions of friends/colleagues at social/work gatherings	8.6	86.0	5.5
Cultural/religious celebrations in public areas that may involve road closures	8.4	85.9	5.7
Cultural/religious celebrations in public areas that may involve noise/other forms of pollution	10.8	81.6	7.6

While most respondents including minorities agreed that the right amount of accommodation had been made for various customs and practices, expectedly there were more minorities among those who felt that there was not enough accommodation had been made (see Table 55). For instance, at least 12 per cent of Malays and Indians felt not enough accommodation was made for dietary restrictions at social or work gatherings, compared to 7.6 per cent of Chinese respondents.

Table 55: Respondents' views of levels of racial and religious accommodation in Singapore, by respondents' race

How much accommodation do you think Singaporeans have made for various customs and practices by the different races and religions? (Not enough)	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
Dietary restrictions of guests at government functions/grassroots events	6.9	10.8	11.3	4.7
Dietary restrictions of friends/colleagues at social/work gatherings	7.6	12.4	12.8	2.8
Cultural/religious celebrations in public areas that may involve road closures	7.2	11.2	14.5	9.9
Cultural/religious celebrations in public areas that may involve noise/other forms of pollution	10.7	10.1	13.3	9.0

Indians respondents, meanwhile, were most likely to express such sentiments in the area of public celebrations that may involve road closures compared to Chinese respondents. This could potentially stem from guidelines related to Thaipusam. Nonetheless the proportion of Indians who felt that there was insufficient accommodation for religious celebrations was less than 15 percent.

4.9 Colour-blind ideology

This ninth indicator assesses the extent to which race or religious identity affects how people interact with one another, or in gauging an individual's suitability for a job.

The majority of respondents endorsed a race and religion-blind policy. For instance, 68.4 per cent and 62 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that someone's race does not affect how they interact with that person, and that a person's race or religion should not be regarded in finding the right person for a job respectively (see Table 56). About a third, however, agreed or strongly agreed that they had a good idea of someone's behaviour

or views based on their race. Overall, the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed to engaging in racial stereotyping dropped from nearly half in 2013 to 35.2 per cent in 2018, indicative of a growing awareness of the ills of racial stereotyping.

Table 56: Respondents' views of embracing colour-blind ideology in the case of social interaction, racial stereotyping and hiring (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Someone's race does not affect how I interact with him/her	1.3 (1.0)	2.4	6.5 (5.7)	21.4 (24.0)	44.0 (45.9)	24.4 (23.4)
When I know what someone's race is, I have a good idea of what some of his/her behaviour and views will be like	3.9 (3.6)	8.7	17.0 (13.8)	35.3 (35.8)	29.3 (38.1)	5.9 (8.7)
Someone's race or religious identity should be disregarded when it comes to considering him or her for a job	3.3 (2.7)	5.2	8.8 (5.7)	20.8 (21.6)	35.8 (41.4)	26.2 (28.6)

Analysing the results by respondents' race, we found that Malays and Indians were more likely than a Chinese respondent to agree or strongly agree that someone's race does not affect how they interact with that person (see Table 57). While 65.3 per cent of Chinese respondents expressed such sentiments, 76.9 per cent of Malays and 81.1 per cent of Indians did so. Malays and Indians were also more likely to rely on racial stereotypes, with 43.4 per cent of Malays and 41.3 per cent of Indians agreeing or strongly agreeing that someone's race gave them a good idea of what the person's behaviour and views were like (see Table 58). Overall, respondents still embrace a colour-blind ideology.

Table 57: Respondents' views of embracing colour-blindness in social interaction, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Someone's race does not affect how I interact with him/her 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	1.5 (0.9)	2.5	7.3 (6.1)	23.4 (25.3)	45.4 (47.7)	19.9 (20.0)
Malay	0.6 (1.2)	1.2	3.0 (4.4)	18.3 (20.3)	41.2 (39.0)	35.7 (35.1)
Indian	0.3 (2.6)	3.0	4.1 (4.9)	11.5 (18.3)	37.6 (39.0)	43.5 (35.2)
Others	1.8 (0)	1.8	7.2 (3.2)	11.7 (21.0)	38.7 (46.8)	38.7 (29.0)

Table 58: Respondents' views of racial stereotyping, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

When I know what someone's race is, I have a good idea of what some of his/her behaviour and views will be like 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	3.8 (2.8)	8.8	17.6 (14.7)	36.5 (37.8)	28.8 (38.0)	4.4 (6.7)
Malay	2.2 (4.5)	6.3	15.3 (11.2)	32.9 (28.7)	34.3 (40.1)	9.1 (15.5)
Indian	6.2 (7.6)	9.4	15.0 (10.5)	28.3 (31.2)	27.1 (35.9)	13.9 (14.9)
Others	5.3 (6.5)	14.0	13.2 (11.4)	33.3 (29.3)	26.3 (40.7)	7.9 (12.2)

Analysing the results by respondents' age, we found that those aged between 18 and 25 were more likely to be race-blind compared to those aged 56 and above (see Table 59). Just over a third of young respondents strongly agreed that someone's race would not affect how they interacted with that person, compared to less than a fifth of those aged 56 and above. Older persons, meanwhile, were more likely than millennials to rely on racial stereotypes. Around 47 per cent of those aged above 65 agreed or strongly agreed

that a person's race gave them a good idea of what the person's behaviour and views were like (see Table 60). The corresponding proportion of those aged between 18 and 25 who had similar sentiments was 24.5 per cent.

Table 59: Respondents' views of embracing colour-blindness in social interaction, by respondents' age (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Someone's race does not affect how I interact with him/her 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18–25	0.7 (0.5)	1.0	7.2 (6.2)	19.4 (24.7)	35.6 (37.7)	36.1 (31.1)
26–35	1.3 (0.9)	2.2	7.4 (7.5)	19.9 (21.9)	41.8 (43.3)	27.4 (26.4)
36–45	0.7 (1.1)	1.8	7.8 (5.8)	16.7 (23.6)	46.5 (42.5)	26.5 (27.0)
46–55	0.9 (1.3)	2.3	5.5 (5.2)	22.5 (20.8)	43.1 (50.1)	25.7 (22.5)
56–65	1.7 (0.9)	2.8	6.8 (4.1)	24.6 (26.8)	45.0 (50.0)	19.1 (18.2)
Above 65	2.6 (1.3)	3.9	4.4 (5.1)	25.3 (28.2)	49.2 (53.7)	14.5 (11.7)

Table 60: Respondents' views of racial stereotyping, by respondents' age (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

When I know what someone's race is, I have a good idea of what some of his/her behaviour and views will be like 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18–25	5.9 (5.0)	12.1	20.3 (17.3)	37.1 (35.5)	19.3 (32.3)	5.2 (10.0)
26–35	5.1 (3.8)	7.9	19.7 (15.1)	37.7 (35.4)	22.7 (34.2)	6.8 (11.4)
36–45	2.8 (3.5)	8.8	17.2 (13.4)	33.5 (38.0)	31.6 (36.3)	6.1 (8.8)
46–55	3.1 (4.8)	8.1	14.3 (9.6)	35.3 (34.8)	32.8 (41.9)	6.4 (8.9)
56–65	3.4 (2.8)	8.5	15.4 (13.0)	34.1 (37.1)	33.0 (41.3)	5.8 (5.8)
Above 65	3.9 (0.5)	8.2	16.7 (18.2)	34.5 (32.2)	32.1 (43.2)	4.6 (5.9)

In the area of disregarding race or religion when finding the right person for a job, Malays and Indians were much more likely to say they strongly agreed with this compared to the Chinese. Close to three quarters of Malays and Indians expressed such sentiments, compared to 59.4 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Table 61).

Table 61: Respondents' views of embracing colour-blindness in hiring, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Someone's race or religious identity should be disregarded when it comes to considering him or her for a job 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	2.8 (2.0)	5.1	9.5 (6.1)	23.2 (23.5)	38.7 (43.8)	20.7 (24.5)
Malay	4.6 (4.8)	4.4	5.6 (4.4)	15.1 (16.4)	30.2 (34.2)	40.0 (40.2)
Indian	5.6 (4.6)	4.7	6.2 (4.1)	11.8 (16.2)	23.5 (31.0)	48.2 (44.1)
Others	3.6 (7.4)	12.5	9.8 (5.7)	8.0 (9.8)	20.5 (39.3)	45.5 (37.7)

Analysing the results by respondents' age, those aged between 18 and 25 were more likely to strongly agree that race or religion should be disregarded in hiring the right person. Six in ten expressed such sentiments, compared to nearly half of those aged 56 and above (see Table 62).

Table 62: Respondents' views of embracing colour-blindness in hiring, by respondents' age (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Someone's race or religious identity should be disregarded when it comes to considering him or her for a job 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18–25	3.2 (2.3)	3.7	7.0 (5.5)	19.7 (18.9)	28.9 (33.0)	37.4 (40.5)
26–35	3.6 (4.5)	3.3	8.5 (4.5)	19.9 (20.7)	30.8 (36.8)	33.8 (33.5)
36–45	3.0 (2.5)	5.3	11.2 (6.8)	18.7 (24.5)	34.9 (35.6)	27.0 (30.7)
46–55	3.1 (2.6)	5.7	7.9 (5.9)	19.0 (18.3)	37.8 (45.6)	26.4 (27.7)
56–65	2.7 (2.2)	6.2	8.2 (4.6)	22.7 (21.2)	41.0 (51.8)	19.3 (20.2)
Above 65	4.1 (2.0)	6.3	8.8 (6.9)	25.4 (27.9)	39.3 (45.5)	16.2 (17.6)

4.10 Inter-cultural understanding

This tenth indicator examines the extent to which Singaporeans are interested in understanding the beliefs and practices of different cultures. It also measures the population's perception of their understanding of other groups and their willingness to ask and share beliefs and practices.

To examine interest in intercultural understanding, respondents were asked if they were interested in understanding other races' or religions' customs and practices. Around three-quarters of respondents showed some level of agreement to statements that they were interested in such issues (see Table 63). It is notable however, that the level of agreement

tended to be weak with nearly 40 per cent of respondents choosing the “somewhat agree” option about the issue.

Table 63: Respondents’ levels of interest in understanding the customs and practices of other racial and religious groups (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am interested in understanding other racial groups’ customs and practices	3.3 (4.3)	5.9	12.4 (12.2)	40.2 (32.9)	30.2 (39.3)	8.1 (11.2)
I am interested in understanding other religious groups’ beliefs and practices	4.4 (6.5)	7.5	15.4 (15.0)	38.8 (32.4)	26.8 (36.2)	7.1 (10.0)

Analysing the results by respondents’ race, we found that Malays and Indians were much more likely to be interested in understanding other racial groups’ customs and practices (see Table 64). While 32.8 per cent of Chinese respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 54.3 per cent of Malays and 56.1 per cent of Indians expressed similar sentiments. This finding was replicated when it came to expressing interest in understanding other religious groups’ beliefs and practices.

Table 64: Respondents’ levels of interest in understanding the customs and practices of other racial groups, by respondents’ race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

I am interested in understanding other racial groups’ customs and practices 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	3.6 (5.1)	6.9	14.0 (14.3)	42.6 (34.8)	27.4 (38.0)	5.4 (7.9)
Malay	2.0 (2.1)	2.2	7.0 (6.0)	34.4 (29.3)	38.2 (42.2)	16.1 (20.4)
Indian	2.9 (2.3)	2.9	7.7 (6.1)	30.4 (23.4)	37.5 (45.4)	18.6 (22.8)
Others	0.0 (1.6)	3.5	7.0 (5.6)	28.1 (29.8)	46.5 (42.7)	14.9 (20.2)

Analysing the results by respondents' age, we found that those aged between 18 and 25 were more likely to be interested in understanding other races' customs, compared to their older counterparts (see Table 65). Nearly half of these young respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, compared to 33.5 per cent of those aged above 65, and 31.8 per cent of those aged between 55 and 65.

Table 65: Respondents' levels of interest in understanding the customs and practices of other racial groups, by respondents' age (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

I am interested in understanding other racial groups' customs and practices 2018 (2013)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18-25	3.0 (4.5)	3.5	9.7 (11.1)	34.4 (30.5)	33.2 (38.4)	16.3 (15.5)
26-35	3.0 (4.2)	2.8	10.9 (11.3)	41.4 (30.4)	32.1 (40.6)	9.8 (13.5)
36-45	2.3 (4.3)	4.9	11.8 (12.3)	40.2 (31.3)	33.0 (39.8)	7.8 (12.2)
46-55	2.8 (4.1)	7.1	12.9 (11.8)	41.1 (34.8)	28.7 (41.1)	7.3 (8.3)
56-65	2.9 (5.3)	7.9	15.7 (11.7)	41.7 (36.9)	26.2 (36.5)	5.6 (9.6)
Above 65	6.2 (3.6)	8.5	12.2 (17.5)	39.5 (32.4)	28.5 (38.3)	5.0 (8.2)

The survey also asked respondents how often they thought they understood other religious groups' beliefs. About a quarter of respondents said they always, often or very often understood such beliefs and practices (see Table 66). On the related issue of sharing when asked about their religious beliefs, 27.1 per cent of respondents said they did this often, very often or always.

Table 66: Respondents' likelihood of asking others to share religious beliefs, sharing their own religious beliefs and understanding others' religious beliefs (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Often/Very Often/Always	2018 (2013)
How often do you think you understand other religious groups' beliefs and practices	25.1 (21.5)
How often do you ask others to share their religious beliefs and practices	16.1 (18.0)
How often do you share, when asked, your religious beliefs and practices?	27.1 (31.1)

Malays and Indians were much more likely to express such sentiments (see Table 67). For instance, close to half of Malays and Indians often, very often or always thought they understood other religions' beliefs and practices, compared to just 19.2 per cent of Chinese respondents. Compared to Chinese respondents, racial minorities were also much more likely to share, when asked about their religious beliefs and practices.

Table 67: Respondents' likelihood of asking others to share religious beliefs, sharing their own religious beliefs and understanding others' religious beliefs, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Often/Very Often/Always	2018 (2013)			
	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
How often do you think you understand other religious groups' beliefs and practices	19.2 (16.2)	42.3 (35.9)	49.0 (42.6)	32.5 (31.4)
How often do you ask others to share their religious beliefs and practices	10.8 (13.8)	33.7 (30.2)	34.3 (34.5)	24.8 (25.8)
How often do you share, when asked, your religious beliefs and practices?	20.8 (26.6)	49.5 (42.0)	47.4 (49.2)	36.0 (49.6)

Respondents were also asked how much opportunity they had to interact with people from other races and religions. About a quarter felt they had little or hardly any opportunity. Chinese respondents were more likely to perceive a lack of opportunities (see Table 68). While just over 26 per cent said they had little or hardly any opportunity for such interactions, the corresponding proportions of Malays and Indians who thought so was 17.2 per cent and 13.1 per cent, respectively. Malays and Indians were slightly more likely to perceive a lack of opportunities in 2018; 18.3 per cent and 19.2 per cent of Malays and Indians, respectively, felt this way in 2013, with the numbers dipping to 17.2 per cent and 13.1 per cent, respectively, in 2018.

Table 68: Respondents' perception of opportunities available to interact with people of other races and religions, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2013 wave)

Little/Hardly any	2018 (2013)			
	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
How much opportunity do you currently have to interact with people who are different racially and religiously?	26.6 (25.5)	17.2 (18.3)	13.1 (19.2)	9.6 (15.3)

Respondents were most likely to say that workplaces, schools and neighbourhoods were the most likely venues to meet people of different races and religions (see Table 69).

Table 69: Respondents' likelihood of getting to know people of other races and religions across the following venues

If there were opportunities, how likely are you to try to get to know people who are different from you racially and religiously?	Likely/Very Likely
At your workplace/ school	58.6
In your neighbourhood	46.4
Places where you engage in leisurely activities (e.g. sports, hobby groups)	43.5
In the online space (e.g. social media)	25.5

5. CONCLUSION

Overall, this paper has attempted to document the landscape of racial and religious interaction, relations and harmony in Singapore, as well as capture any changes to this landscape in the span of five years. To track these changes, we compared results from our survey administered in 2018 to our survey results from 2013. This survey examined 10 indicators of racial and religious harmony in Singapore: inter-racial and religious social trust, inter-racial and religious acceptance, social connectedness between racial groups, perception of discrimination, perception of social exclusion, inter-racial and religious tension, and attitudes towards diversity, colour-blind ideology, intercultural understanding and interaction.

In general, our results show that Singapore is faring well when it comes to inter-racial and inter-religious relations. The majority of respondents embrace racial diversity and adopt colour-blindness in the case of social interaction and employment. In addition, most

(including racial minorities) perceive little to no discrimination and social exclusion in public spaces in Singapore, which is an important sign of racial and religious harmony. There are also high levels of inter-racial and religious trust in Singapore, alongside little perception of inter-racial and religious tension. Most respondents also indicate interest and willingness to interact with and get to know other cultures. These findings demonstrate a strong foothold of multicultural values in Singapore, with most Singaporeans internalising narratives of multiculturalism and racial harmony.

However, our findings do point to the possibility of further improvement in certain areas. For example, racial minorities were more likely to perceive workplace discrimination, especially when it comes to applying for jobs and being considered for job promotions. This sentiment increased slightly in 2018, signalling the need for more resources to be channelled into tackling workplace discrimination.

Our results also found that older respondents were slightly more likely to have lower levels of inter-racial trust and less racially diverse social networks. This could potentially stem from older persons having less opportunity to interact with people of other races, given the heavy focus on inter-racial understanding and mixing in today's educational curriculum and schools, as well as in ground-up exchanges and community activities, which may be benefiting younger people more. Future initiatives to strengthen racial and religious harmony in Singapore should continue to engage older persons just as they do younger cohorts. Opportunities for intercultural understanding and trust building through

platforms that allow for interaction and learning are important. Simultaneously, there has to be continuous maintenance, revamping and improving of efforts to engage the young in inter-racial and religious understanding and interaction through the provision of spaces and resources.

However, there has been significant improvement in inter-racial and religious relations in 2018, as compared to 2013. For example, respondents in 2018 were more likely to trust people of other races and religions, than they were in 2013. In addition, the proportion of respondents who indicated having close friends of another race was bigger in 2018 even for older persons (perhaps somewhat due to more from the baby boomer generation entering the oldest demographic group). There is also little change in perception of discrimination in public spaces, such as public transport, in 2018. These trends signal the steady progress of inter-racial and religious harmony over time.

One reason for these more positive results could stem from increased discourse on inter-racial and religious relations over the last few years. Several surveys have been reported with substantial media coverage and commentary highlighting issues such as racial prejudice¹², inter-religious trust levels¹³ and inter-racial understanding and interactions¹⁴.

¹² Mathew Mathews. "CNA-IPS Survey on Race Relations" Available at https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/CNA-IPS-survey-on-race-relations_190816.pdf

¹³ Mathew Mathews, Leonard Lim and Shanthini Selvarajan. "Community Relations Amidst the Threat of Terror" IPS Working Paper No.30 Available at https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/working-paper-no-30_community-relations-amidst-the-threat-of-terror_250918.pdf

¹⁴ Mathew Mathews, Leonard Lim, Shanthini Selvarajan and Nicole Cheung. "CNA-IPS Survey on Ethnic Identity in Singapore" IPS Working Paper No.28 Available at https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/wp-28_cna-ips-survey-on-ethnic-identity-in-singapore.pdf?sfvrsn=4952600a_2

Accounts such as that of Indian Singaporean Shrey Bhargava¹⁵, who was asked to portray racial caricatures in an audition for a local film, paved the way for discourse on racial discrimination and representation on mainstream media in Singapore. This discourse dominated both mainstream news sites and social media platforms such as Twitter. Increased conversations on various platforms, encouraged by a number of accounts on racial discrimination including an allegation of a bakery management staff making racially discriminatory statements of a job candidate¹⁶, helped raise awareness of the fragility of racial relations in Singapore.

The past few years also saw the emergence of new initiatives to improve inter-racial and religious relations. Various SG Secure initiatives highlight the need for Singaporeans of all racial and religious backgrounds to stay united in the face of terror threats. Civil society programmes such as “DMZ Dinners”¹⁷ organised by the Thought Collective, which featured a series of dinners where Singaporeans of various ethnicities could congregate over food, at times with artists and activists, discuss pertinent issues related to race and religion in Singapore. Other examples include the Explorations in Ethnicity organised by One People.sg¹⁸, a programme to provide a safe platform for youths to discuss difficult issues of race, and challenge racial stereotypes and prejudice, as well as documentaries such as “Regardless of Race”, by Channel News Asia¹⁹, aimed at propelling the discourse

¹⁵ Bhavan Jaipragas. “Indian Actor’s Accent Sparks Debate on Singaporeans’ Attitude to Race.” *South China Morning Post*, June 3, 2017.

¹⁶ Olivia Ho. “PrimaDeli apologises, sacks staff for making racist remarks to job interviewee.” *Straits Times*, April 29 2016.

¹⁷ <http://dmz.thethoughtcollective.com.sg/video-series/1/race>

¹⁸ http://www.onepeople.sg/category/eie/?fbclid=IwAR1VQRzJ9B8kGyF16NQI5sJl_HXpDj64u6yT8SVznre6lbtq1gBNEzIKA8

¹⁹ <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/video-on-demand/regardlessofrace>

of racial relations forward. The advent of such government and community initiatives could contribute to explaining the increased openness to, trust and acceptance of other races and religions in 2018.

While there has been progress in racial and religious harmony in Singapore over the past few years, our survey does show that there is still room for improvement, especially in areas of workplace discrimination and inter-racial and religious mixing. While narratives of multiculturalism are internalised by most, more resources have to be channelled into helping people achieve these multicultural goals and ideals through their actions. Government bodies, corporations, community organisations and the people of Singapore have to co-operate and consciously work hard to ensure that racial and religious harmony continues to strengthen and grow.

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