

**Attitudes and Ethnoreligious Integration:
Meeting the Challenge and Maximizing the Promise of
Multicultural Malaysia**

Final report: Survey and recommendations

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Executive Summary

Summary of survey findings

Data was collected from Malay (n = 503), Chinese (n = 500) and Indian (n = 501) respondents in Peninsular Malaysia in September-October, 2016.

1. Respondents had a marked preference for ethnic ingroup friends and more favourable attitudes towards the ethnic ingroup than their ethnic outgroups, a tendency which was particularly pronounced for Malay respondents.
2. Promoting positive inter-ethnic contact was shown to have the potential to yield favourable changes in attitudes, and should be considered an important component of interventions to improve inter-ethnic integration.
3. Respondents from all ethnic groups identified more strongly with their ethnic group than they did with being Malaysian, though for Malays, these identities were more similar in strength than for non-Malays.
4. Integration efforts (such as '1Malaysia') that emphasize being Malaysian may not benefit majority and minority groups in the same way; results show that non-Malays may respond by developing more positive outgroup attitudes, while there may be no effect for Malays, for whom being Malaysian (national identity) may be associated with being Malay (ethnic identity).
5. Mixing, and particularly friendships in the neighbourhood and workplace, was associated with more favourable outgroup attitudes (with a stronger effect for neighbourhood than work friendships).
6. A large proportion of Malays did not think the government's economic policies were equitable, and about half of the samples from each ethnic group were highly dissatisfied with their economic standing relative to their ethnic outgroups. Nearly half of Malay respondents felt that their group was highly discriminated against compared to two-thirds of non-Malay respondents.
7. Respondents who perceived discrimination of the ethnic ingroup were more likely to report willingness to engage in collective action and personal action (expressing a desire to emigrate from Malaysia). Nearly half of Chinese respondents reported a strong desire to emigrate from Malaysia, while more than half of Indian respondents reported a strong willingness to participate in collective action. Perceived discrimination was also associated with poorer mental health (see point 9 below).
8. Respondents identified strongly with their religious groups, particularly the Muslims and the Hindus. Having more outgroup friendships and higher knowledge of outgroup religions was shown to partially alleviate the negative effects associated with high levels of religious identification. Further, perceiving core similarities between religions and having more meaningful

conversations with friends from religious outgroups were shown to have the potential to improve religious tolerance. This finding formed the basis for one of our schools interventions below.

9. Diversity and integration have far-reaching effects, including on one's mental health.

Greater diversity, positive inter-ethnic contact and social support in the neighbourhood were associated with better mental health, while negative contact and inter-ethnic tensions in the neighbourhood, along with feeling discriminated against, was associated with poorer mental health.

10. A high percentage of people from the different ethnic groups (substantially higher than 50% of the each sample) expressed strong agreement with the integration suggestions of creating racially-mixed neighbourhoods, schools and political parties, treating different religious groups equally, and doing away with Malay special privilege (with two exceptions: the Chinese and Indians respondents expressed less support for doing away with vernacular education, while the Malay respondents expressed less support for doing away with Malay special privileges).

Summary of intervention recommendations

1. Workplace intervention: We proposed a diversity-training intervention at CIMB, which utilizes perspective-taking as the primary means of changing the attitudes and behaviours of participants and others in their social network. The effectiveness of study would be evaluated using an experimental approach and social network analysis. The intervention would be designed to effect widespread changes in attitudes and behaviours by changing the mindset of a select few people in the organisation, thereby being time- and cost-effective for the company.

2. School intervention 1: This intervention was based on cooperative learning and intergroup contact, and would be evaluated as a field experiment. We believe that a cooperative learning paradigm can be particularly beneficial in Malaysia where schools can be very competitive environments. Such an intervention can be carried out over school holidays to increase buy-in from schools, pupils and parents.

3. School intervention 2: We proposed an intervention with young people based on providing them with multi-faith religious education and inter-religious contact in order to increase integration along religious lines, especially when people are highly religiously identified. We suggested the intervention be carried out over the school holidays, and ideally with pupils who have not had much prior exposure to religious outgroups.

Summary of policy recommendations to the Government

1. The government may consider publishing data on social mobility indicators to convey their commitment to fairness, transparency and accountability.

2. There is a need to create and maintain mixed neighbourhoods. This could inform the government's social housing efforts.
3. Community cohesion could be strengthened by creating and maintaining more public social and leisure facilities in neighbourhoods.
4. Multi-faith education should be explored as a way to improve understanding, tolerance and appreciation between members of different religious groups.
5. Programmes like 1Malaysia which are a central plank in the Government's efforts to promote integration may have unintended consequences, and need to be evaluated carefully.

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Introduction

Malaysia is a country with considerable ethno-religious diversity¹ and a long and complex history of trade, immigration and indentured labour. In order for it to flourish and be stable in the long-term, it is essential that people from its many ethnic and religious groups live and work peacefully and successfully together. Notwithstanding relative peace and prosperity, there are marked tensions and points of grievance between groups which threaten its long-term stability and success (Ali, 2008; Noor, 2005). In fact, over the years, there have been indications that ethnic and religious identities have been sharpened and entrenched, resulting in use of incendiary language against certain groups, outbreaks of misunderstandings and violence, and large-scale protests against perceived inequalities and an illegitimate system (Al Ramiah, 2009). When ethnicity is socially defining and politically relevant, as is the case in Malaysia, the result can be negative generalized perceptions of ‘outgroups’ (groups to which we do not belong) compared with positive views of ‘ingroups’ (groups to which we do belong) (e.g., “they are all mean, lazy” vs. “we are all kind, hard-working”). This pattern is especially likely where there is an absence of opportunities for, and drivers of, harmonious and meaningful contact between members of different ethnic and religious groups, which has demonstrable success in promoting more positive intergroup relations (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), and hence should be a central plank of Malaysia’s policy for improving relations between different ethnic and religious groups and promoting national unity.

Previous research (summarized in our proposal dated 13, June, 2016) has indicated that social, economic and institutional factors, and types of contact with other ethnic groups may be particularly relevant for understanding inter-ethnic integration in Malaysia. Overall, the findings of earlier research in this multicultural context illustrate the truism that a lack of overt inter-ethnic conflict does not imply inter-ethnic harmony. While Malaysia has not seen the kind of violent conflict experienced in some other countries with a complex history of inter-ethnic relations (e.g., Indonesia or Sri Lanka), this is not, as some observers such as Muscat (2002) have argued, an indication of contentment with the status quo. Rather, past findings demonstrate that people may seek alternative modes of ‘engaging’, including *dis*engaging (such as withdrawing from intergroup contact or emigrating); if one is overly focused on violent conflict as the key outcome variable these patterns of disengagement may mask the true nature of intergroup relations, which is less sanguine than the absence of conflict might imply.

¹ It has a population of about 28.3 million people, of which 91.8 per cent are Malaysian citizens. Of these citizens, 67.4 percent are Bumiputera (of which 50.1% are Malay), 24.6 percent are Chinese, and 7.3 percent are Indian. Islam is the most widely professed religion in Malaysia (61.3%), followed by Buddhism (19.8%), Christianity (9.2%) and Hinduism (6.3%) (Department of Statistics, 2010).

When designing our survey, we were guided by the belief that it was critical to ground and further develop our understanding of Malaysian ethnoreligious integration based on up-to-date data collected from a large representative sample of the population (laid out in Section 1), who were given a survey measuring a wide range of theoretically-driven and empirically-informed social-psychological constructs (e.g., attitudes, threat, intergroup contact, discrimination). Broadly speaking, our survey set out to shed light on the day-to-day nature of ethnic relations in Malaysia and the factors that encourage and impede meaningful inter-ethnic interactions and understanding between the main ethnic and religious groups. We are confident that such research evidence can offer important insights into the complex social dynamics in Malaysia and will serve as a firm basis on which to suggest policy changes and interventions to improve ethno-religious integration.

In addition to the survey data, at the request of the CIMB Board, we also interviewed a sub-section of employees at CIMB. The purpose of these interviews was to establish a first understanding of the nature of inter-ethnic relations at this multicultural company, and provide a counterpoint to the larger-scale quantitative insights provided by the national survey. We believe that these interviews, especially in combination with the quantitative survey data, yield fascinating insights into the way in which diversity is experienced within CIMB, and can be a valuable basis on which to understand some of the ways in which diversity works in corporate Malaysia in general, and provide a basis on which future research in the workplace can be built.

Section 1: Survey

1.1 Data collection method – sampling frame

The survey study covered all states in Peninsular Malaysia only². A total of 1504 respondents were interviewed face-to-face. They were all adult citizens aged 18 years and older. The sampling design used was a random stratified sample. This means that respondents were identified on the basis of meeting a range of sample characteristics (described in the next subsection), and then, within each strata, randomly selected to participate. Merdeka Centre first conducted a pilot test with 31 respondents from the three main ethnic groups, as a pre-test of the survey and data collection methods.

The baseline information for the sampling was drawn from the household information provided by the Department of Statistic (DOS) and the 2013 electoral roll from the Election Commission of Malaysia.

² Our funders asked that we focus on Peninsular Malaysia only for this wave of data collection, and include East Malaysia in subsequent waves, should they be funded.

The data collection process started on the 20th of September and ended on the 31st of October 2016. The questionnaire used for the study was prepared in the three main languages: Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin and Tamil, and all versions of the questionnaire also had the questions in English in order to aid the interviewers in case they needed to clarify any terms. Each of the three translations was first done by individual translators, and then back-translated into English and checked carefully by the lead researchers and Merdeka Centre in order to standardize the meaning across the different language versions. The face-to-face interviews were conducted by interviewers whose ethnicity was matched to the respondents' ethnicity, and interviews were conducted as far as possible in respondents' homes. Each interview lasted on average for 30 minutes.

1.2 Sample characteristics

The sampling plan was designed separately for the three main ethnic groups in Peninsular Malaysia: the Malays, Chinese and Indians, with a target of 500 respondents per ethnic group. We used booster samples for the ethnic minority groups in order to be able to access the experiences and perceptions of a range of respondents for each ethnic group, and in order to have adequate statistical power³ to test our models for each of the groups. The final samples achieved were: $n = 503$ Malays, $n = 500$ Chinese and $n = 501$ Indians. The refusal rates varied by ethnic group: on average, interviewers approached 7-8 Malays in order to get one Malay respondent, 8-9 Indians to get one Indian respondent, and 15 Chinese to get one Chinese respondent.

Merdeka Centre reports a margin of error for this sample, which is an indicator of data quality and is the error that can result from the process of selecting the sample. The key measure of data precision is the standard error of a proportion taken from a sample. The overall sample size of 1504 voting-age adults gives a maximum error margin of plus/minus 2.53% at the 95% confidence level, which suggests what the upper and lower bounds of the results are.

The sample was stratified on the basis of several features in order to be representative of the general population. Sampling areas from which the respondents were drawn were located across all states in Peninsular Malaysia. The areas were selected to cover a range of ethnic compositions of the three main groups and urban and rural ratios. Sampling areas were then determined on the basis of having the highest population density. A total of 330 sampling points were identified, based on polling districts (Daerah Mengundi) located within state constituencies, with a target of 5 respondents per sampling area. Respondents were selected in order to meet the

³ Statistical power refers to the probability that a statistical test correctly rejects the null hypothesis when the alternative hypothesis is true. In other words, it is the ability of a test to detect an effect, if the effect actually exists.

gender and age proportions of the general population, and were from residential areas in the polling districts. Respondents were not given any incentive to participate, but were given a tote bag with the Merdeka Centre logo as a token of gratitude at the end of the interview.

Table 1: Gender, age urban-rural and religious group proportions achieved for the final sample

	Malay (n = 503)		Chinese (n = 500)		Indian (n = 501)	
Gender (male/female)	50.5%	49.5%	49.6%	50.4%	49.7%	50.3%
Age (under 40/over 40)	50.1%	49.9%	51.6%	48.2%	51.3%	48.7%
Rural-Urban	37.8%	62.2%	15%	85%	17.8%	82.2%
Muslims	100%		0.4%		1.2%	
Buddhists	-		68.6%		0.8%	
Taoists/Confucianists	-		10.6%		0.2%	
Hindus	-		-		90.6%	
Christians	-		8.8%		6.2%	
No religion	-		9.8%		-	

1.3 Methodological details – understanding and interpreting the statistical analyses

Rather than report all the items here, we reproduce the wording of illustrative items when discussing the results below. Unless otherwise noted, measures used standard 5-point rating scales, to allow a range of responses (e.g., ‘not at all’ to ‘very’) and we followed convention in creating reliable multi-item scale scores (i.e., by averaging over multiple items assessing the same construct). When discussing empirical findings (e.g., comparing responses of ethnic or religious groups), we base our conclusions on conventional statistical analyses to test for the significance of differences between group means. We also report the ‘effect size’ of any differences in line with the latest statistical norms (Cumming, 2012). The effect size we use is eta-squared, η^2 . An effect size is a standardized difference between means, or a measure of the association between variables, for example. It provides a way of showing whether a reported effect is not merely ‘statistically significant’ (which can occur with small differences, given sufficiently large samples), but also ‘substantial’. It also provides a way of comparing variables with different scales⁴. All the histograms we present show the average (mean) levels for the

⁴ We compared means using analyses of variance (ANOVAs which report F-tests), which test for the statistical significance of any differences (* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, and *** = $p < .001$). For effect sizes, we follow the

variables for each respondent group, and include error bars which show the standard deviations (amount of variance or dispersion in the data from the mean value⁵).

Further, when we discuss our empirical findings, we rely on tests of the association between variables, which assess the extent to which different variables are correlated with one another. We sometimes conduct bivariate correlations, and at other times, we control for other variables that may be correlated with the outcome variable. Specifically, we report the unstandardized regression coefficient, B, for the association between variables. For example, a B coefficient of 0.12 for Variable A associated with Variable B indicates that as the score for Variable A increases by 1, the score for Variable B increases (on average) by 0.12 (both variables being on a scale from 1-5, for example). We also report how much of the variance (as a percentage) in Variable B is explained by Variable A (and any other variables in the regression model). In all the regression analyses we ran, we accounted for the nested nature of the data, where people are nested within neighbourhoods (in this case electoral polling districts). This enables us to report estimates with corrected standard errors, which makes them more reliable and unbiased.

1.4 Research questions and findings

We turn now to consideration of seven specific research questions which we tried to answer from our data.

Research Question 1: *Does being friends with members of different ethnic groups make me like their group more?* Assessing the relationship between quantity of ethnic outgroup friends and a person's ethnic outgroup attitudes

Research Question 2: *What does it mean to be Malaysian?* How national and ethnic identities are related to inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic contact experiences and outgroup attitudes.

Research Question 3: *Friends at work, or in the neighbourhood?* The differential association between outgroup attitudes and outgroup contact at work and in the neighbourhood.

Research Question 4: *Am I treated fairly in Malaysia? And if not, what can I do about it?* Perceived fairness of government policies, perceived discrimination, and their implications.

Research Question 5: *Does being more religious make people more or less tolerant?* An investigation of some of the key predictors of religious attitudes.

Research Question 6: *Does exposure to diversity affect people's health?* Exploring some of the predictors of health in a multicultural context.

convention of Miles and Shevlin (2001) that small effects ($\eta^2 = 0.01$) should be distinguished from medium effects ($\eta^2 = 0.06$) and large effects ($\eta^2 \geq 0.14$).

⁵The error bars indicate a dispersion of 1 standard deviation from the mean, and 68% of the values given by participants lie within this dispersion, while 99% of values lie within 3 standard deviations of the mean. All values, are, however, bounded by the lower and upper anchors of the scale (i.e., usually lie between 1-5)

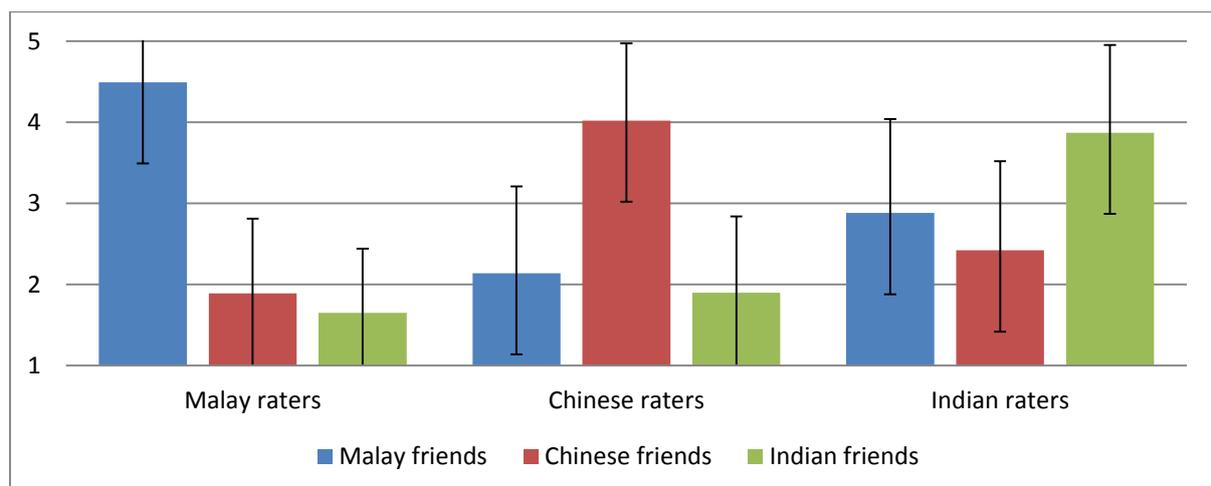
Research Question 7: *‘How can integration in Malaysia be improved?’* An analysis of what our respondents think would help.

Research question 1: ‘Does being friends with members of different ethnic groups make me like their group more?’ Assessing the relationship between quantity of ethnic outgroup friends and a person’s ethnic outgroup attitudes.

The Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954) states that having more outgroup friends or positive outgroup contact will result, over time, in people having more positive attitudes towards the outgroup. This is a hypothesis that has been tested hundreds of times in studies conducted all over the world, and there is now a robust body of evidence to support this hypothesis (see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, for a meta-analysis of over 500 studies).

In our sample, all three groups had significantly more ingroup than outgroup friends (all p s < .001, all η^2 > .45). Though the effect size for all three ethnic groups having more ingroup than outgroup friends was large, the Indians had significantly more outgroup friends than the Chinese and Malays, and the Chinese had more outgroup friends than the Malays (omnibus $F = 136.55, p < .001, \eta^2 > .15$). Thus the majority group (Malays) had fewer outgroup friends than the two minority groups (see Figure 1). This tends to be a common finding for majority and minority group members; minority group members tend to have more opportunity for contact in general, and therefore more outgroup friends than the majority group.

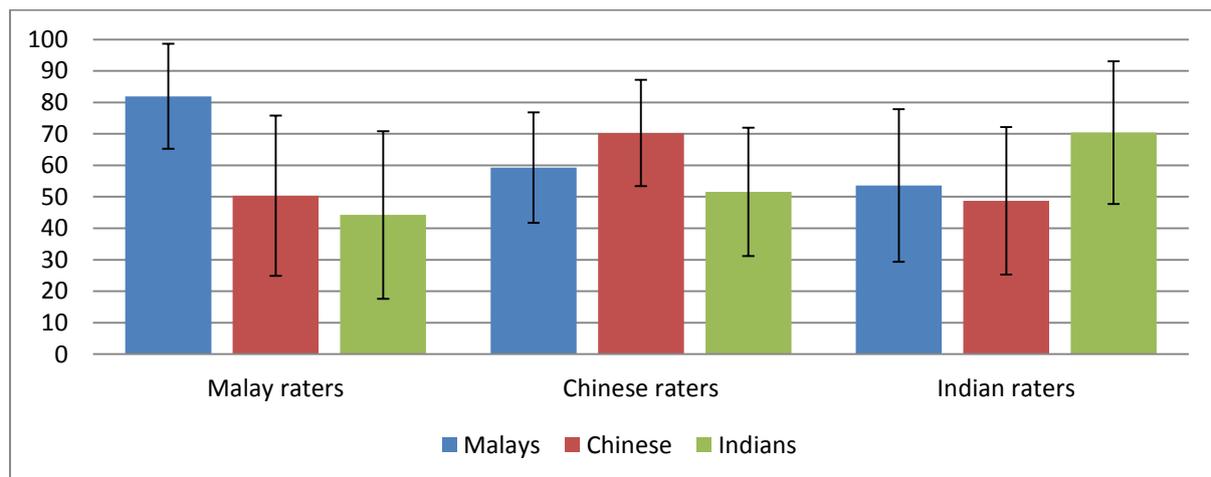
Figure 1: Ethnic ingroup and outgroup friends



Question: What proportion of your good friends are <Malay/Chinese/Indian>? {None or very few (1) – Almost all or all (5)}

We also found that all three groups had significantly more favourable attitudes towards their ingroup than their outgroups (all $ps < .001$, all $\eta^2 > .35$) (see Figure 2). Again the effect size for all three ethnic groups preferring their ingroup to their outgroups was large, but this ingroup bias was most pronounced for the Malays ($F = 826.59$, compared to the Chinese, $F = 287.49$ and Indians, $F = 257.25$). Thus the Malays, especially, felt much more favourable towards their ingroup than their outgroups.

Figure 2: Ethnic ingroup and outgroup attitudes



Question: Please rate how you feel about <Malay/Chinese/Indian> on a thermometer that runs from zero to a hundred degrees. The higher the number, the more favourable you feel. The lower the number, the less favourable you feel. {Not at all favourable (0) – Extremely favourable (100)}

In addition, we looked at the percentage of respondents in each group who reported that *a lot* or *almost all/all* (i.e., the top two points on the scale) of their friends were from the ingroup or outgroup (see Table 2). We saw that in all three groups, most friends were from the ingroup. However, the percentages of mostly ingroup friends were the highest for the Malays (89.5%), compared to the Chinese (79%) and the Indians (68.7%). In terms of having mostly outgroup friends, the Chinese and Indians reported the highest percentages of mostly Malay friends (16.4% and 32.1% respectively), while the Malays reported the highest incidence of having mostly Chinese friends (7.8%).

Table 2: Percentage of respondents in each group who reported that a lot or almost all/all of their friends were from the ingroup or outgroup

	Malay respondents	Chinese respondents	Indian respondents
Malay friends	89.5	16.4	32.1
Chinese friends	7.8	79.0	16.2
Indian friends	3.8	8.8	68.7

Similarly, in terms of ingroup and outgroup attitudes, in all three groups, the highest percentages of people had extremely favourable attitudes towards their ingroup compared to the outgroups (see Table 3). Once again, the percentages of highly favouring one's ingroup were the highest for the Malays (83.5%) compared to the Chinese (64.8%) and the Indians (63.5%).

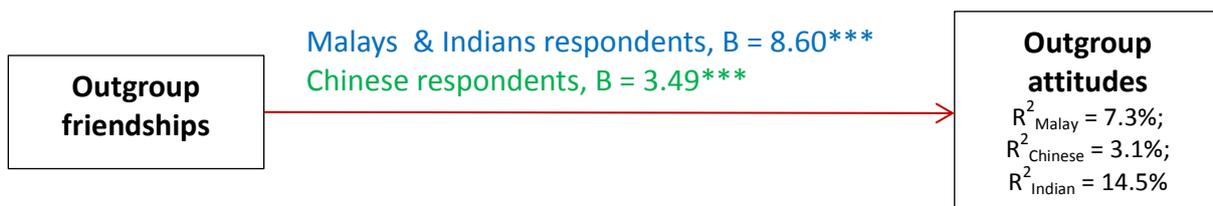
Table 3: Percentage of respondents in each group who reported ingroup and outgroup attitudes at the top 30 points of the attitude thermometer (70-100)

	Malay respondents	Chinese respondents	Indian respondents
Malays	83.5	36.6	33.9
Chinese	29.6	64.8	25.3
Indians	22.7	22.6	63.5

To answer the question about the relationship between outgroup friendships and attitudes (*Does being friends with members of different ethnic groups make me like their group more?*), we conducted a bivariate regression in which we regressed outgroup attitude on outgroup friendship. The direction of causality of the contact hypothesis implies that more positive contact and friendships should lead to more positive outgroup attitudes.⁶

First, we assessed the relationship between outgroup friendships and outgroup attitudes, when each respondent group was rating both its outgroups (i.e., when outgroup friendships and attitudes were aggregated across both outgroups for each respondent group: Malays rating Chinese and Indians, Chinese rating Malays and Indians, Indians rating Malays and Chinese). We found that in all groups, those who had more outgroup friendships also had more favourable outgroup attitudes (see Figure 3). The magnitude of association between the two variables was identical for Malays and Indians, while it was weaker for the Chinese.

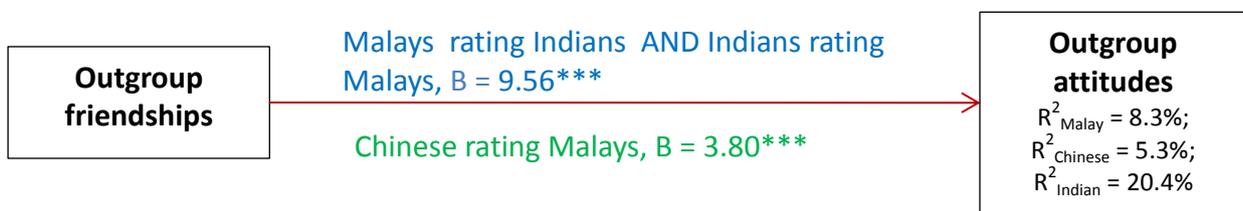
Figure 3: Relationship between outgroup friendships and outgroup attitudes, when aggregated across both respective outgroups



⁶ The reverse effect may also be found, due to self-selection (e.g., those with prejudice avoid contact; while those with more liberal attitudes may seek it out). However, we cannot explicitly account for this reverse effect because of the purely cross-sectional nature of our data.

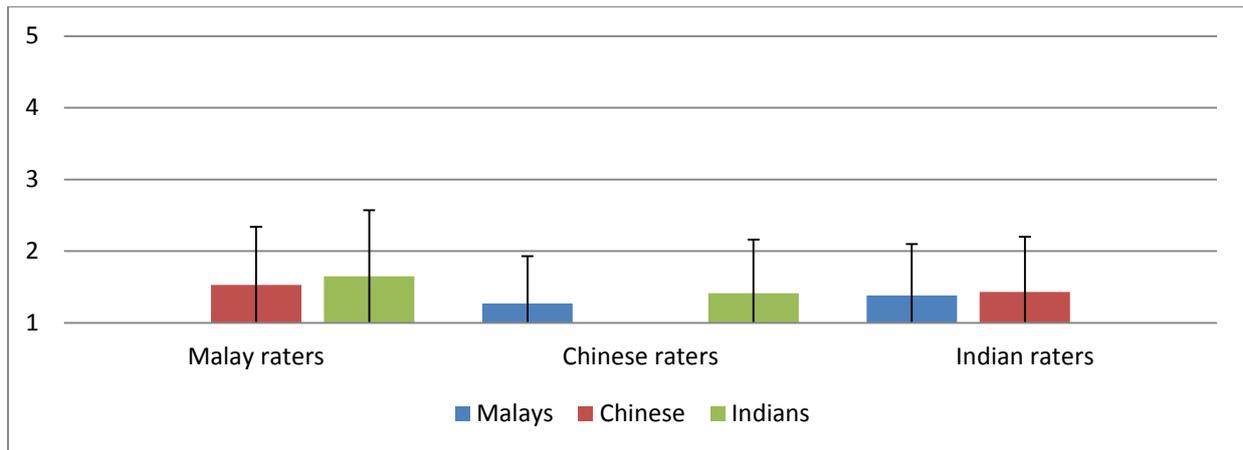
Second, we conducted a robustness-check of these results by looking specifically at whether there was a difference in the friendship-attitude relationship when the majority group (the Malays) rated the smallest minority group (the Indians) versus when the minority groups (the Chinese and the Indians) rated the largest majority group (the Malays). Once again, the magnitude of association between the two variables was identical for Malays and Indians, when they were rating one another, indicating that friendships could be equally beneficial for both majority and minority groups. However, the relationship was weaker for the Chinese, when they were rating the majority Malays (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Relationship between outgroup friendships and outgroup attitudes, when the majority group rated the smallest minority group, and the minority groups rated the largest majority group



A key variable that can impact whether or not people take up contact opportunities that are available is the level of intergroup anxiety that people feel towards members of the outgroup (whether they feel nervous, and uncomfortable when thinking about mixing with the outgroup). In the Malaysian context we found (see Figure 5) that levels of intergroup anxiety are low for all three groups towards their respective outgroups (in all cases below the mid-point of the scale, and within the range of respondents answering “not at all” to “a very little”). This suggests an intergroup climate in which people do feel comfortable about interacting with members of other groups.

Figure 5: Intergroup anxiety



Question: When you think about mixing with < Malay/Chinese/Indian >, do you feel (i) nervous, (ii) uncomfortable?
{Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}

Summary: Overall, these findings suggest that while people tend to largely have ingroup friends and reserve their most favourable attitudes for the ingroup (the effect sizes for these differences between ingroup and outgroup were large), there was a consistent link between positive intergroup contact (specifically outgroup friendships) and outgroup attitudes for both majority and minority groups. This relationship was, however, weaker for the Chinese group compared to the other two groups. Overall, the levels of intergroup anxiety were low. Overall these findings suggest that promoting positive interethnic contact has the potential to yield a favourable change in attitudes across the board, and should be considered as an important component of interventions seeking to improve interethnic integration.

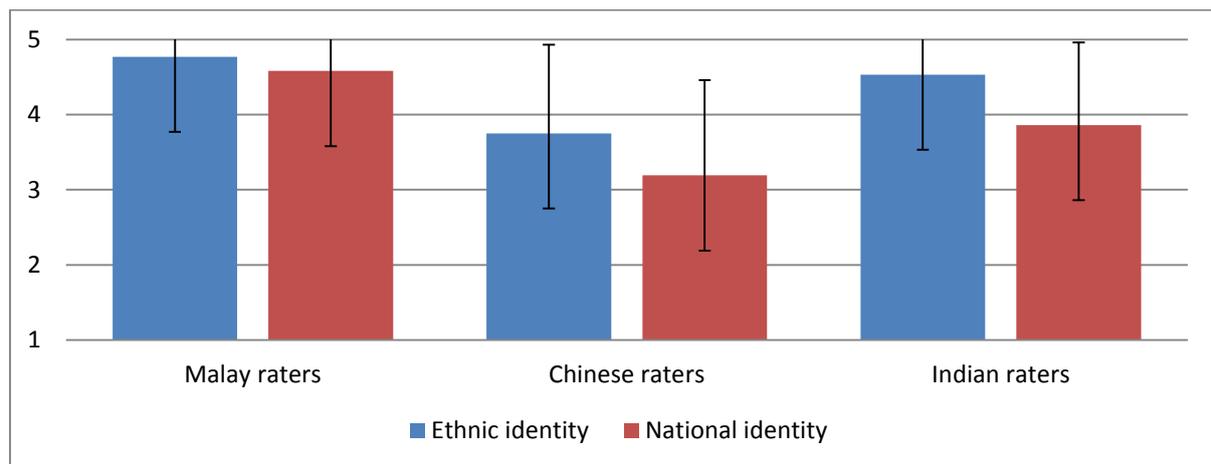
Research question 2: ‘What does it mean to be Malaysian?’ How national and ethnic identities are related to inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic contact experiences and outgroup attitudes

In this sub-section, we consider some social identities that are important and highly salient to Malaysians, i.e., their ethnic and national identities (we explore religious identities in Section 1.4.5). We assess how strongly people identify with these groups, and the way in which such identification is associated with inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic friendships, and also with outgroup attitudes.

In all three ethnic groups (see Figure 6), respondents identified significantly more with their ethnic than national group (all $ps < .001$), though the difference was most marked for the

Indians ($\eta^2 = .25$), followed by the Chinese ($\eta^2 = .13$), and then the Malays ($\eta^2 = .07$). The effect size for Chinese and Indians identifying more with their ethnic than national group was large, while the same effect size for the Malays was medium (indicating that although they too rated ethnic over national group, the difference was less marked). This was further corroborated by the correlation between ethnic and national identification for the Malays ($r = .34, p < .001$), which was stronger than it was for the Chinese ($r = .26, p < .001$) and the Indians ($r = .22, p < .001$).

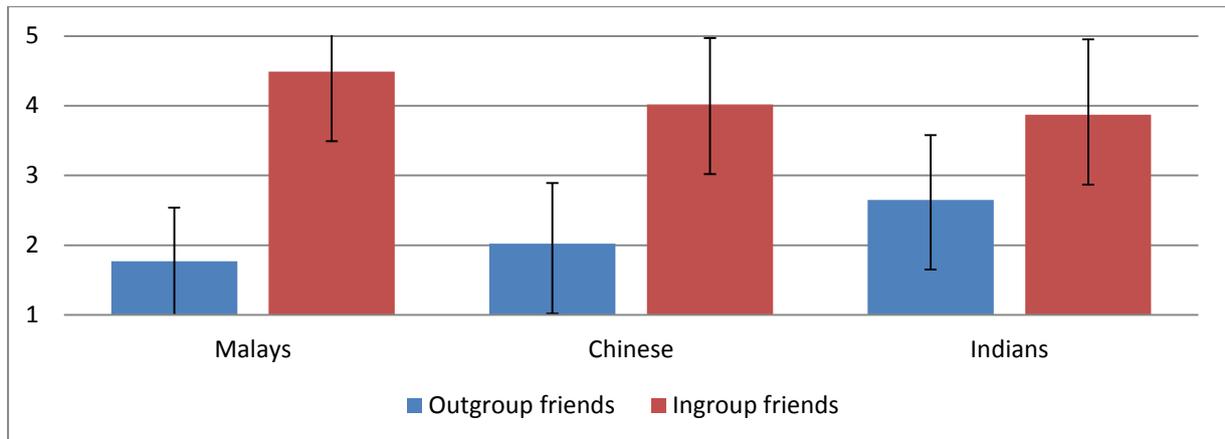
Figure 6: Levels of ethnic and national identification



Questions: Ethnic identification - (i) Does being <Malay/Chinese/Indian> mean a lot to you? and (ii) Is being <Malay/Chinese/Indian> an important part of who you are? National identification - (i) Does being Malaysian mean a lot to you? and (ii) Is being Malaysian an important part of who you are? {Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}

Because we were interested in how having ingroup and outgroup friends related to identity, we first compared average levels ethnic ingroup and averaged outgroup friends. We saw the same trend as in Figure 1 (which broke outgroup friends into the two respective outgroups for each respondent group); all three groups reported significantly more ingroup than averaged outgroup friends (all $ps < .001$, all $\eta^2 > .45$, see Figure 7, and the effect size for the difference between the two for all three ethnic groups was large).

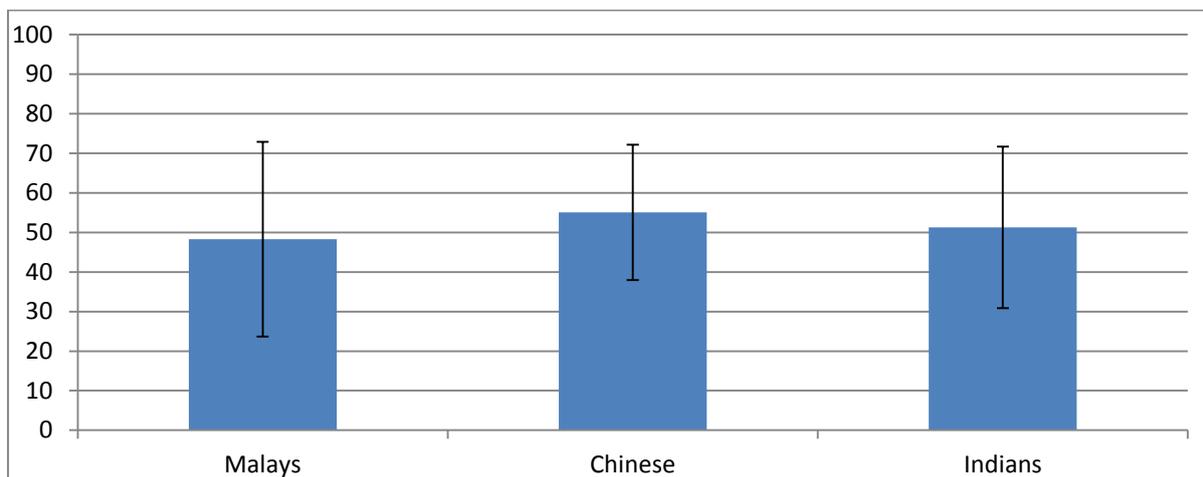
Figure 7: Ethnic ingroup and outgroup friends (outgroup friends averaged across both outgroups)



Question: What proportion of your good friends are <ingroup/outgroup 1/outgroup 2>? {None or very few (1) – Almost all or all (5)}

We also see, in Figure 8, that the Chinese had significantly more favourable averaged outgroup attitudes than the Malays ($p < .001$) and the Indians ($p < .05$), while the Malays and the Indians had equivalently favourable outgroup attitudes ($p = .11$) (omnibus $F = 12.39, p < .001, \eta^2 = .017$).

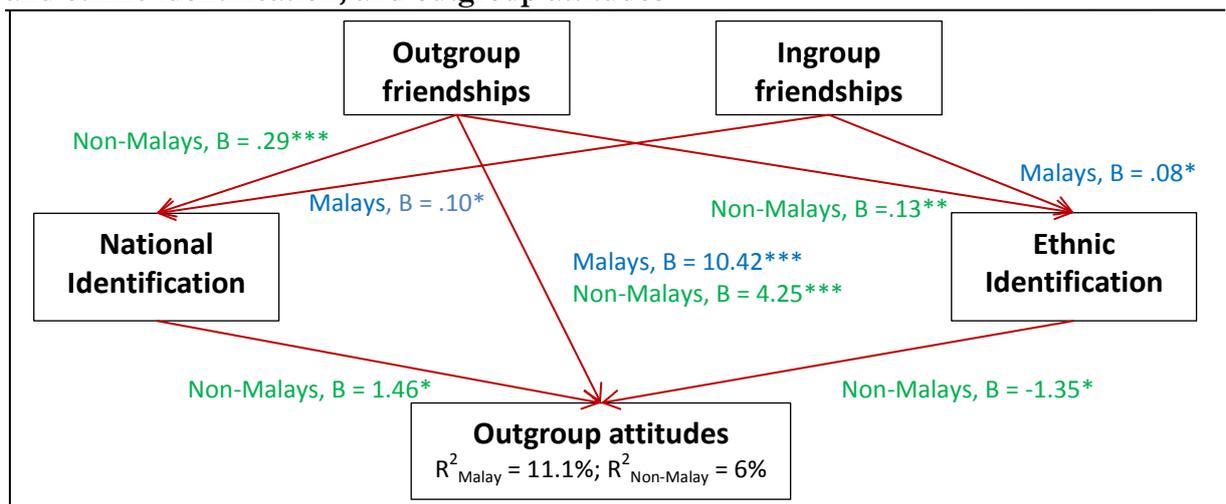
Figure 8: Ethnic ingroup and outgroup attitudes (outgroup attitudes averaged across both outgroups)



Question: Please rate how you feel about <outgroup 1/outgroup 2> on a thermometer that runs from zero to a hundred degrees. The higher the number, the more favourable you feel. The lower the number, the less favourable you feel. {Not at all favourable (0) – Extremely favourable (100)}

To investigate how these social identities relate to respondents' inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic contact experiences and outgroup attitudes, we conducted a path analysis⁷ which treated outgroup and ingroup friends as predictors of national and ethnic identification and outgroup attitudes, and additionally treated national and ethnic identification as mediators in the relationship between outgroup and ingroup friendships and outgroup attitudes⁸. A mediator refers to a process variable that explains *why* an independent variable has an association with a dependent variable. It is located between the independent and dependent variables in a regression/path analysis. We ran the analysis for each group separately and found that the effects were very similar for the Chinese and Indian minority groups. Thus the model we present here is broken down into effects for Malays and non-Malays. We control for gender, age, education, household income and rural-urban location in our analysis.

Figure 9: Path model of relationship between outgroup and ingroup friendships, national and ethnic identification, and outgroup attitudes



As seen in Figure 9, we found that having high levels of national identification (i.e., feeling highly-identified with being Malaysian) was associated with more positive outgroup attitudes for the non-Malays but not for the Malays. This suggests that the Malays may have a different conception from non-Malays of what it means to be Malaysian, a conception which does not relate to being more favourably disposed towards non-Malays. We found support for

⁷ A path analysis involved a series of multiple regression analyses run simultaneously, and can include multiple independent variables and dependent variables.

⁸ It is important to note that this is a novel model that we are testing, in which ingroup and outgroup friends predict levels of ethnic and national identification. While we believe that this direction of prediction is plausible and likely, we also note that most variables in the social sciences tend to have a reciprocal relationship (in other words, the number of outgroup friends could predict national identification, which in turn could predict number of outgroup friends in the future). In order to develop strong theory regarding the direction of causality in these relationships, longitudinal data is needed, which we hope we will have an opportunity to collect in the future.

this idea when we noted that having more outgroup friends was associated with higher national identification for non-Malays (and also higher ethnic identification, thereby showing how inter-ethnic friendships can promote a dual model of ethnic and national identification for non-Malays), while having more ingroup friends was associated with more national identification for Malays⁹. Thus, we need to think carefully about how different audiences (i.e., different ethnic/religious groups) receive the message of government integration efforts such as 1Malaysia, which seek, on the face of it at least, to promote national identification. If national identification is associated with higher levels of outgroup friendships and more favourable outgroup attitudes only for the non-Malays, while having no such association for the Malays, then it may not prove uniformly beneficial in promoting integration across all ethnic groups. Further, the fact that ingroup friendships were associated with increased levels of both national and ethnic identification for the Malays suggests that Malays might be projecting their ingroup ethnic identity onto the national identity, thus possibly conceiving of being Malaysian as being ‘the same thing’ as being Malay. Thus speaking in terms of being Malaysian to a Malay audience may not promote integration, and could potentially hinder it. More research is necessary to replicate and further investigate the relationships between these variables.

Summary: We found that while respondents from all ethnic groups identified more strongly with their ethnic than national group, the Malays revealed the strongest relationship between these two social identities. Our path analysis indicated that integration efforts that involve a superordinate identity, such as being Malaysian, may not have the same desired effects on integration for majority and minority groups; for non-Malays national identification was associated with increased outgroup friendships and more favourable outgroup attitudes, while for Malays there was no association of national identification with outgroup attitudes.

Research question 3: ‘Friends at work, or in the neighbourhood?’ The differential association between outgroup attitudes and outgroup contact at work and in the neighbourhood.

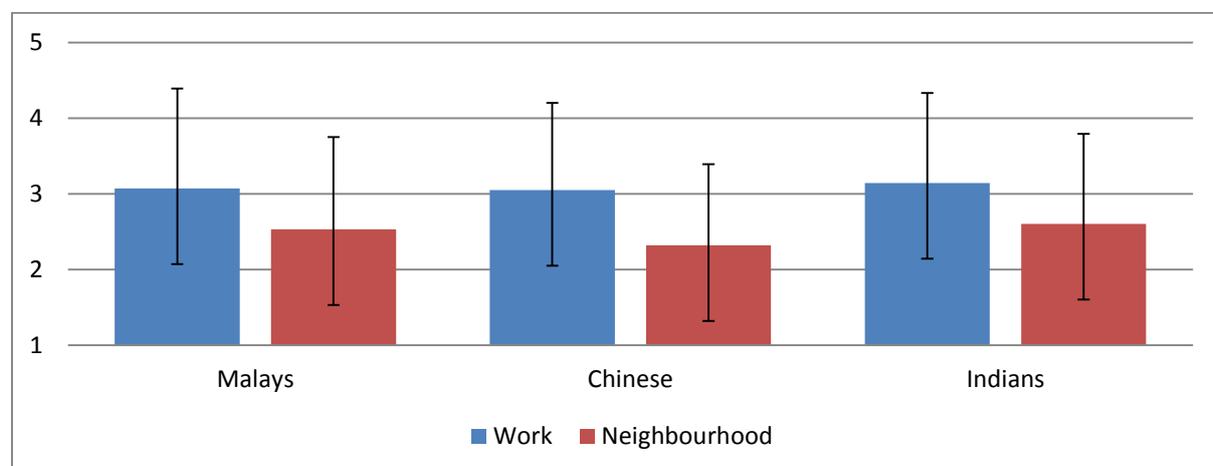
We considered some places in which people may routinely have inter-ethnic contact, such as the neighbourhood or the workplace, and assessed whether there was a differential

⁹ We also found one significant indirect effect (only for the non-Malays), from outgroup friendship through national identification to outgroup attitudes ($B = .42, p = .03$). Thus, for the non-Malays, outgroup friendships were associated with more positive outgroup attitudes through an increase in national identification.

association between having contact in each of these places and one's outgroup attitudes¹⁰. In each location we considered both positive and negative forms of contact. Although the vast literature on intergroup contact has focused on positive contact (not surprisingly, since it aimed to promote tolerance and reduce prejudice), more recent research has shown that positive and negative contact are not necessarily negatively correlated, and more integrated settings result in higher negative as well as positive contact. This analysis allows us to consider which type of contact may be most related to improved outgroup attitudes, and to design interventions and recommendations accordingly. Workplace contact is a largely under-studied form of contact within the social psychological intergroup literature, which has tended to focus on neighbourhood contact, contact in school, and friendships with outgroup members (thus the findings from this analysis will also prove informative to wider academic and policy audiences). In all our analyses here (as in the previous sub-section), we averaged outgroup contact and attitudes across both outgroups for each ethnic respondent group.

Looking at Figure 10, we can see that the levels of positive contact were lower for each of the three ethnic groups in the neighbourhood compared to at work (all $ps < .01$, $\eta^2 = .13$).

Figure 10: Positive contact experiences at work and in the neighbourhood

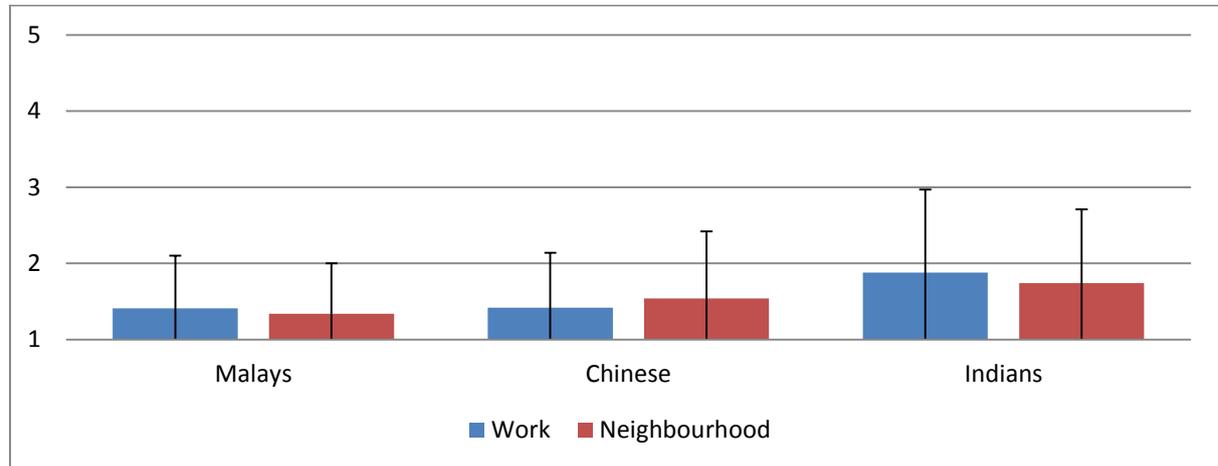


*Questions: Work positive contact - In the last year, how often, if at all, did you have **positive/good interactions** with <outrouper1 / outrouper2> at work where you enjoyed yourself during the interaction or you felt you worked well together? Neighbourhood positive contact - In the last year, how often, if at all, did you have **positive/good interactions** with <outrouper1 / outrouper2> in the neighbourhood where you enjoyed yourself during the interaction or someone said or did something good to you? {Never (1) – Very often (5)}*

¹⁰ We did not consider the important question of school contact because our sample are aged 18 years and above, and only 8.9% of respondents reported currently being students. We believe that this is an important research question that should be pursued in future research.

Looking at Figure 11, we can see that the levels of negative contact were equivalent at work and in the neighbourhood for the Malays and Chinese but higher at work than in the neighbourhood for Indians ($p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .013$).

Figure 11: Negative contact experiences at work and in the neighbourhood

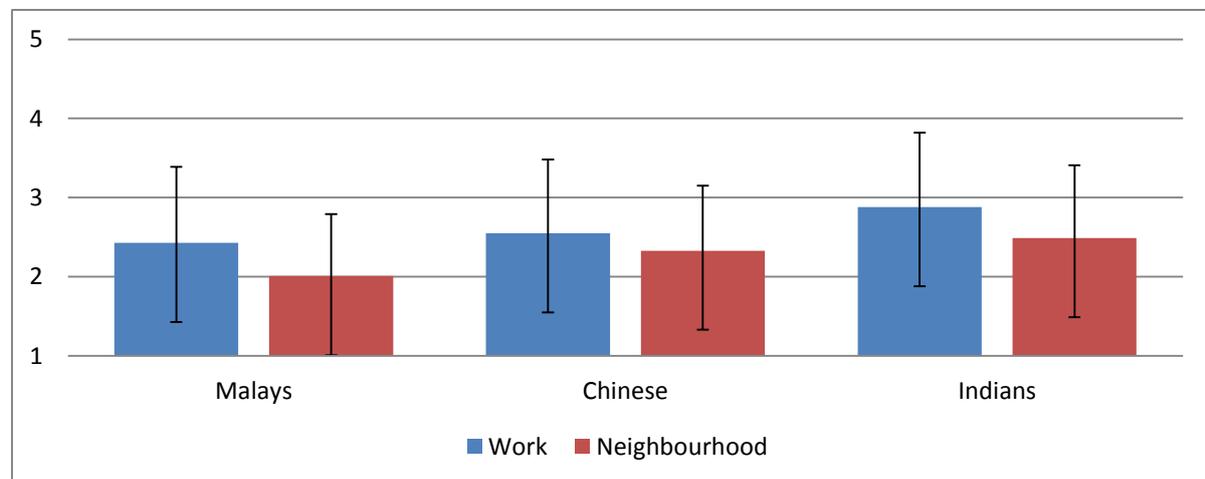


*Questions: **Work negative contact** - In the last year, how often, if at all, did you have **negative/bad interactions** with <outgroup1 / outgroup2> **at work** where the interaction upset you or someone said or did something bad to you?*
***Neighbourhood negative contact** - In the last year, how often, if at all, did you have **negative/bad interactions** with <outgroup1 / outgroup2> **in the neighbourhood** where the interaction upset you or someone said or did something bad to you? {Never (1) – Very often (5)}*

We ran a 3 (Ethnic group: Malay versus Chinese versus Indian) x 2 (Place: Neighbourhood versus Work contact) X 2 (Valence: positive versus negative contact) mixed-model ANOVA, with repeated measures on the last two factors, to assess whether the amount of contact varied as a function of place, valence, and ethnic group, and whether these factors interacted. We found a main effect for contact valence: respondents reported more positive than negative contact experiences ($F = 419.59$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .42$). We also found a main effect for place in which contact occurred: respondents reported more contact at work than in the neighbourhood ($F = 53.05$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$). Finally, we found a three-way interaction between Place, Valence and Ethnic group ($F = 4.07$, $p = .018$, partial $\eta^2 = .014$). Decomposing the interaction for each ethnic group showed that while there was more positive contact at work than in the neighbourhood for all ethnic groups, this effect was stronger for the Malays and the Chinese, compared to the Indians (largely because the Malays and Chinese experienced equivalent levels of negative contact at work and in the neighbourhood, while the Indians reported significantly more negative contact at work than in the neighbourhood; refer again to Figure 11).

We also looked at the proportion of outgroup friends that people reported having at both work and in the neighbourhood. We found (see Figure 12) that all three ethnic groups reported more friendships at work than in the neighbourhood (all p s < .05, all $\eta^2 > .04$). We ran a 3 (Ethnic group: Malay versus Chinese versus Indian) x 2 (Place: Neighbourhood versus Work) mixed-model ANOVA, with repeated measures on the last factor, to see if we could find any difference between the ethnic groups in terms of whether there were more outgroup friendships at work or in the neighbourhood. We did not find a significant interaction for Place and Ethnic group, but the main effect for place was significant ($F = 35.12, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .06$). Overall, there were more outgroup friendships at work than in the neighbourhood for all three groups.

Figure 12: Outgroup friendships at work and in the neighbourhood



Questions: What proportion of your friends from your workplace/ neighbourhood are <outgroup1 / outgroup2>? {None or very few (1) – Almost all or all (5)}

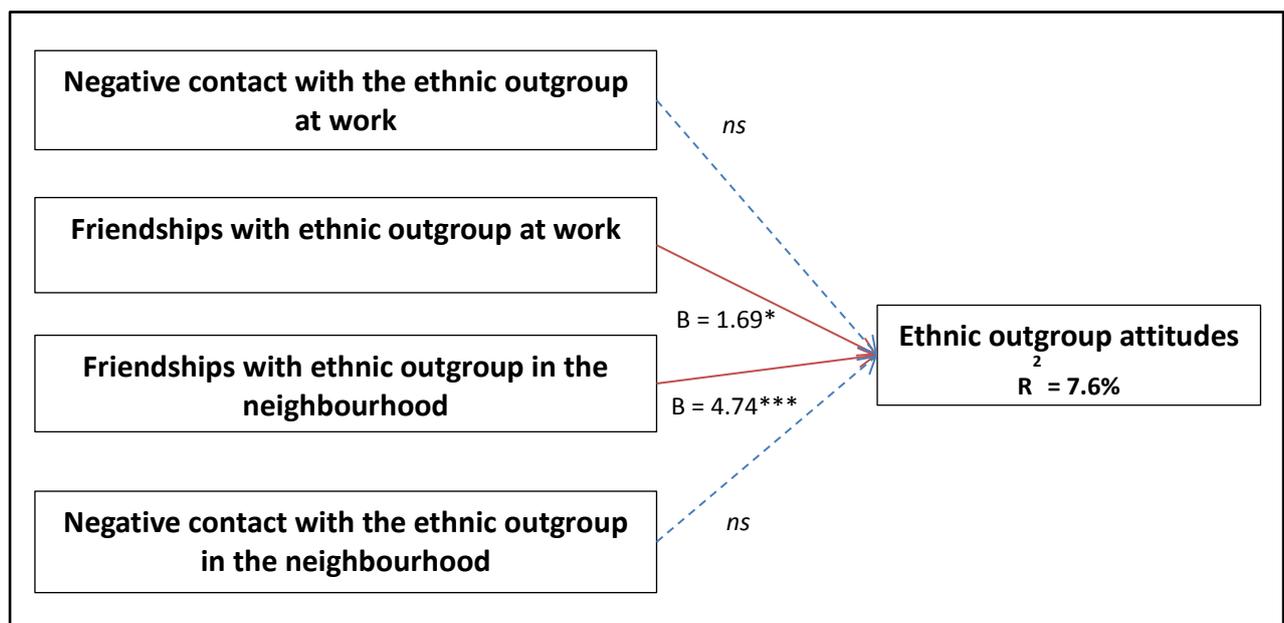
Thus, based on the findings for positive contact, negative contact and outgroup friendships, we found that people had more positive and meaningful (and fewer negative) contact experiences at work compared to the neighbourhood. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the workplace has the potential to offer many conditions that are conducive to positive intergroup experiences, such as conferring equal status on people (as may be the case if you are working collaboratively in a team), can be a context where people perceive support for mixing (because the office hires a diverse range of people), and is a place where people often work together cooperatively towards a common goal.

The next stage of our investigation involved assessing the relationship between inter-ethnic contact in these different places, and outgroup attitudes. We created a model with work and neighbourhood friendship, and work and neighbourhood negative contact as predictors, and

outgroup attitudes as the dependent variable, or outcome¹¹. We controlled for gender, age, education, household income and rural-urban location in our analysis. We ran the model only for those who reported being in work, which reduced our sample size substantially (final N = 574 respondents). Thus, in order to have sufficient power to detect effects, and because we did not see a strong pattern of ethnic differences in the results we reported above, we simultaneously analysed the three ethnic groups in our model in a single dataset.

We found that negative contact in both contexts was not significantly associated with outgroup attitudes (see Figure 13). However, both friendships in the neighbourhood and at work were significantly associated with more positive outgroup attitudes, though we found a much larger association with outgroup attitudes for neighbourhood friendships than work friendships. Since we know from the preceding analyses, that people have more friendships at work than in the neighbourhood, this differential finding could indicate a ceiling effect for work friendships, suggesting that neighbourhood contact may impact attitudes more because they are more novel or unusual for a person. A better way to answer this question is through the collection and analyses of longitudinal data in which we can control for prior levels of contact in the neighbourhood and at work. Such an analysis could also explore the impact of work contact on, for example, those who come from less diverse neighbourhoods.

Figure 13: Path model of the relationships between negative and friendship contact at work and in the neighbourhood and outgroup attitudes



Note: 'ns' refers to a non-significant association between variables

¹¹ We removed positive contact at work and in the neighbourhood because of its high collinearity (association) with the friendship measures, and because the friendship measures yielded stronger effects than positive contact.

Summary: Our results show the vital importance of promoting mixing, and particularly friendships, in the neighbourhood, because these (more so than friendships at work) were associated most strongly with favourable outgroup attitudes. This finding makes the case for the active creation and maintenance of mixed (i.e. ethnically non-segregated) neighbourhoods as a potentially powerful means of improving integration. But this is likely to be difficult to achieve in practice, especially in the short term. Hence the value of the workplace, a location in which the levels of both positive contact and friendships were, in fact, higher than in the neighbourhood (though the association between friendships and attitudes were weaker at work, than in the neighbourhood, though still significant).

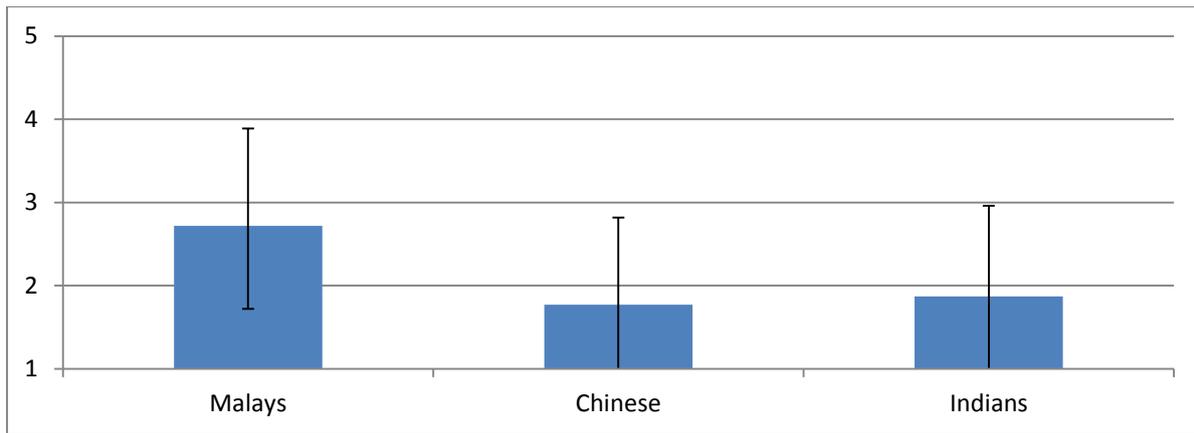
Research question 4: ‘Am I treated fairly in Malaysia? And if not, what can I do about it?’ Perceived fairness of government policies, perceived discrimination, and their implications.

In this sub-section, we report findings in which respondents revealed how fair they felt Malaysian government policies were, the degree to which they felt their ingroup interests were protected, their perceived opportunities to succeed, and their perceived relative deprivation and discrimination. Respondents also reported the degree to which they wanted to emigrate from Malaysia and their willingness to engage in collective action. By looking at all these variables singly and in association with one another, we were able to form a picture of how people feel about the status quo, and how they may respond to feeling unfairly treated.

As evident from Figure 14, all three groups believed that the economic policies were not all that fair (with all three groups reporting levels of perceived fairness below the mid-point of the scale; independent sample t-test: all p s < .001). These findings echo some of our previous work in which we showed that despite being the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action, the Malays rated the socio-economic system to be low in legitimacy (below the mid-point of the scale) just as did the non-beneficiary Chinese and Indians (Al Ramiah, 2009, Study 2).

When comparing perceptions across ethnic groups, Malays perceived the government’s economic policies to be significantly more fair to everyone, compared to the Chinese (p < .001) and the Indians (p < .001) (omnibus $F = 116.80$, $\eta^2 = .14$) (see Figure 14).

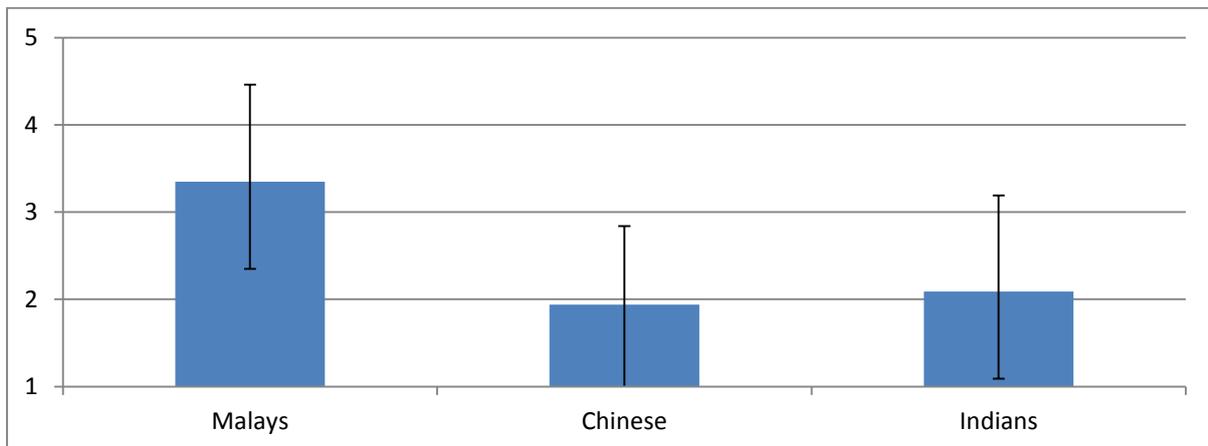
Figure 14: Perceived fairness of economic policies



Question: Do you think that the economic policies in Malaysia are fair to everyone? {Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}

The Malays also felt that their ingroup interests were represented by the government more than the Chinese ($p < .001$) and the Indians ($p < .001$) did (omnibus $F = 284.65$, $\eta^2 = .28$) (see Figure 15).

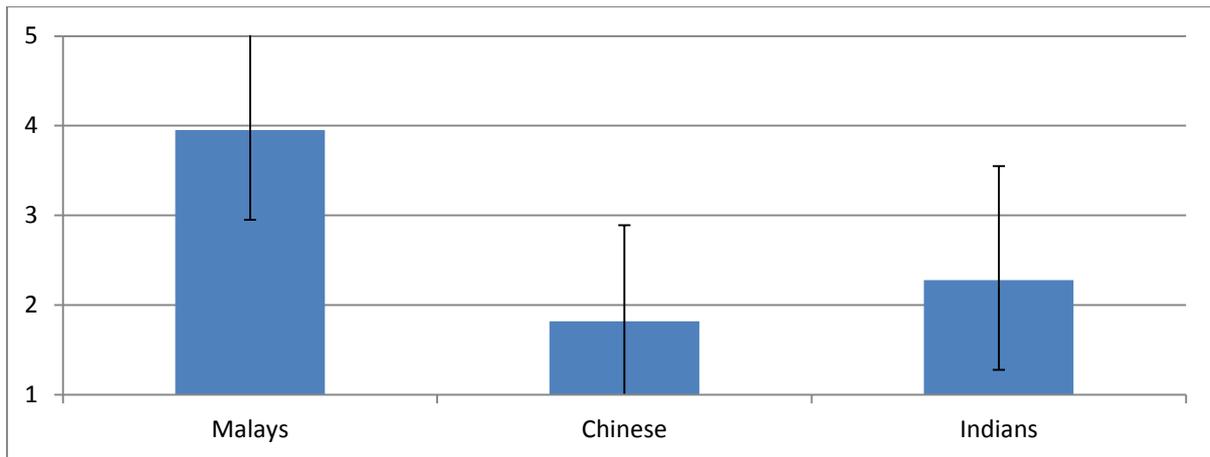
Figure 15: Perception that ingroup interests are protected by the government



Question: Do you feel that your <Ingroup's> interests are represented by the government? {Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}

The Malays were also significantly more comfortable receiving special privileges compared to the comfort expressed by Chinese ($p < .001$) and Indians ($p < .001$) with the Malays receiving special privileges (omnibus $F = 464.51$, $\eta^2 = .38$) (see Figure 16). This is consistent with findings from past research, which found that Chinese and Indians, who did not benefit from the affirmative action policy, saw it less positively than the Malays who received economic preferment (Haji-Yusof, 1983). Interestingly, in the current sample, the Indians were more comfortable with the Malays receiving special privileges than the Chinese were ($p < .001$).

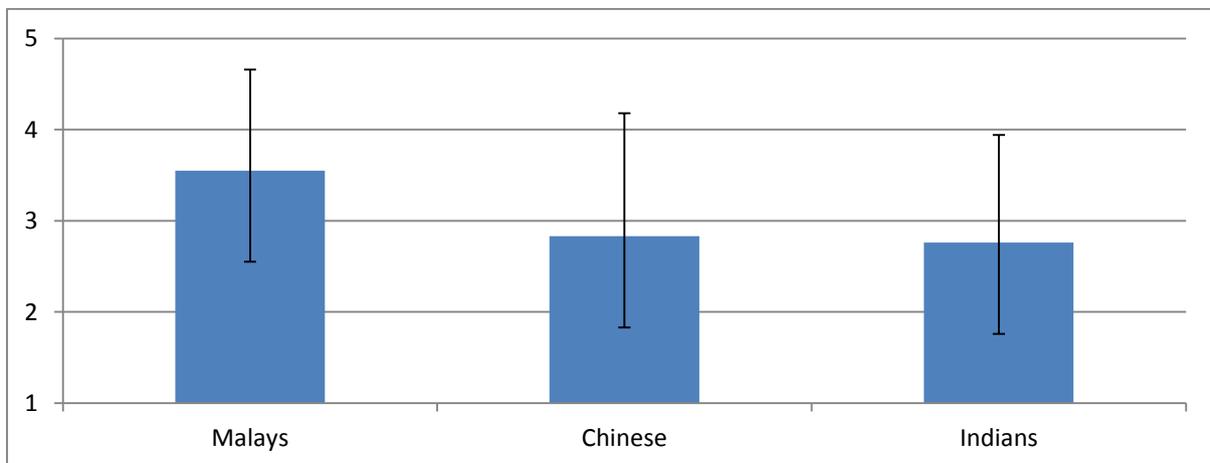
Figure 16: Comfort with Malays receiving special privileges



Question: How comfortable do you feel that the Malays are entitled to special privileges in Malaysia? {Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}

Finally, the Malays perceived there to be more opportunities to succeed in Malaysia compared to the Chinese ($p < .001$) and the Indians ($p < .001$) (omnibus $F = 66.07$, $\eta^2 = .08$) (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: Perceived opportunities to succeed in Malaysia



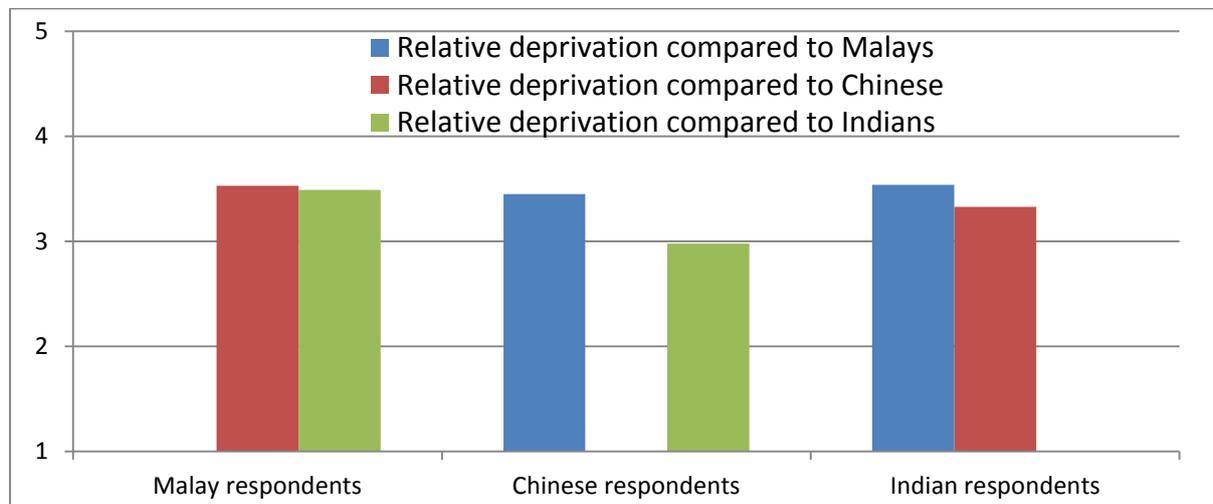
Question: Do you think you have the necessary opportunities to succeed to have a good job and life? {Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}

We also calculated the percentage from each ethnic group who felt that the economic policies of the government were very fair (calculated based on agreement with the top 2 points of the scale: *quite a lot* to *very much*). We found that many more Malays reported that the policies were very fair (33.5%), compared to the Chinese (7.2%) and the Indians (8.4%). However, we note that even amongst the Malay group, two thirds of the sample did not feel that the policies were very fair. The findings for the minority groups are in line with findings from past research

we conducted using a convenience sample of Chinese and Indian adult respondents in the Klang Valley, where 73% of respondents considered the economic policies of the government to be unfair to members of their ethnic group (Al Ramiah & Thillainathan, 2013).

Additionally, we asked respondents how satisfied they were about their ingroup’s economic position compared to the economic position of their two outgroups, which was a measure of perceived relative deprivation. This measure did not tap absolute levels of perceived deprivation, but rather, tapped the deprivation that people felt as group members *relative* to other groups. We found that on the whole, Malays, Chinese and Indians did not feel satisfied about their group’s economic position compared to the other ethnic groups’ economic positions. Breaking it down to pairwise comparisons between groups (see Figure 18), the Malays felt equally relatively deprived when comparing themselves to the Chinese and the Indians (both $p < .001$), while both the Chinese and the Indians felt most relatively deprived compared to the Malays than their other respective outgroup (both $p < .001$). We also found that there was no significant difference between rural and urban respondents in their perceptions of relative deprivation about their respective outgroups.

Figure 18: Perceived relative deprivation



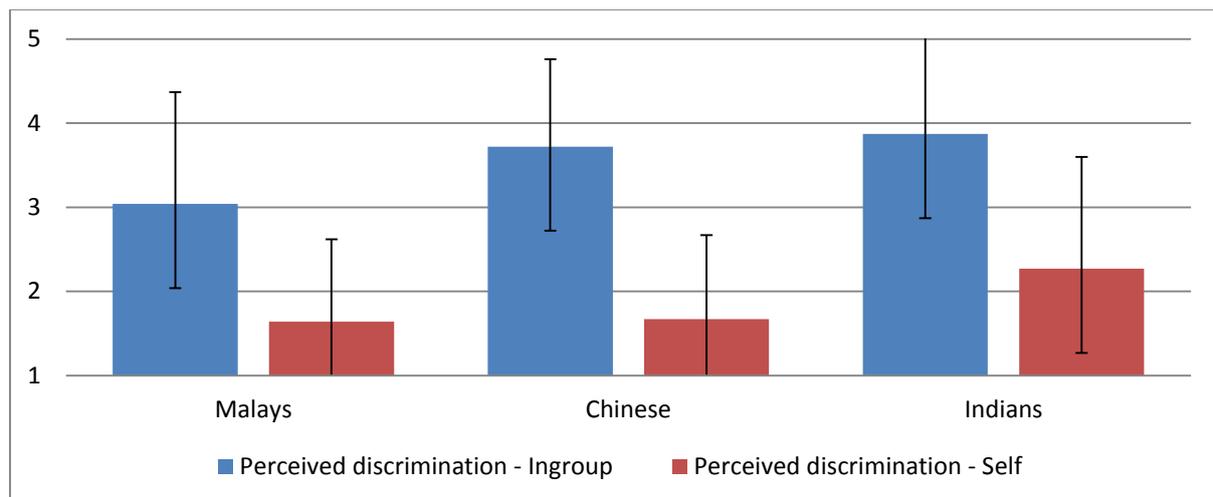
Question: How satisfied are you about your <Ingroup's> economic position compared to the economic position of <outgroup1/outgroup2>? {Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}

In terms of percentages, we calculated the percentage from each ethnic group who felt highly relatively deprived (calculated based on agreement with the top two points of the scale: *quite a lot to very much dissatisfied*). Approximately half of the Malays felt highly dissatisfied about their economic position compared to the Chinese (51.1%) and the Indians (49.3%). Approximately half of the Chinese (49.2%) and Indians (53.9%) felt highly dissatisfied about

their position compared to the Malays, and about half of the Indians (51.9%) felt highly dissatisfied about their position compared to the Chinese. However, only about a third of the Chinese (31%) felt highly dissatisfied about their position compared to the Indians. This is a noteworthy finding because it indicates that, in general, about half of the population (based on the sample estimates that we have) are dissatisfied with their economic standing relative to their outgroups, and such dissatisfaction can be detrimental to efforts to create a more harmonious and well-integrated society.

We also found that all three groups perceived less discrimination of themselves personally, and more discrimination of their ingroup (all p s < .001, see Figure 19). This is in keeping with findings from the psychological literature that have generally shown that most people report higher levels of perceived ingroup discrimination than personal discrimination (e.g., Quinn, 1999). We conducted a 3 (Ethnic group: Malay versus Chinese versus Indian) x 2 (Discrimination type: Ingroup versus Personal) mixed-model ANOVA, with repeated measures on the second factor, and found a significant interaction effect for Ethnic group x Discrimination type ($F = 26.46, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$), indicating that the greatest difference between perceived ingroup and personal discrimination was for the Chinese group. We also found that the Indians perceived more personal discrimination of themselves than the Malays and Chinese did (both $p < .001$), while the Indians and the Chinese perceived more discrimination of their ingroup than the Malays did (both $p < .001$).

Figure 19: Perceived discrimination



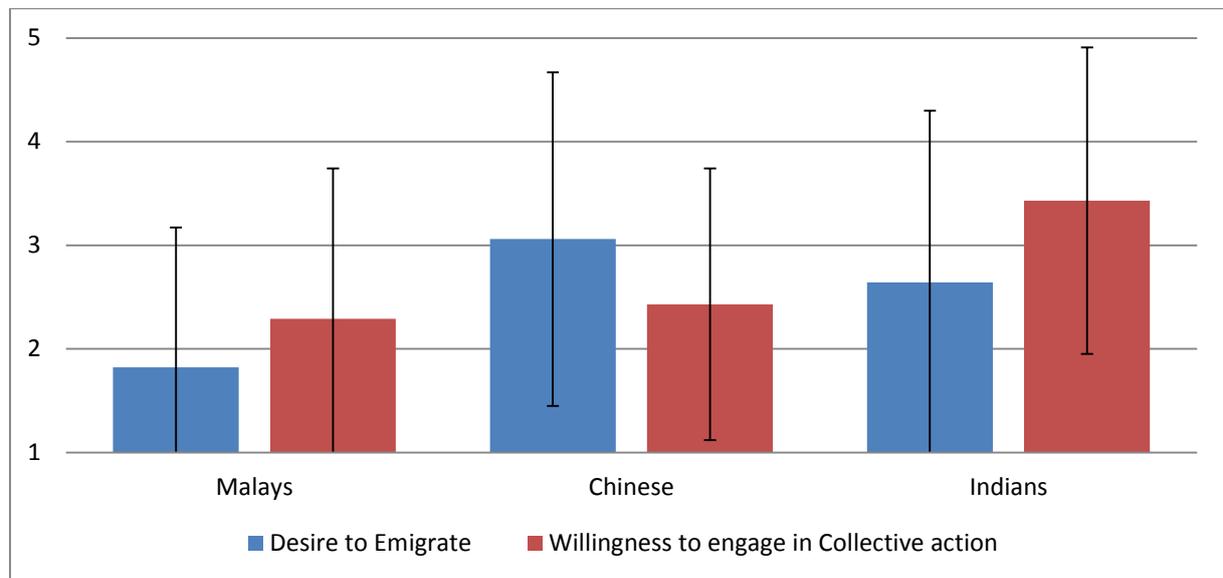
Questions: Perceived discrimination of ingroup - Do you agree with this statement: "There is a lot of discrimination or unfair treatment against <Ingroup> in Malaysian society today" {Definitely disagree (1) – Definitely agree (5)}. Perceived discrimination of self - In the last five years, how often, if at all, have you personally been discriminated against or unfairly treated because you are <Ingroup member>? {Never (1) – Very often (5)}

We also calculated the percentage from each ethnic group who felt highly discriminated against (calculated based on agreement with the top two points of the scale: *tend to agree to definitely agree*). We found that about half of the Malays felt that their ingroup was highly discriminated against (46.3%) compared to about two thirds of both the Chinese (65.2%) and the Indians (67.3%). On the other hand, there was a much lower incidence of feeling highly personally discriminated against among both the Malays and the Chinese (7.4% each) and a higher level for the Indians (18%). Thus while we saw a relatively low incidence of high levels of feeling personally discriminated against, the fact that so many Chinese and Indians (and to a lesser extent Malays) reported that their group was highly discriminated against has the potential to undermine integration efforts.

Apart from perceptions of fair treatment, we also measured the degree to which people felt inclined to act in different circumstances, in particular when asked whether they would emigrate from Malaysia and whether they would engage in collective action on behalf of their ingroup. We call such measures action tendencies, because they provide an indication of how people think they may act in a particular circumstance (rather than being a measure of actual behaviour). We found that the Chinese reported the highest desire to emigrate, followed by Indians and then the Malays (all $ps < .001$, see Figure 20). However, hearteningly, the desire to emigrate did not significantly exceed the mid-point of the scale for any of the groups. We did find, however, that both age and education impacted people's desire to emigrate; younger people from all groups reported a greater desire to emigrate than older people, and in the case of the Chinese, those in the categories of 18-35 years of age and also (to a lesser degree) those in the category of 36-50 years of age wanted to emigrate at a level that was higher than the mid-point of the scale. Similarly, those who were more educated indicated a greater desire to emigrate.

We also calculated the percentage from each ethnic group who felt a strong desire to emigrate from Malaysia (calculated based on agreement with the top two points of the scale: *quite a lot to very much*). We found that 15.5% of Malays, 48.8% of Chinese and 37.3% of Indians reported a stronger than average desire to emigrate from Malaysia. We also found, as expected, that the percentage of respondents expressing a strong desire to emigrate were higher for those who had at least completed their secondary education: 17.3% of Malays, 52.6% of Chinese and 42% of Indians. Past research on Chinese and Indian respondents in the urban Klang Valley showed that 60% of the sample said that they would like to migrate from Malaysia if they could (Al Ramiah & Thillainathan, 2013).

Figure 20: Desire to emigrate and willingness to engage in collective action on behalf of the ingroup



Questions: Desire to emigrate: If you had the opportunity, would you like to move away from Malaysia to live in another country? {Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}. Willingness to engage in collective action: There are different actions people can take if and when they are dissatisfied with how things are going in the country. How willing would you be to participate in a protest action or demonstration to improve the economic situation of <Ingroup> people? {Not willing at all (1) – Very willing (5)}

The desire to emigrate represents an instance of personal action which has substantial consequences for the individual, but may not necessarily have an impact on the larger group (nor is it intended to). So, we also asked respondents about whether they might be willing to undertake collective action to improve the economic standing of their ingroup (e.g., participating in a protest or demonstration), if they were dissatisfied with the status quo. As can be seen in Figure 20, we found that the Indians reported significantly higher willingness to engage in collective action compared to the Malays and the Chinese (both $p < .001$) (omnibus $F = 100.41$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$). As before, younger people indicated greater willingness for collective action, though in the case of the Indians, even the oldest group in the sample (aged 51 years and above) indicated a willingness to engage in collective action above the mid-point of the scale. Amongst the Chinese, we saw evidence that those who were more educated were more willing to participate in collective action than those who were less educated ($p < .05$), though there was no difference in the other two groups on the basis of level of education.

We also calculated the percentage from each ethnic group who felt a strong willingness to participate in collective action on behalf of their ingroup (calculated based on agreement with the top two points of the scale: *rather willing* to *very willing*). We found that 27.6% of Malays, 23.4% of Chinese and 52.5% of Indians reported a strong willingness to participate in collective

action. That so many Indians show a willingness to participate in collective action is an indication of their discontent with the status quo. The Hindraf Rally in 2008 in which Malaysian Indians protested the marginalization of the Indians (and particularly the Hindus) in Malaysia was the first public rally of its kind and scale in Malaysia, where a protest was deemed the most viable and effective way to express dissatisfaction with the treatment of the ingroup.

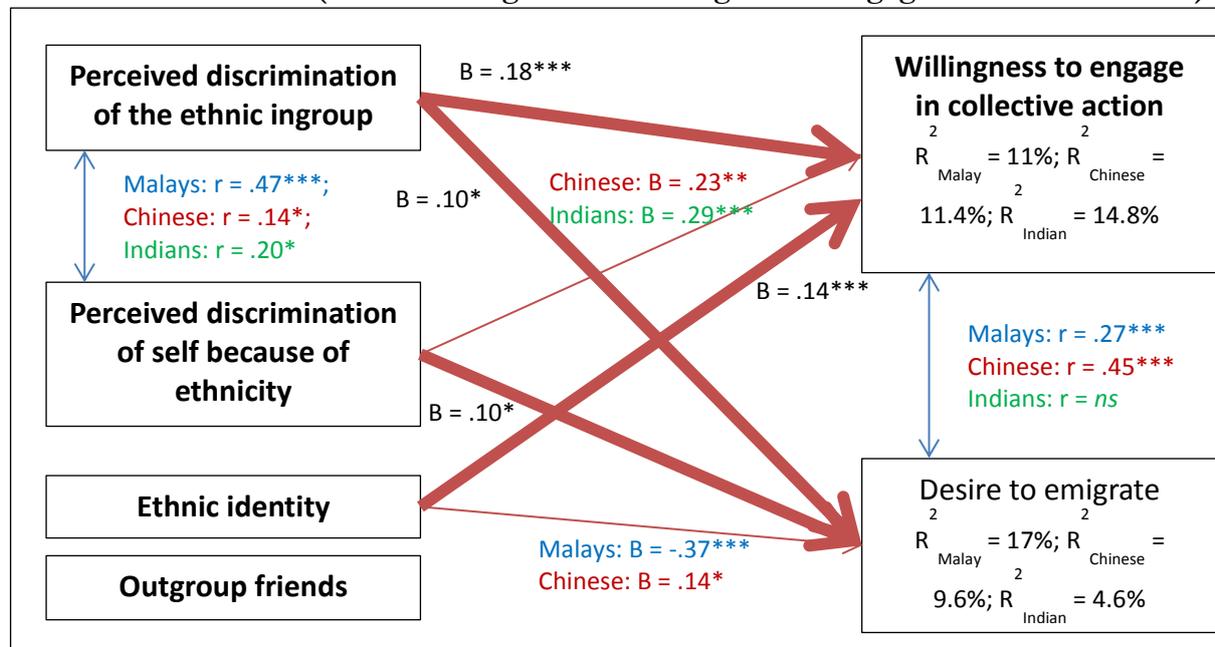
We conducted a 3 (Ethnic group: Malay versus Chinese versus Indian) x 2 (Action tendency type: Desire to emigrate versus Willingness to engage in collective action) mixed-model ANOVA, with repeated measures on the second factor. We found a significant main effect for action tendency ($F = 16.83, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .01$), such that Malaysians were, on the whole somewhat more likely express a desire to engage in collective action than to emigrate. We also found a significant interaction effect for Ethnic group x Action tendency type ($F = 78.36, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .10$); Malays and Indians expressed a greater willingness for collective action than a desire to emigrate (both $ps < .001$, though the effect was more pronounced for Indians), while the Chinese expressed a greater desire to emigrate than engage in collective action ($p < .001$).

Finally, we considered how some of these variables might be associated with, and moderate, one another. Specifically we investigated the relationship between perceived discrimination (of the ingroup and of the self) and action tendencies (desire to emigrate and willingness to engage in collective action), controlling for levels of ethnic identification and quantity of outgroup friendships, and, in addition, gender, age and education level. We conducted the regression analyses separately (but simultaneously) for each ethnic group because of some of the clear differences that existed between groups in terms of these variables. We equated the estimates across groups where possible, if two or more groups showed an equivalent relationship between variables.

We found that for all three ethnic groups, perceived discrimination of the ingroup was associated with a greater willingness to engage in collective action *and* with a greater desire to emigrate from Malaysia. Perceived discrimination of the self on the basis of ethnicity was also associated with a greater desire to emigrate for all three groups, and a greater willingness to engage in collective action for both the Chinese and Indian minority groups, but not the Malay majority (see Figure 21). Overall, greater ethnic identification was associated with greater willingness to engage in collective action for all three groups, but was negatively associated with the desire to emigrate for the Malays and positively associated with it for the Chinese. There were no direct associations between outgroup friendships and either of the action tendencies. Thus we can see that overall, perceived discrimination (of both the ingroup and the self) was

consistently positively associated with both types of action tendencies, providing us with a sense of how group members may respond to feeling that they are discriminated against.

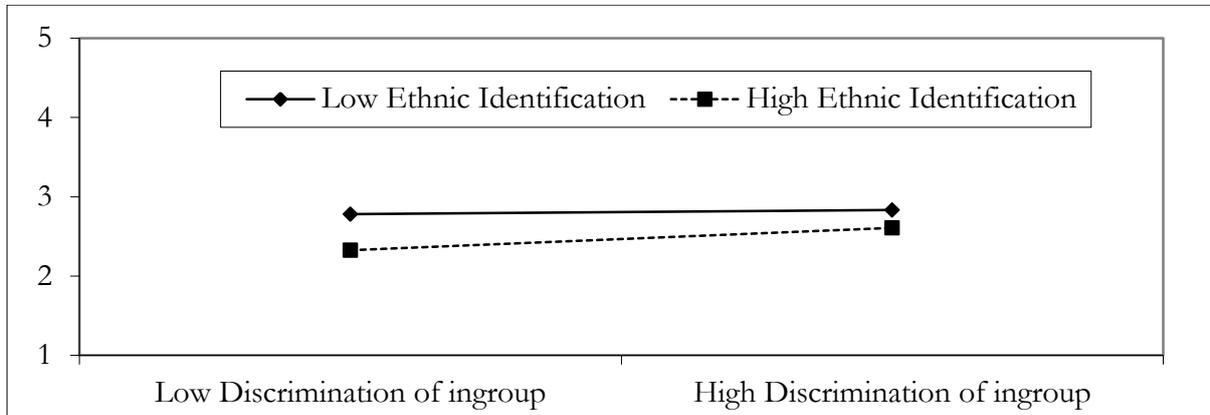
Figure 21: Relationships between perceived discrimination (of the ingroup and of the self) and action tendencies (desire to emigrate and willingness to engage in collective action)



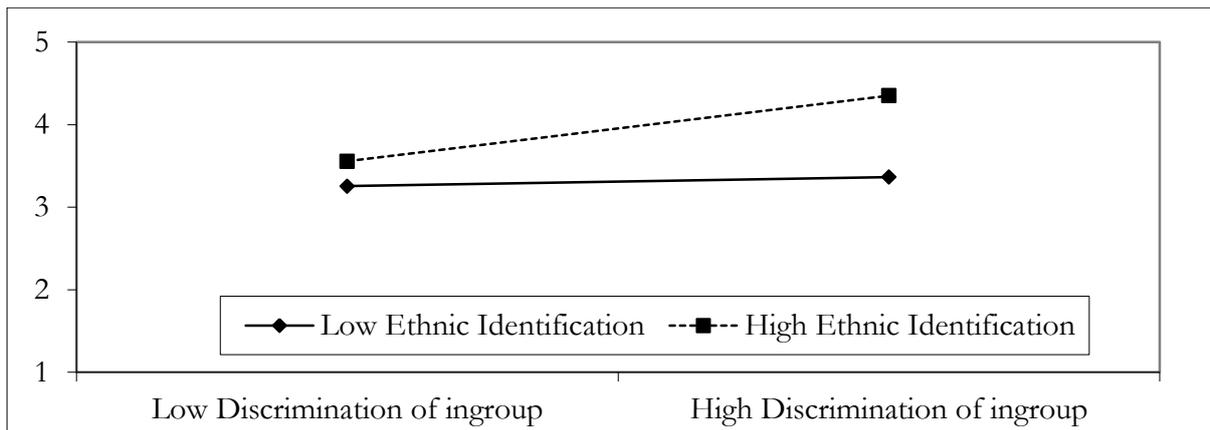
We also considered how the level of ethnic identification interacted with perceived discrimination to predict action tendencies. That is, we considered specifically whether the relationship between perceived discrimination and action tendencies was different for respondents who identified relatively strongly or weakly with their ethnic group. We found a significant interaction between perceived ingroup discrimination and level of ethnic identification on desire to emigrate for all three groups (B between .08 - .14 for all three groups, $p < .05$). When we decomposed this interaction, we found that as people reported higher levels of perceived discrimination of the ingroup, they were more likely to want to emigrate if they were also highly ethnically identified. We also found that when Malays perceived low levels of ingroup discrimination, they were less likely to want to emigrate if they were highly identified as Malays. However, at high levels of perceived ingroup discrimination, they behaved similar to Malays who were lowly identified with their ingroup, and expressed a greater desire to emigrate (see Figure 22a). We also found that high ethnic identification and high levels of perceived discrimination were associated with particularly high desire to emigrate for the Chinese (see Figure 22b). These interaction effects suggest that when people are highly ethnically identified *and* when they

perceive that their ingroup is being highly discriminated against, their desire to leave the intergroup context intensifies.

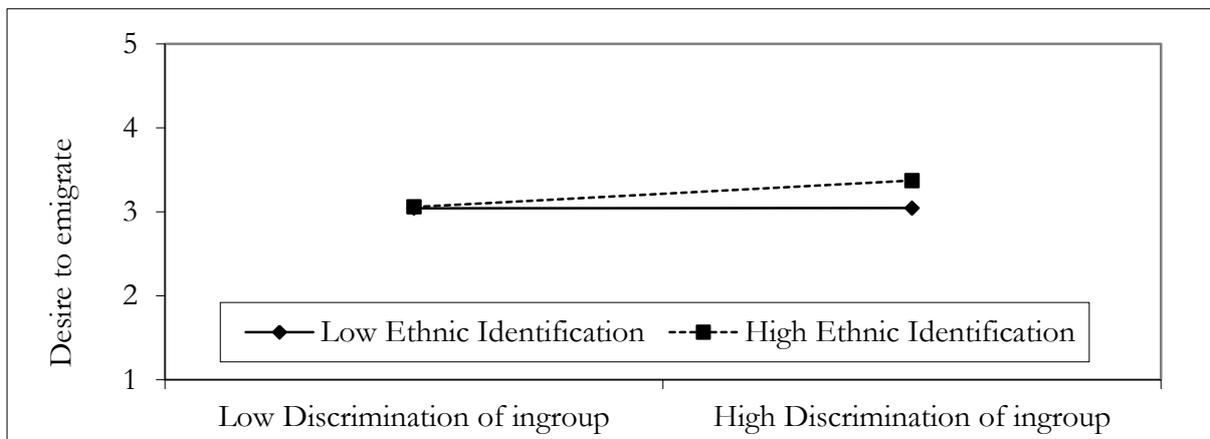
Figure 22: Interaction between perceived ingroup discrimination and ethnic identification on desire to emigrate



a. Malay respondent group



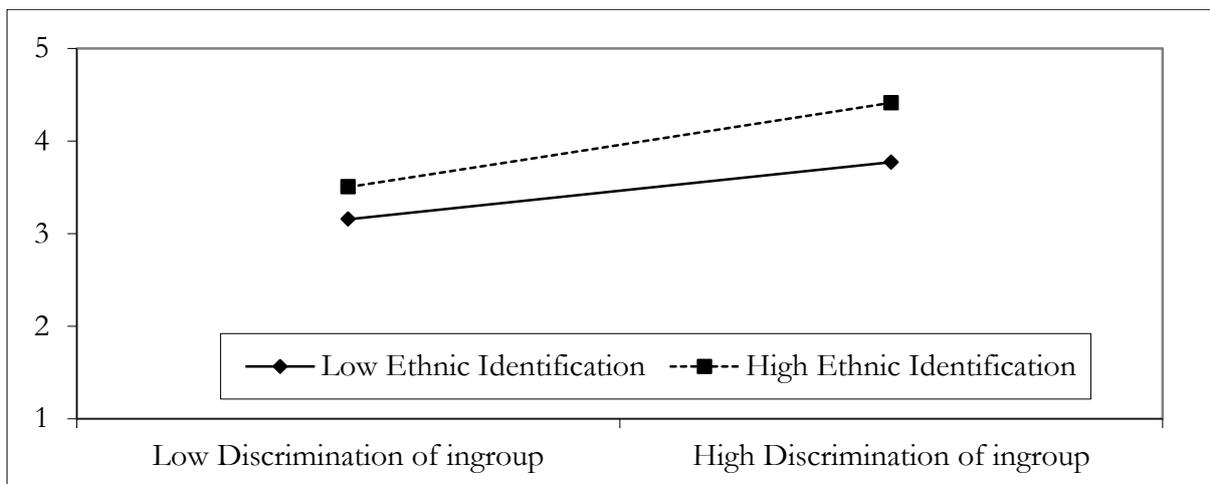
b. Chinese respondent group



c. Indian respondent group

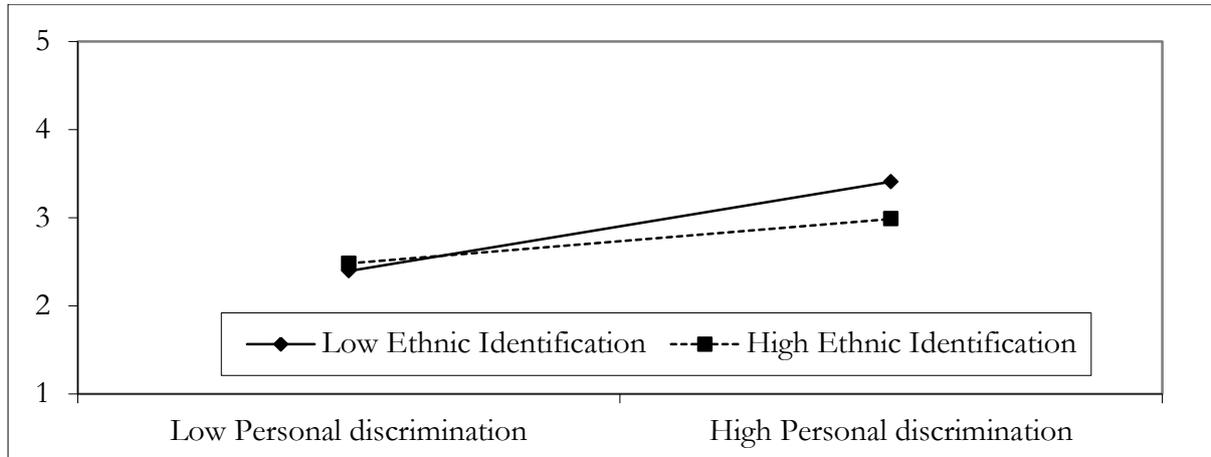
We also found a significant interaction between perceived ingroup discrimination and level of ethnic identification on willingness to engage in collective action for the Indian group only ($B = .08, p < .05$). When we decomposed this interaction, we found that when Indians perceived high levels of ingroup discrimination *and* were highly ethnically identified, they expressed a great willingness to engage in collective action (see Figure 23).

Figure 23: Interaction between perceived ingroup discrimination and ethnic identification on willingness to engage in collective action – Indian respondent group only



Further, we considered how having outgroup friends interacted with perceived discrimination, to predict action tendencies. We found a significant interaction between perceived personal discrimination and proportion of outgroup friends on willingness to engage in collective action for the Indian group only ($B = -.10, p < .05$, see Figure 24). In other words, Indians who experienced more personal discrimination were less willing to engage in collective action when they had more outgroup friends compared to when they experienced high discrimination but had fewer outgroup friends (see Figure 24). This result suggests that having outgroup friends may exert a so-called ‘sedative effect’ on collective action tendencies (in response to perceived personal discrimination), particularly for minority groups (there is evidence of this phenomenon in past research with minorities in other countries, e.g., Becker. Wright, Lubensky & Zhou, 2013; Reimer, Becker, Benz et al., in press). This is a noteworthy finding and needs to be borne in mind when creating interventions which are based on increasing the amount of intergroup contact (including friendships) that people (particularly minority group members) have.

Figure 24: Interaction between perceived personal discrimination and level of outgroup friends on willingness to engage in collective action – Indian respondent group only



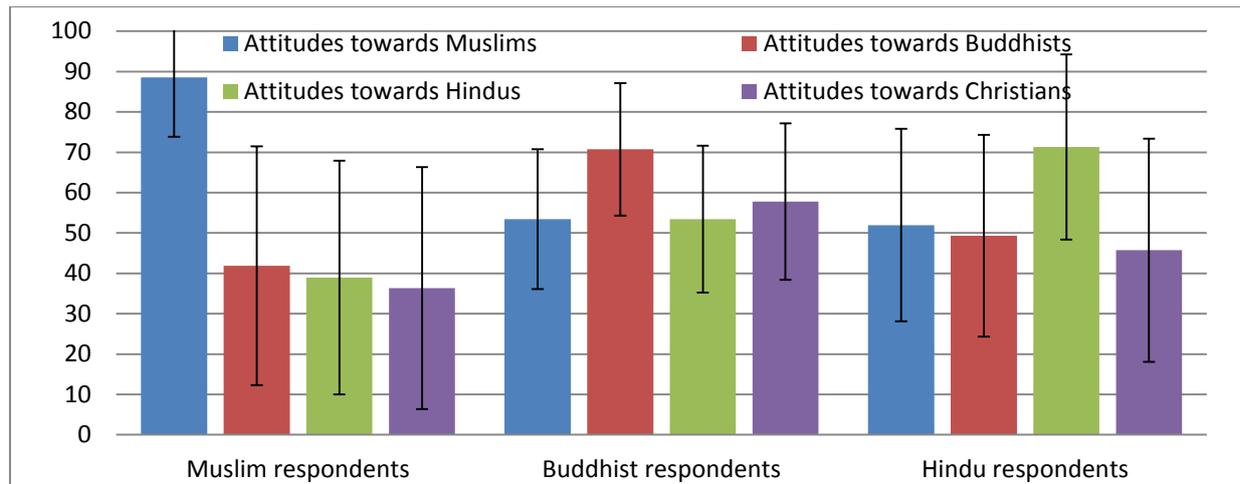
Summary: Compared to the Chinese and the Indians, Malays reported feeling that Malaysia was a fair place, where their interests were protected and they had more opportunities to succeed (though the perceived levels of fairness for all groups were low). However, a large number of Malays did not think economic policies were very equitable and about half of the samples from each ethnic group were highly dissatisfied with their economic standing relative to their outgroups. We also found many Chinese and Indians (and to a lesser extent Malays) reported that their group was highly discriminated against, while relatively few people felt that they personally were highly discriminated against. We found that the more people perceived discrimination of the ingroup, the more likely they were to report willingness to engage in both collective action to improve the standing of the ingroup and personal action, in the form of expressing a desire to emigrate from Malaysia. Thus how people feel their group is being treated, independent of how they feel they are personally being treated, can have a powerful impact on their actions and on consequences for integration.

Research question 5: *'Does being more religious make people more or less tolerant?'* An investigation of some of the key predictors of religious attitudes

We referred to the 2008 Hindraf rally in the previous sub-section; this was an event at which Indians rallied around their religious rather than (more traditionally relevant within a Malaysian context), ethnic identity. In a country that is becoming increasingly Islamic, perhaps coalescing around a religious identity makes sense for other groups as well. Religious identification and attitudes towards religious outgroups and religious symbols have also been in the press in the last few years, as there have been attacks against churches and temples, and contentious discussions over the 'ownership' of religious language (such as the disputed use of the term 'Allah' by Christian groups). In this sub-section, we consider the implications of having a strong religious identity on outgroup attitudes. Before mapping out the relationships between variables, we first explore some of the group differences between key variables that we believed would be strongly associated with outgroup religious attitudes.

We start by looking at attitudes towards one's religious ingroup and respective outgroups. We focused on the ratings provided by the three main religious groups (Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus) and did not include the ratings of the Christians because their sample size was very small ($n = 75$). We do, however, include the ratings that these three ethnic groups make about the Christians. We found that all three religious respondent groups demonstrated a more favourable attitude towards their ingroup than towards their outgroups (all $ps < .001$) (omnibus $F = 781.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .37$) and this was particularly pronounced for the Muslims (see Figure 25). Specifically, while the Muslims were particularly favourable towards people from their own group, their attitude towards outgroup members fell considerably below the mid-point of the scale (independent sample t-test: all $ps < .001$). For Buddhist and Hindu respondent, while they too preferred their ingroup compared to the outgroups (all $ps < .001$), their attitudes towards the outgroups were very close to the mid-point of the scale and, in almost all cases, the difference from the mid-point of the scale was non-significant.

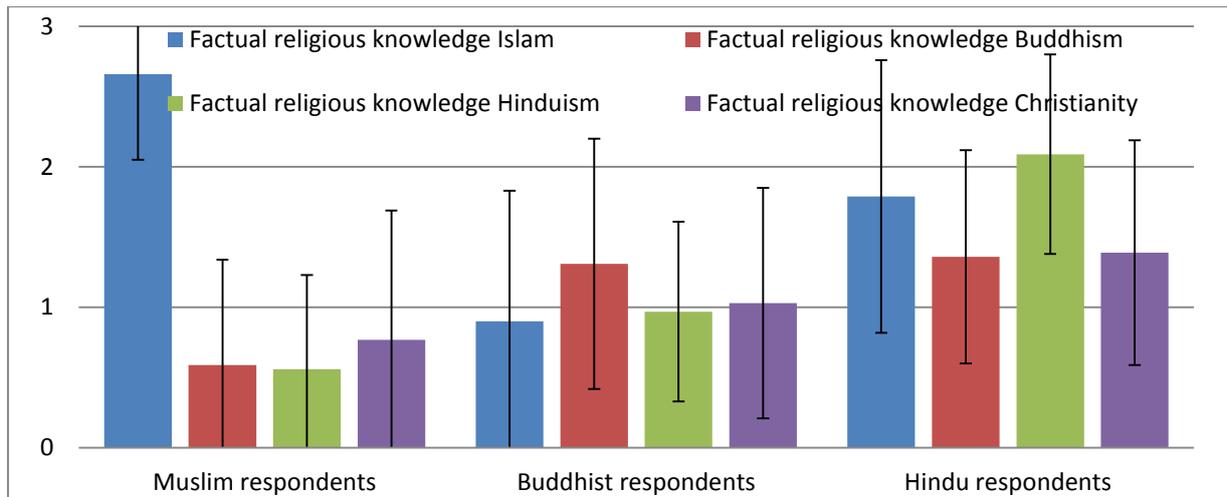
Figure 25: Attitudes towards religious ingroup and outgroups



Question: Please rate how you feel about <Muslims/ Buddhists/ Hindus/ Christians> on a thermometer that runs from zero to a hundred degrees. The higher the number, the more favourable you feel. The lower the number, the less favourable you feel. {Not at all favourable (0) – Extremely favourable (100)}

In a social context that has a strong history of religious identification and shows signs of becoming more polarized along religious lines, we were interested in how much people actually knew about their own religion and about outgroup religions. We devised a very brief religious knowledge test which contained three questions assessing very basic knowledge about each religious tradition. These questions were created based on the Religious Education course in secondary schools in England, and were further developed and refined after we conducted a pilot test in Malaysia with an adult sample. We only used the questions that received the highest scores, indicating that these were the questions that involved knowledge that was most easily accessible to the pilot respondents. The results of the religious knowledge test in the final sample showed that people from all religious groups knew significantly more about their own religion than the outgroup religions (all p s < .001) (omnibus $F = 964.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .41$). As evident from Figure 26, ingroup factual knowledge was greatest for Muslims, followed by Hindus and then Buddhists (all differences were significant, $p < .001$).

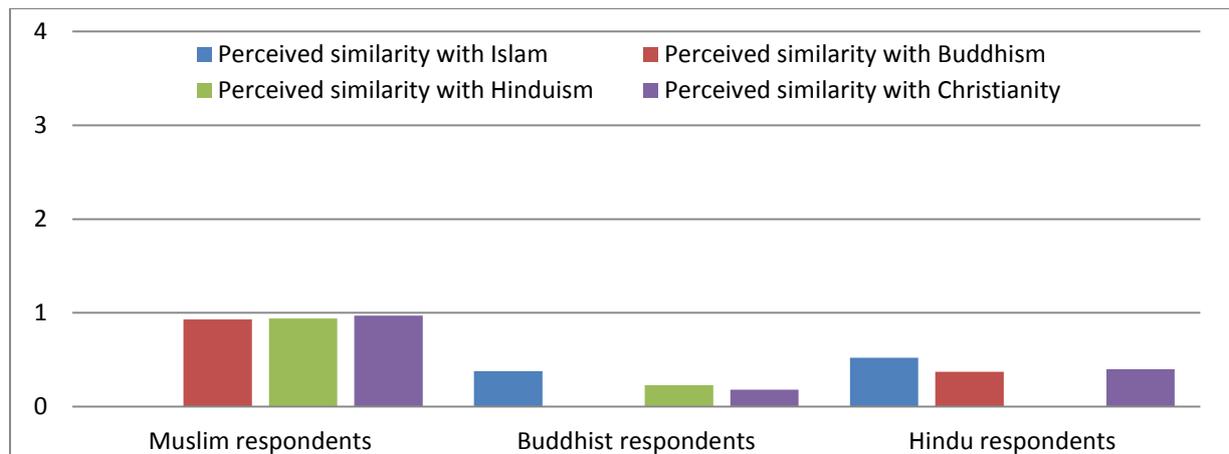
Figure 26: Factual religious knowledge scores



Note: Participants were asked 3 questions about each religion (these were true or false type questions). They received a score between 0-3, with 0 indicating that all answers were incorrect and 3 indicating correct responses to all the questions.

We also assessed the degree to which people felt that their ingroup religion and each outgroup religion shared core similarities (such as being kind and compassionate to all people). We did this by asking respondents the extent to which each religion taught these core values, and then subtracted the score given to the outgroup religion from the score given to the ingroup religion. Final scores ranged from 0 to 4, with lower scores therefore reflect high levels of perceived similarity between two religions. Overall, we found that there were high levels of perceived similarity between religions for all three respondent groups (see Figure 27). However, Muslim respondents saw other religions as somewhat more dissimilar to Islam, while Buddhists and Hindus saw outgroup religions as being closer to their own religions (omnibus $F = 39.98, p < .001, \eta^2 = .08$).

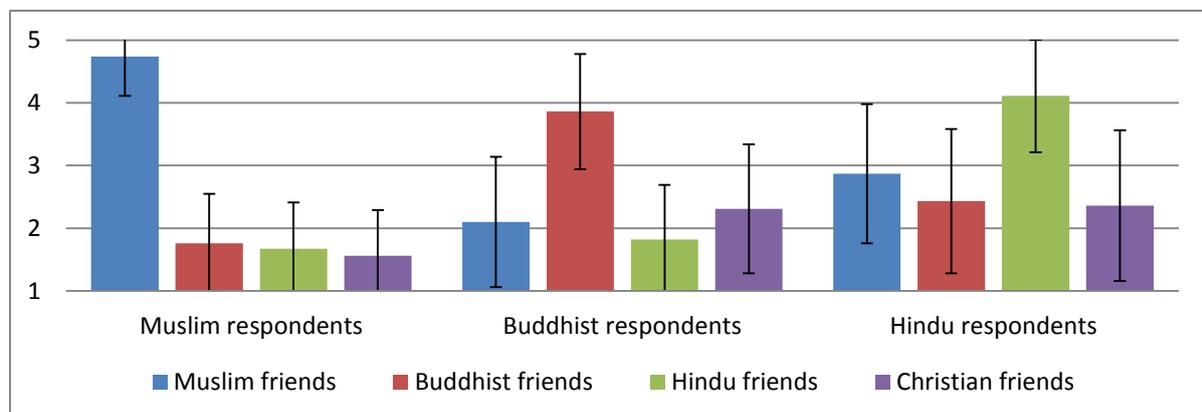
Figure 27: Perceived similarity of core religious beliefs between ingroup and outgroup religions



Question: Do you agree that <Islam/Buddhism/Hinduism/Christianity> “Teaches the importance of being kind and compassionate to all people? {Definitely disagree (1) – Definitely agree (5)}. Core similarity score was calculated by subtracting the value given to the outgroup from the score given to the ingroup, and ranged from 0-4.

In terms of friendships with people from the *religious* ingroup and outgroups, we saw a similar trend as we did for *ethnic* ingroup and outgroup friendships. Thus, in the interest of space, we simply note that all respondent groups reported having significantly more friends from their religious ingroup than the outgroups (all $ps < .001$).

Figure 28: Religious ingroup and outgroup friends

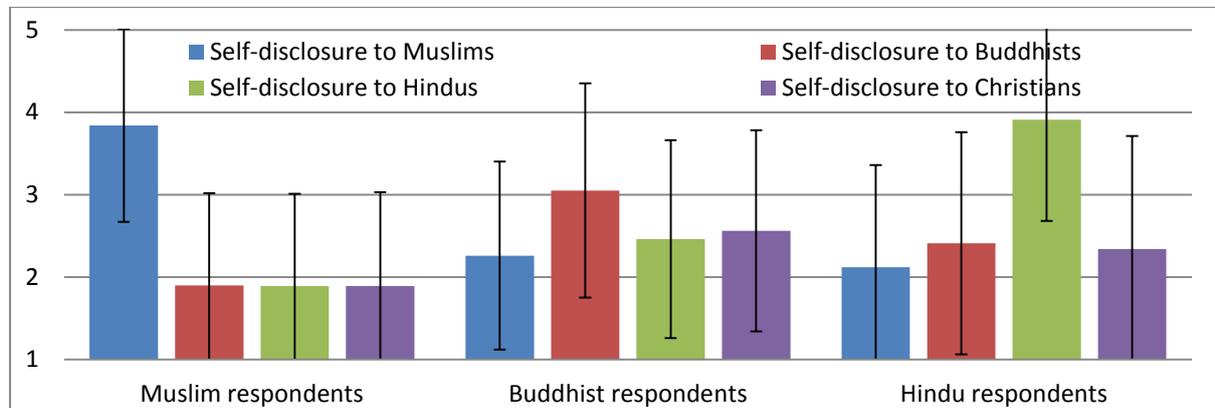


Question: What proportion of your good friends are <Muslim/Buddhist/Hindu/Christian>? {None or very few (1) – Almost all or all (5)}

While outgroup friendships are a measure of having good quality contact with others, we were specifically interested in assessing whether people had meaningful conversations with their religious outgroup friends. Unsurprisingly, people disclose more personal information to members of their own religious group on religious matters (all $ps < .001$) (omnibus $F = 789.78, p < .001, \eta^2 = .37$). What is striking (and similar to the finding for religious outgroup friendships

and factual religious knowledge) is that Muslims seem to be more isolated than the other groups – they report mixing less and have less religious knowledge about the outgroup religions, and also having fewer meaningful conversations with religious outgroup members (see Figure 29).

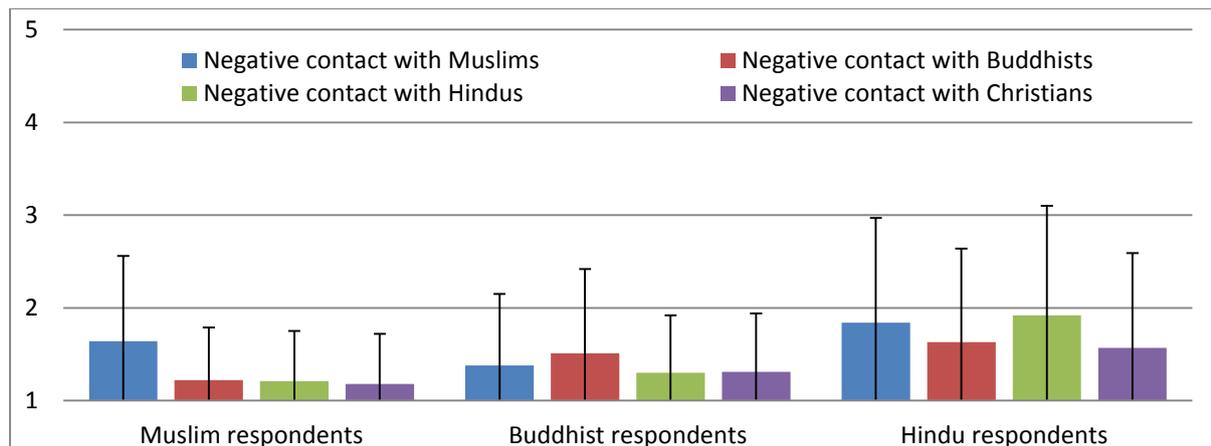
Figure 29: Self-disclosure to ingroup and outgroup friends



Question: Do you feel you can speak openly and honestly about religion with your friends who are < Muslim/Buddhist/Hindu/Christian>? {Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}

On the whole, respondents reported very levels of negative contact with the outgroup (see Figure 30). Interestingly, all respondent groups reported the highest levels of negative contact with members of their ingroup ($p < .001$ for all groups, except that for Hindus, the levels for negative contact with Hindus and Muslims were statistically equivalent) (omnibus $F = 13.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$). We also note that Hindu respondents reported on average more negative contact with outgroups than Muslims and Buddhists. We believe that due to their minority status, the Hindus were likely to have more contact with outgroups in general, both positive and negative contact (and this resonates with the fact that they have more outgroup-religion friends than Muslims and Buddhists).

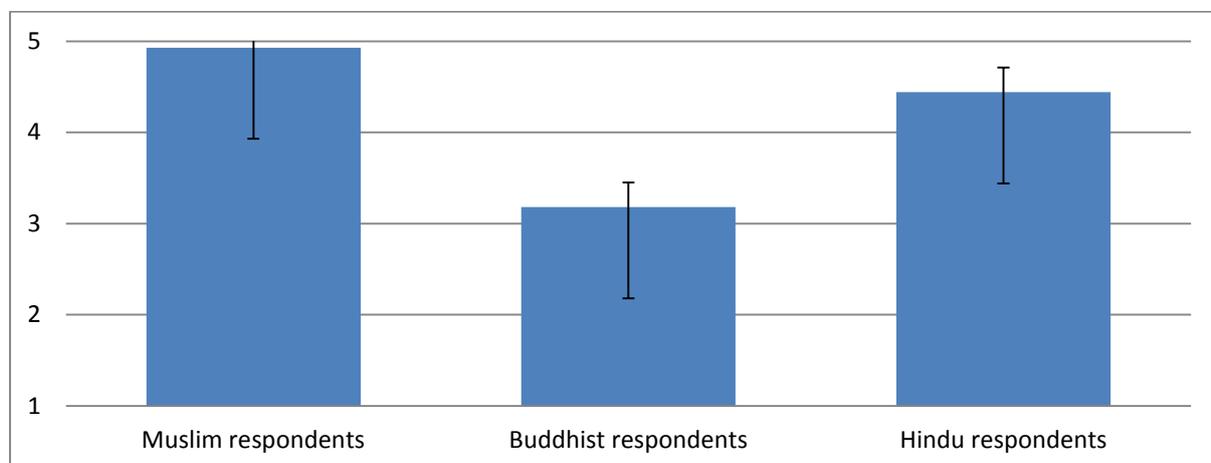
Figure 30: Negative contact with religious ingroup and outgroup members



*Question: In the last year, how often, if at all, did you have **negative/bad interactions** where people said or did something bad to upset you? Think about times when you chatted with someone or did something together. Think about < Muslim/Buddhist/Hindu/Christian>? {Never (1) – Very often (5)}*

Finally, we report findings on the mean levels of religious identification (see Figure 31). We found that Muslims reported having significantly higher levels of religious identification than both Buddhists and Hindus (both $p < .001$), and Hindus were more religiously identified than Buddhists ($p < .001$) (omnibus $F = 316.55, p < .001, \eta^2 = .41$).

Figure 31: Religious identification

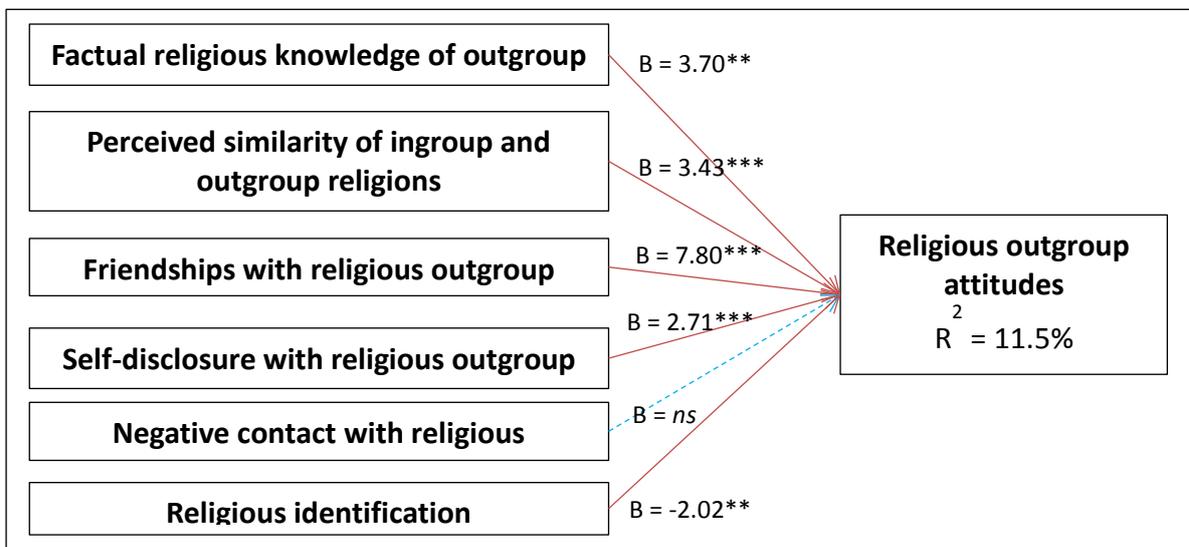


Questions: (i) Does being < Muslim/Buddhist/Hindu/Christian>? mean a lot to you? and (ii) Is being < Muslim/Buddhist/Hindu/Christian>? an important part of who you are? {Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}

As in previous sub-sections, understanding the levels for these variables allows us to answer the overarching research question, which concerns religious attitudes and the factors associated with them. We created a multiple regression model in which religious attitudes were treated as the outcome variable, and were regressed on factual religious knowledge, perceived core similarities between religions, quantity of religious outgroup friends, self-disclosure about religious topics, negative contact experiences with religious outgroup members and religious

identification. We conducted the analysis for all groups simultaneously because we found that all these factors variables had a similar relationship with the religious attitudes variable across groups. The main caveat though is that our analysis does not include the Hindu religious respondent group because two of the key variables exerted opposite effects in this sub-sample. We present the results for the Hindu sub-sample separately after the main multiple group analysis. The final sample size for the analysis without the Hindu sub-sample was 933 respondents and the analysis controlled for gender, age, education, household income and rural versus urban location.

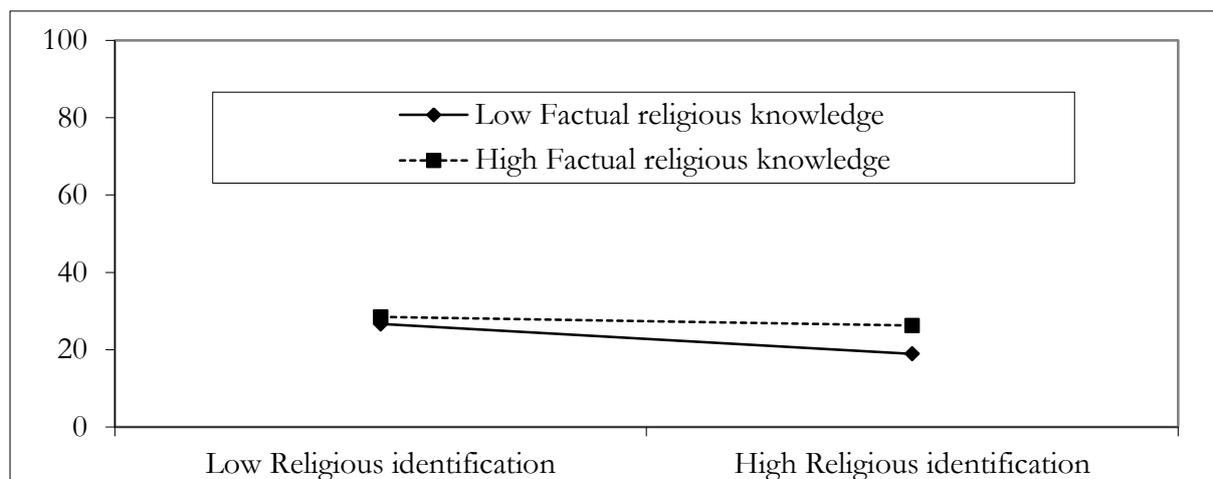
Figure 32: Religious attitudes and the factors associated with them



We found that each of factual religious knowledge, perceived similarity, friendships and self-disclosure with respect to the outgroup were associated with more positive inter-religious attitudes. However, greater religious identification was associated with more negative attitudes (see Figure 32). Thus it seems that efforts must be made to increase factual religious knowledge, enable people to perceive core similarities between their own and other religions, develop friendships with religious outgroup members, and have deeper more meaningful conversations with these religious outgroup friends. However, the finding of a negative relationship between religious identification and religious outgroup attitudes is a very important one, more so in a nation where religion is becoming an increasingly powerful dimension along which people are aligning themselves socially and politically. This finding led us to ask whether anything could be done to alleviate the negative association between religious identification and outgroup attitudes. We sought to answer this question by investigating how some of the other variables in our model which had a positive association with religious outgroup attitudes might serve to buffer the negative effects of religious identification.

We were particularly interested in assessing whether the beneficial effects of having increased knowledge and understanding of outgroup religions might go some ways towards reducing the ill effects of religious identification. We found a significant positive interaction ($B = 1.91, p < .05$) which indicated that for those who were highly religiously identified, having a high level of factual religious knowledge of the outgroup was associated with significantly better attitudes than for those who were highly religiously identified *and* had low levels of factual religious knowledge about the outgroup (see Figure 33).

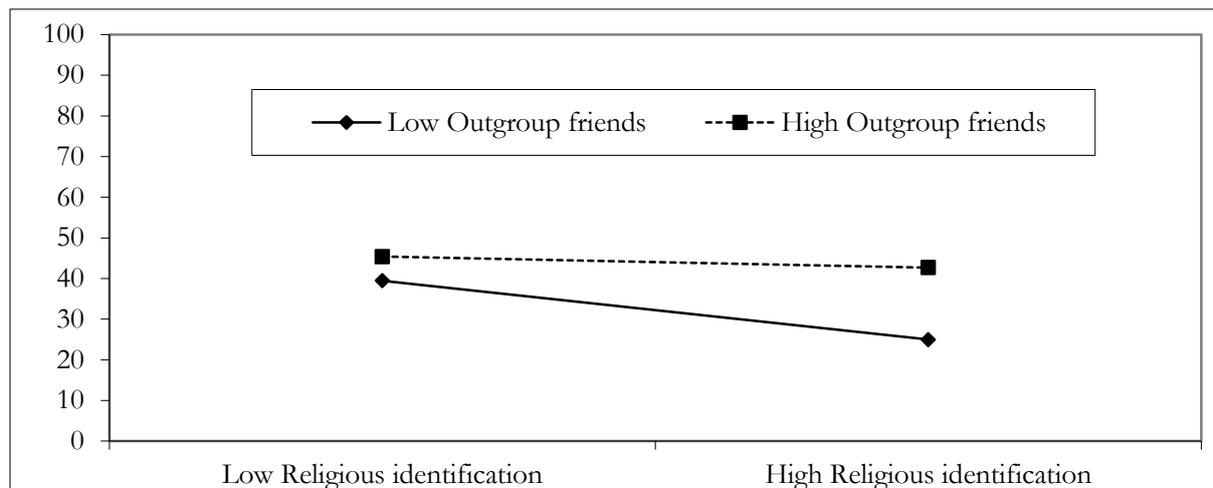
Figure 33: Interaction between factual knowledge of outgroup religion and religious identification on religious outgroup attitudes



This finding suggests that knowledge of outgroup religions can play a role in reducing religious intolerance in a context where people are highly religiously identified. We further found that this effect was larger when we ran the analysis for the Muslim sub-sample only. There is much effort, particularly within the Muslim community, to encourage religious identification and religious education of Islam. Many young children now attend religious education classes daily (apart from agama classes in school) and there are an increasing number of Muslim public and private religious schools in the country. We know from looking at mean levels of responses, that the Muslims are the most highly religiously identified group. However, Muslims are often discouraged (publically and privately) from seeking out knowledge about outgroup religions. They are also the group that shows the greatest perceived dissimilarity between Islam and outgroup religions, which may be a function of a lack of education concerning outgroup religions. Our findings suggest that this avoidance can be costly in terms of national integration. One possibility may be for the government to think along the lines of providing all school children with a basic level of information about the religions of people with whom they share this country, and the need to view all religions with due respect.

We were also interested in assessing whether the beneficial effects of having more friends from other religious groups might reduce the ill effects of religious identification. We found a significant positive interaction ($B = 3.40, p < .001$): people with high levels of religious identification who had more friends from religious outgroups held more positive attitudes towards religious outgroups, compared to those who were highly religiously identified and had fewer outgroup friends (see Figure 34).

Figure 34: Interaction between having outgroup friends and religious identification on religious outgroup attitudes



Thus, in a highly religious nation (and an *increasingly* religious nation), we find evidence that segregation and lack of mixing can be particularly harmful, and that increasing opportunities for (and actual uptake of) outgroup friendships can buffer the negative effects of a person’s high levels of religious identification¹².

¹² We ran these analyses separately for the Hindu respondents and found that having factual knowledge about outgroup religions was associated with less favourable outgroup attitudes, while being more religiously identified as Hindu was associated with more favourable outgroup attitudes. While being religiously identified may not preclude favourability to others, and particularly not for a minority group, we do not see a clear reason for the negative association between factual knowledge of outgroup religions and attitudes that the Hindus reported, and would need to conduct further studies to see if we could replicate and explain this finding.

Summary: We have seen evidence that Malaysia is a religious country, and that people have the highest interaction with co-religionists, and knowledge of their own religious traditions. While this is not a problem per se, we presented evidence which showed that specific efforts – which focused on increasing factual religious knowledge, allowing people to perceive core similarities between their own and other religions, encouraging friendships with religious outgroup members, and having deeper and more meaningful conversations with these religious outgroup friends – could have strong effects on improving religious tolerance (though we urge caution in overstating these findings because of the cross-sectional nature of this dataset). We have shown that promoting outgroup friendships and knowledge and appreciation of outgroup religions in particular, may be especially useful in moderating some of the possible negative effects that may arise from high levels of religious identification.

Research question 6: ‘Does exposure to diversity affect people’s health?’ Exploring some of the predictors of health in a multicultural context.

We have already seen that having ethnic outgroup friends in the neighbourhood and at work is related to having more positive ethnic outgroup attitudes. In this section, we go beyond attitudes, and consider whether having outgroup friends is related to health outcomes. There is a body of research which shows that having a strong social network is one of the most important predictors of mental health and longevity (e.g., Holt-Lunstad, Smith & Layton, 2010).

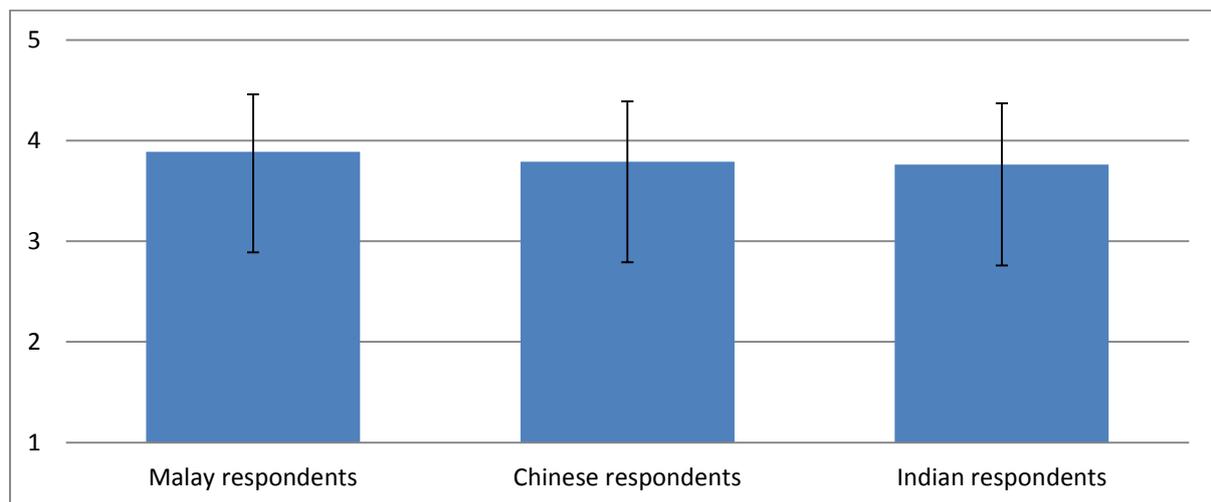
In the context of increasingly diverse societies where people are living, working and studying with others from many different ethnoreligious backgrounds, there is evidence that people who live in more ethnically homogeneous areas have better health outcomes than those who live in ethnically mixed areas (known as the ‘ethnic density effect’), because, it has been argued, those in less diverse areas receive more support from their ingroup social networks and experience less discrimination (Das-Munshi, Becares, Dewey, et al., 2010). However more research is needed to confirm this finding as the studies which have looked at this question have had only limited statistical power and have differed in design across studies (Shaw, Atkins, Becares et al., 2012).

Our main research question revolves around what the health implications are for people who live in more, compared to less, ethnically diverse areas (in this case, neighbourhoods). Is it possible that having a mixed social network (measured through having intergroup contact)

results in better health outcomes for a person who lives in a diverse neighbourhood? In other words, can ethnic diversity be health-promoting if people are mixing with ethnic outgroup members in the neighbourhood? One potential mechanism, that we will explore, is that having positive intergroup contact may mitigate part of the negative effect of diversity on health.

In our sample, all three groups reported fairly high levels of mental health, above the mid-point of the scale (see Figure 35). Health was measured using the 12-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) and included items such as: “Have you recently felt constantly under strain?” and “Have you lost much sleep over worry?”. The Malays reported slightly higher levels of mental health than the Chinese ($p < .05$) and the Indians ($p < .01$), while the Chinese and Indians reported equivalent levels of mental health to one another ($p = ns$) (omnibus $F = 6.18, p < .01, \eta^2 = .01$).

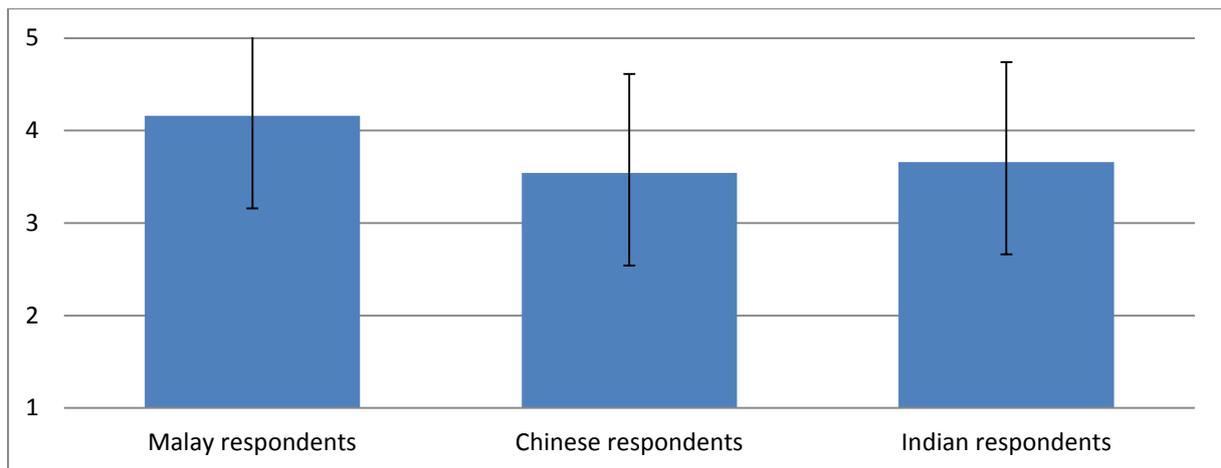
Figure 35: Mean mental health scores for the three main ethnic groups



Questions: Health was measured using the widely-used General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) which contains 12 questions. {Not at all (1) – Very much (5), reverse-coded}

As mentioned above, one of the key components of neighbourhood living is the degree of social support received from neighbours. We had a measure of social support (which was about whether people felt their neighbours would help them in an emergency and look out for one another in the neighbourhood). We found that people from all three groups reported, on average, fairly high levels of social support, significantly above the mid-point of the scale (see Figure 36). The Malays reported slightly higher levels of social support than the Chinese ($p < .001$) and the Indians ($p < .001$), while the Chinese and Indians reported equivalent levels of social support ($p = ns$) (omnibus $F = 51.92, p < .001, \eta^2 = .07$).

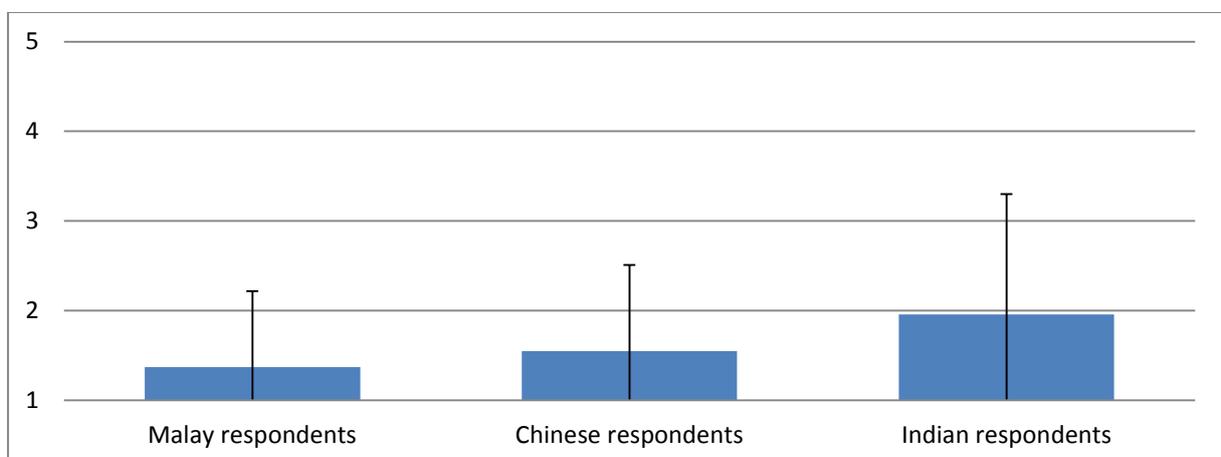
Figure 36: Mean social support in the neighbourhood



Questions: Social support was measured by asking respondents the degree to which they agreed with the following statements: (i) My neighbours will help me in an emergency and (ii) People in this neighbourhood look out for each other. {Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}

In an attempt to capture the flipside of neighbourhood social support, we also asked respondents about neighbourhood inter-ethnic tensions (which measured the degree to which respondents felt that there were tensions between people from different ethnic groups in the neighbourhood). We found that people from all three groups reported, on average, fairly low levels of neighbourhood tension (see Figure 37). The Indians reported higher levels of inter-ethnic tension than the Malays ($p < .001$) and the Chinese ($p < .001$), while the Chinese reported higher levels of tension than the Malays ($p < .05$) (omnibus $F = 39.72, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$). We note that the Chinese and Indians in our sample were more likely to live in areas in which they were not the majority, compared to Malays (a finding which we discuss more below).

Figure 37: Mean tension in the neighbourhood



Question: Neighbourhood tension was measured by asking "Do you agree that there is tension between people from different racial groups in this neighbourhood". {Not at all (1) – Very much (5)}

Other key variables which we anticipated would be related to health-promotion include some variables which we have discussed in the foregoing sections, e.g., positive and negative inter-group contact in the neighbourhood (see Figures 9 and 10) and perceived discrimination of self and of one's ingroup (see Figure 18).

Our respondents lived in areas with a range of ethnic diversity. In our analyses, diversity was measured as the percentage of outgroup members in the neighbourhood. Malays lived in neighbourhoods with percentage of outgroup members ranging from 0%-69%, Chinese from 3% – 96% and Indians from 19%-94%. We also calculated the percentage of each sample that lived in 'ingroup-dominant' neighbourhoods (i.e., neighbourhoods in which one's ingroup formed 80% or more of the population), and found that 70.6% of Malays lived in such areas, compared to 6.2% of Chinese. No Indians lived in ingroup-dominant neighbourhoods in our sample.

We analyzed a multi-level model in which we assessed the degree to which a respondent's contextual-level factors (e.g., the diversity of their neighbourhood) was associated with their mental health, alongside a range of individual-level factors (i.e., factors that relate purely to the individual, such as their gender, age, inter-ethnic contact experiences, etc.). A multi-level model considers that respondents are nested within a particular contexts (as here, where respondents are nested within neighbourhoods). The present analysis treats all the people nested within a particular neighbourhood as being related to one another because they all share a context and are, therefore, not statistically independent from each other (e.g., they all experience a similar degree of ethnic diversity in the neighbourhood, they experience similar access to healthcare and schools, etc.). Multi-level models allow us to separate out the contextual component of a person's experiences from their individual-level components, thereby treating the respondent as a unique individual embedded within a shared social context. As mentioned previously, the models we have computed so far in this report accounted for the fact that our respondents were nested within neighbourhoods, and corrected the standard errors of the estimates accordingly. The current model, on the other hand, explicitly kept the two levels of analysis (neighbourhood and individual) as separate (but interrelated) in order to investigate the unique relationships that variables at each of these levels had with our outcome variable of interest, in this case, mental health.

We present the findings for our model in Table 4 below. We controlled for gender, age, education, and household income at the individual-level (we found that those who were more educated, were older and had more income reported higher levels of mental health. We also controlled for average household income at the neighbourhood-level (which in this case was

measured as average household income of the district within which the neighbourhood is situated); we did not find a significant association between average household income and health. We also calculated whether there was a significant interaction effect between diversity and positive contact in the neighbourhood (which is a measure of whether diversity may be health-promoting for those who have more positive inter-ethnic contact), and whether there was a significant interaction between perceiving social support in the neighbourhood and having negative intergroup contact (such that the negative relationship between negative contact and health was mitigated for those who had more social support). We did not find that either of these interaction effects was significant. We report only the significant effects in the table below.

Table 4. Factors associated with an individuals' mental health

	Beta coefficient
<i>Level 1: Individual-level</i>	
Majority-status	.15*
Positive inter-ethnic contact in the neighbourhood	.05*
Negative inter-ethnic contact in the neighbourhood	-.08*
Social support in the neighbourhood	.10**
Inter-ethnic tensions in the neighbourhood	-.07*
Perceived personal discrimination	-.12***
Perceived ingroup discrimination	-.08**
<i>Level 2: Neighborhood – level</i>	
Diversity	.06*

From the total variance in the outcome variable, all predictors of the presented model explained 10% variance on the individual and 66% variance on the contextual level.

We found that respondents in the Malay majority group reported better mental health than those in the minority groups. We also found a positive relationship with health for those who had positive inter-ethnic contact and perceived social support in their neighbourhood. We found a negative relationship with health for those who had negative inter-ethnic contact experiences and perceived inter-ethnic tensions in the neighbourhood, and for those who perceived personal and ingroup discrimination. At the contextual-level, we also found that living in a more diverse neighbourhood was associated with better health outcomes, while controlling for all respective individual-based predictors.

These findings represent, to our knowledge, the first neighbourhood-level investigation in Malaysia, of inter-ethnic relations and of various social and demographic predictors of mental health. The results show that living in diverse neighbourhoods has the potential to be beneficial

for Malaysians (from both majority and minority groups), which is an important finding for policy-makers who are designing social housing, and thinking about creating and supporting mixed neighbourhoods. We did not find, as we had expected, that this relationship between diversity and health was particularly pronounced for those having inter-ethnic contact. We did, however, find that having positive inter-ethnic contact was, on its own, associated with better health, while having negative inter-ethnic contact was associated with poorer health outcomes. The reality of diversity is that people living in more diverse neighbourhood will have both more positive and more negative contact experiences. Our previous analyses of positive and negative contact in the neighbourhood and at work found that people often have the most negative contact experiences with those with whom they also have the most positive contact experiences, i.e., the ingroup. Thus the finding here that negative inter-group contact experiences were associated with poorer health should not discourage us from realizing the potential and promise of diversity, and of encouraging more inter-ethnic mixing.

Furthermore, we found that respondents reported better health outcomes when they felt that there was social support within their neighbourhoods – i.e., when they felt that neighbours cared for and looked out for each other. Relatedly, health outcomes were poorer for those who reported feeling inter-ethnic tensions within the neighbourhood. These findings point to the fact that people cannot and should not merely co-exist alongside one another. If the engagement they have with one another is one that is supportive then diversity is likely to be associated with better health outcomes.

Finally, our findings demonstrated an additional - and extremely important - outcome for perceived discrimination. Not only was discrimination associated with a greater willingness to take collective action and a stronger desire to emigrate (as we showed in previous analyses), the current analysis showed that discrimination (of oneself personally and one's ingroup) was associated with poorer mental health (in keeping with findings from the UK, e.g., Wallace, Nazroo & Becares, 2016). These results point to the multiple and wide-ranging negative outcomes of discrimination, which require future research study and policy intervention.

While our analyses yielded some novel and, we believe, instructive findings, we acknowledge some limitations of our data. Firstly, there were very few respondents from each of the neighbourhoods, on average 5 respondents per neighbourhood. This means that our models had limited analytic power on the contextual-level which reduced the ability of contextual-level factors to reach the level of significance. This may also be why the neighbourhood average household income variable did not have a significant association with health in our study, though it has been shown to be an important predictor of health and integration in studies conducted in

other parts of the world. Additionally, the government does not release average household income or other poverty-related data at the electoral district level (which is the neighbourhood level in this study), but only at the district level. Thus, it is possible that this high-level measure does not adequately capture the meaningful level of average household income at the neighbourhood level.

Summary: The neighbourhood is an important context for integration. Our findings show that the state of integration within the neighbourhood (as measured by diversity and inter-ethnic contact, social support and inter-ethnic tensions) played an important role in explaining a person's mental health, as did feeling discriminated against. Our findings point to the benefits of diversity on mental health, with the caveat that diversity should be fostered in a way that people feel a sense of community cohesion – i.e., they feel socially supported and that inter-ethnic tensions do not run high. The national government should work with local government to understand how housing and regeneration policies could improve or inhibit integration locally. Community cohesion should be strengthened by bringing people together across different ethnic, religious and socioeconomic strata, through creating and maintaining common social and leisure facilities, so that people have a chance to mingle with one another close to home, and develop the bonds that can reduce tensions and increase social support. Our findings also clearly emphasize and reinforce the need to combat discrimination, which we have shown can be associated with poorer mental health.

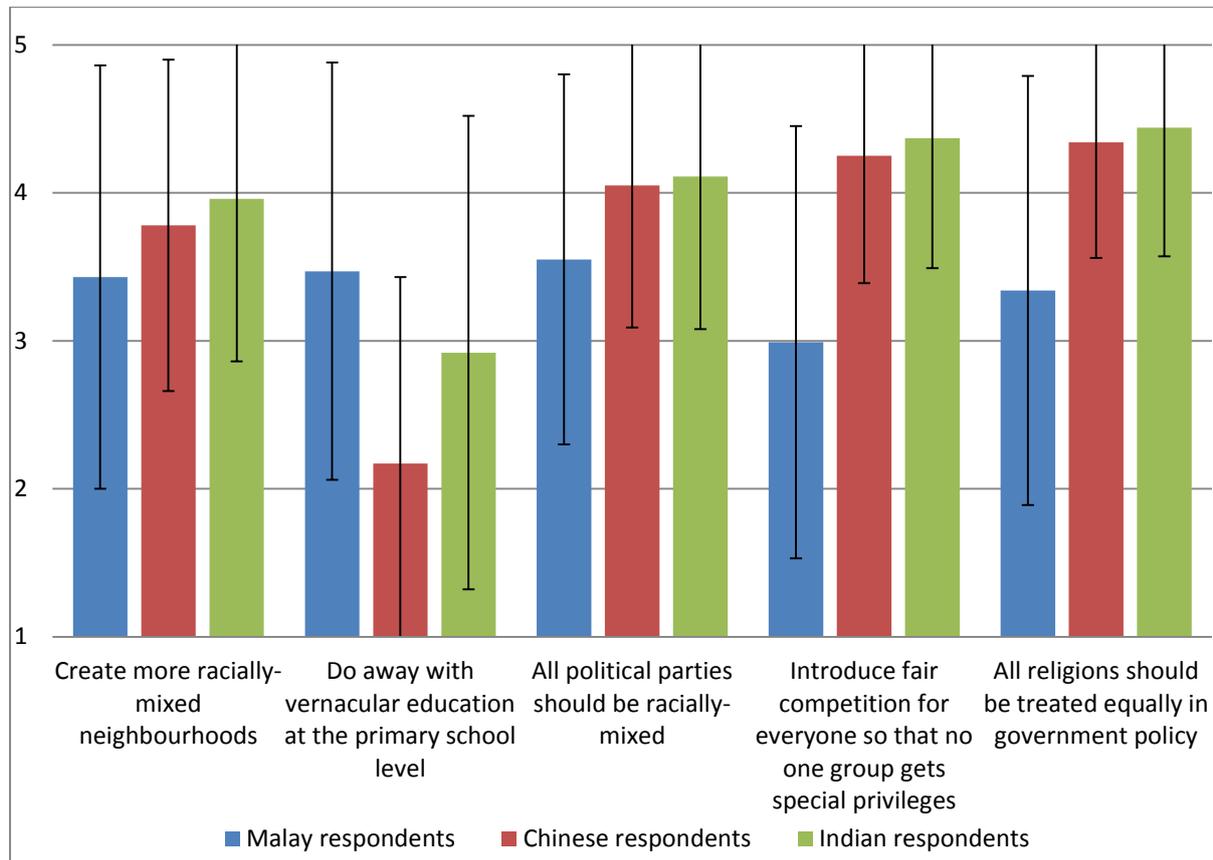
Research question 7: *'How can integration in Malaysia be improved?'*

An analysis of what our respondents think would help.

We asked respondents to tell us how much they thought a series of possible changes to government policy and neighbourhood ethnic composition might improve integration. We did this in a two-step process. We first gave respondents in the pilot pre-test an open-ended question in which they were asked to list ways in which they thought inter-ethnic and religious integration could be improved in Malaysia. We then compiled a set of five suggestions on the basis of the most frequently stated free-response options, which were asked to respondents in the national survey.

We report here the mean levels that respondents reported for each of the five statements regarding integration that were presented to them. We briefly present the results for each statement below (see Figure 38):

Figure 38: Mean-levels of agreement with suggestions to improve ethnoreligious integration



Scale: Definitely disagree (1) – Definitely agree (5)

1. “Create more racially-mixed neighbourhoods”:

There was a significant difference between the three ethnic groups in level of agreement with this statement ($F = 24.76, p < .001, \eta^2 = .03$): the Malays expressed a lower level of agreement than the Chinese and the Indians (both $p < .001$), and the Chinese expressed less agreement than the Indians ($p < .05$) ($M_{\text{Malay}} = 3.43, SD = 1.43; M_{\text{Chinese}} = 3.78, SD = 1.12; M_{\text{Indian}} = 3.96, SD = 1.10$)¹³.

2. “Do away with vernacular education at the primary school level”:

There was a significant difference between the three ethnic groups ($F = 105.24, p < .001, \eta^2 = .12$), with the Malays agreeing with the statement to a much greater degree than the Chinese

¹³ M refers to mean level and SD to standard deviation

and the Indians (both p s < .001), and with the Chinese expressing substantially less agreement than the Indians (p < .001) ($M_{\text{Malay}} = 3.47$, $SD = 1.41$; $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.17$, $SD = 1.26$; $M_{\text{Indian}} = 2.92$, $SD = 1.60$). It is noteworthy that while the Indians expressed more agreement with the statement than the Chinese, there was a substantial amount of variation in the group ($SD = 1.60$), indicating quite a lot of variance and disagreement within the Indians on this statement.

3. “All political parties should be racially-mixed”:

There was a significant difference between the three ethnic groups ($F = 39.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$), with the Malays agreeing with the statement to a lesser degree than the Chinese and the Indians (both $p < .001$), and with the Chinese and Indians expressing equivalent levels of agreement ($p = ns$) ($M_{\text{Malay}} = 3.55$, $SD = 1.25$; $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 4.05$, $SD = .96$; $M_{\text{Indian}} = 4.11$, $SD = 1.03$).

4. “Introduce fair competition for everyone so that no one group gets special privileges”:

There was a significant difference between the three ethnic groups ($F = 241.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$), with the Malays agreeing with the statement to a lesser degree than the Chinese and the Indians (both $p < .001$), and with the Chinese and Indians expressing equivalent levels of agreement ($p = ns$) ($M_{\text{Malay}} = 2.99$, $SD = 1.46$; $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 4.25$, $SD = .86$; $M_{\text{Indian}} = 4.37$, $SD = .88$).

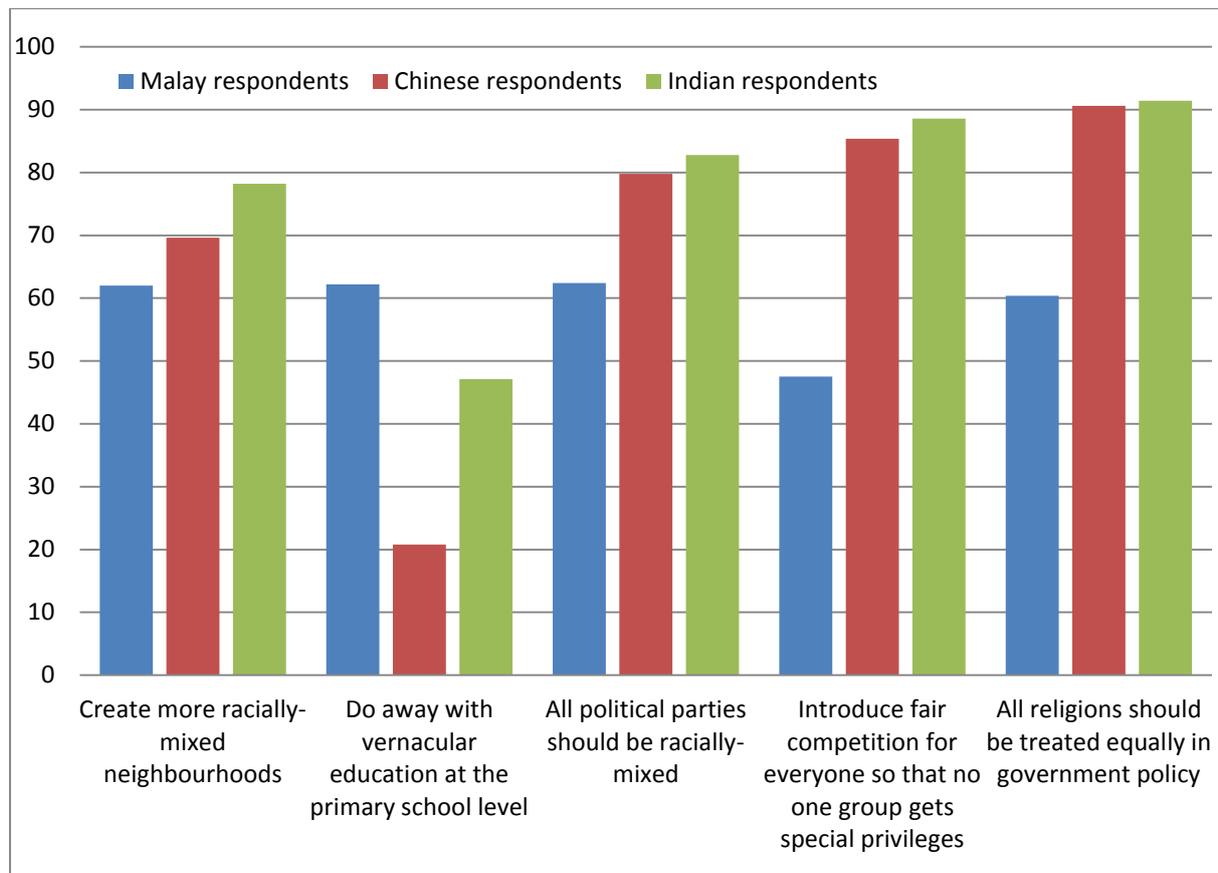
5. “All religions should be treated equally in government policy”:

There was a significant difference between the three ethnic groups ($F = 160.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$), with the Malays agreeing with the statement to a lesser degree than the Chinese and the Indians (both $p < .001$), and with the Chinese and Indians expressing equivalent levels of agreement ($p = ns$) ($M_{\text{Malay}} = 3.34$, $SD = 1.45$; $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 4.34$, $SD = .78$; $M_{\text{Indian}} = 4.44$, $SD = .87$).

Thus, in general, we note the trend that the Malays expressed a lower level of agreement to most of the integration suggestions than the Chinese and the Indians, with the exception of the suggestion to do away with vernacular schools, about which the Chinese are substantially less enthusiastic than the Malays and the Indians.

However, in addition to mean levels, it is instructive to look at the percentage of respondents from each ethnic group who expressed a high degree of agreement with the integration suggestions (calculated based on agreement with the top two points of the scale: *tend to agree* to *strongly agree*, see Figure 39).

Figure 39: Percentage of respondents who expressed a high degree of agreement (*tend to agree and strongly agree*) with suggestions to improve ethnoreligious integration



We were very interested to note that across the board, there was a high percentage of people from the different ethnic groups who expressed strong agreement with the integration suggestions, substantially higher than 50% of the sub-samples (with the exception of the response of Chinese and Indians to doing away with vernacular education and the Malays' response to doing away with special privileges). We even found high levels of agreement with the suggestion that political parties should be racially-mixed: about 62% of the Malay sample strongly agreed with this statement (compared to approximately 80% of the non-Malays sample). This is an extremely noteworthy finding. Malaysians are often told that they are not ready to move beyond communally-based political parties; that people will react badly to not having their interests championed by such parties. The explanation for this is that while the urban Malays may be comfortable with mixed-race parties, the rural folks are not (e.g., Mohamad., 2016). However, our data shows that 62% of rural Malays and 63% of urban Malays strongly endorse mixed parties.

We also investigated whether having ethnic outgroup friends was associated with endorsement of any of these integration suggestions. We found that having outgroup friends was associated with increased endorsement of mixed neighbourhoods for Malay ($r = .20, p < .001$)

and Chinese ($r = .13, p < .01$) respondents, while having outgroup friends was associated with increased endorsement of doing away with vernacular schools for Malays ($r = .09, p < .05$) and Indian ($r = .13, p < .01$) respondents. Indians highly endorsed mixed neighbourhoods regardless of the number of outgroup friends they had, just as the Chinese expressed low levels of support for the dismantling of vernacular schools, regardless of the number of outgroup friends they had. Although some of these correlations, as noted, were statistically significant (due to the large sample size), overall the associations between having outgroup friends and these suggestions for integration policy were low.

Summary: A high percentage of people from the different ethnic groups expressed strong agreement with the integration suggestions; substantially higher than 50% of the sub-samples (with the exception of the Chinese and Indians respondents' ratings for doing away with vernacular education and the Malays' response to doing away with special privileges). These findings may offer a starting point for policy-makers and politicians to consider changing current policies and consider alternative ways (beyond slogans such as 1Malaysia) to improve integration. Outgroup friendships were significantly correlated with some of the integration suggestions. But for some groups, their endorsement of these suggestions was unrelated to how much they interacted with outgroup members.

1.5 Section summary and recommendations

The survey data has allowed us to produce a range of findings on the state of ethno-religious relations in Malaysia, and to highlight ones that we believe have great relevance for designing interventions to improve integration, and for serving as a baseline for a future research programme.

Promoting inter-ethnic contact

Our findings show that Malaysians tend to mix most with members of their own ethnic and religious groups, and also have substantially more favourable attitudes towards ingroup than outgroup members. This is not a surprising finding – in every country across the world, people show ingroup preference in terms of mixing and friendships (a phenomenon known as homophily; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001) and in terms of attitudes (a phenomenon known as ingroup bias). However, we also found a strong and consistent link between positive intergroup contact (specifically having outgroup friendships) and outgroup attitudes for both

majority and minority groups, and that Malaysians do not, in general, feel anxious or uncomfortable in mixing with their outgroups. Instead, they expressed strong agreement for mixing and integration efforts. Thus, promoting positive inter-ethnic contact has the potential to yield a favourable change in attitudes towards outgroups, and should be considered an important component of interventions seeking to improve inter-ethnic integration. This could be in the form of government policy which encourages more desegregated/mixed environments in schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods. We caution, however, that merely providing desegregated spaces does not result in effective mixing between groups (Al Ramiah, Schmid, Hewstone & Floe, 2015), and often additional effort is necessary to get people to mingle across group boundaries. However such desegregated spaces are a critical and necessary first step. We also note that emphasizing mixed spaces and friendships within a school context may yield particular benefits. This is in line with recent research suggesting developmental differences regarding the effectiveness of inter-group contact. More specifically, the effect of intergroup contact has a stronger effect on the improvement of intergroup attitudes in adolescence compared to in adulthood (Wölfer, Schmid, Hewstone, & van Zalk, 2016).

While we were not able to examine the impact of mixing at school in our sample, we were able to assess how having friendships at work and in one's neighbourhood were associated with outgroup attitudes. We found evidence that both the workplace and neighbourhood represent important spaces for making friends, but respondents from all ethnic groups reported having more outgroup friends at work than in the neighbourhood. However, in terms of the relationship between outgroup friendships and outgroup attitudes, we found that friendships in the neighbourhood were associated most strongly with favourable outgroup attitudes (compared to work friendships, which had a weaker but still significant association with outgroup attitudes).

Moving beyond outgroup attitudes, we also found that neighbourhood diversity, social support and positive inter-ethnic contact were positively associated with a person's mental health. This is a significant finding in a multicultural context; it expands the traditional scope of integration which tends to be about getting along together and liking one another, to demonstrate just how consequential such 'getting along together' can be for one's mental well-being. We believe that these combined findings of the varied outcomes related to intergroup contact, diversity and social support makes a strong case for the active creation and maintenance of ethnically integrated, not segregated (1) neighbourhoods and (2) mixed workplaces as a potentially powerful means of improving integration. Within each sphere, we would advocate the provision of common spaces where people can engage in a range of relevant activities (e.g., social,

leisure, work) with one another, thereby actively increasing the opportunities for inter-group mixing.

Shaping and moderating the effects of identity (ethnic, national and religious) in a multicultural setting

Identity plays an important role in how people see themselves, their ingroup members and others, and is indispensable in any analysis of inter-ethnic relations. Malaysians in general had higher levels of ethnic than national identification, though the Malays demonstrated more similar levels for the two types of identification than the other two groups. Our analyses indicated that integration efforts that involve a superordinate identity, such as being Malaysian, may not yield equivalent integrative effects for majority and minority groups; non-Malays may respond to such slogans and efforts by feeling more included and inclusive towards others, while Malays may see such sloganeering very differently: Our findings indicate that Malays do not associate a strong Malaysian identity with increased outgroup friendships and more favourable outgroup attitudes, but instead associate it with having more Malay friends, which suggests that being Malaysian and Malay are very closely aligned for Malays. This then presents a problem for integration efforts that are focused on a 'one size fits all' policy, like '1Malaysia'. This asymmetry between Malays and non-Malays can have negative consequences over time because if the Malays associate 'Malaysian-ness' with being Malay, then non-Malays may begin to see calls for Malaysian-ness as an attempt by the majority-led government to disregard important components that non-Malays contribute to the national identity and, in effect, to require of them assimilation, rather than involving everyone in integration. The question of what constitutes the 'right' or 'true' national identity is a very complex and fraught one, with which governments and people across the world must grapple. However, Malaysia is utterly lacking a meaningful conversation around this topic. In the absence of that, Malaysians are in the position of having an ill-defined Malaysian-ness thrust upon them, which can, over time, serve to weaken rather than strengthen national integration.

Another type of identity that we studied was religious identity. We found that Malaysians are on the whole highly religiously identified, and that people have the highest interaction with, and knowledge of, their own people and religious traditions. Our analyses showed that a focus on promoting several factors could, over time, lead to greater religious tolerance and favourability. The first factor is increasing factual knowledge among all Malaysians of other religions. Since religion has taken centre-stage in Malaysia (as many social and political developments suggest), there is an urgent need for Malaysians to have a basic understanding of the core tenets of the various religions that are practiced by their fellow Malaysians. Such

knowledge has the potential to make them better arbiters when it comes to contentious religious matters, and to not be easily swayed by false information. Schools and universities are important places for the careful teaching of such knowledge. The second factor that we found to be associated with more religious tolerance is allowing people to perceive core similarities between their own and other religions. This is partly a function of knowledge but is also the outcome of teaching multi-faith religious education in a way that allows people to perceive areas of commonality and difference. The third and fourth factors are encouraging friendships with religious outgroup members, and having deeper and more meaningful conversations with these religious outgroup friends. Friendships provide a critical way in which people can develop a deep, non-book based understanding and appreciation of different religious traditions. Such a lived experience of the religious sensibilities and experiences of others could serve as an important complement to more classroom-based religious education efforts.

We also showed that having high levels of religious identification was negatively associated with attitudes to religious outgroups. We found this to be a very worrying finding, especially in a domestic and global context that shows signs of polarizing more and more along religious lines. However, we were extremely heartened to find that (i) promoting outgroup friendships and (ii) knowledge of outgroup religions have the potential to moderate some of the possible negative effects that may arise from high levels of religious identification. Our findings echo the call by The Woolf Institute's 2015 Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life report, for, among other things, "an enhanced mutual understanding of religion and belief; more socially representative schools; and more and better religious education and integration within schools".

In summary, these findings point to the need for greater openness towards, and awareness of, outgroup religions for a more harmonious society; ignorance and isolation are the enemies of cohesive societies. Our recommendations run counter to many trends (at various levels) in Malaysia, in which people are being pushed further apart because of fear that they may be corrupted by external (especially religious) influences. Ill-feelings and misconceptions abound, and the best way to combat these are to empower people to lift themselves out of ignorance and allow them to enjoy the company of people from other ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Combatting discrimination

Compared to the Chinese and the Indians, Malays reported feeling that Malaysia was a fair place, where their interests were protected and they had opportunities to succeed. Even so, a large number of Malays did not think economic policies were very equitable and about half of the samples from each ethnic group were highly dissatisfied with their economic standing relative

to their outgroups. Such discontent can have dangerous and destabilising consequences in a multi-ethnic setting in which economic success is still often connected to, and *seen* to be connected to, ethnicity. We also found many Chinese and Indians (and to a lesser extent Malays) reported that their group was highly discriminated against, while there was a relatively low incidence of feeling highly personally discriminated against. We found that the more people perceived discrimination against their ingroup, the more likely they were to report willingness to engage in both collective action to improve the standing of the ingroup and personal action, in the form of wanting to emigrate from Malaysia. The association between perceived discrimination and action tendencies was fairly consistent across all groups, indicating that discrimination was not only experienced and acted upon by minority groups, but also by the majority group. Clearly then, policies which appear to favour the majority group are not having their intended effect: we note that nearly half of Malay respondents felt that their group was highly discriminated against compared to two-thirds of the non-Malay samples. If there is a sense that one's ingroup is disadvantaged or discriminated against, this can powerfully shape people's perceptions and actions, independent of how they feel they are personally being treated, and can have highly negative consequences for integration. Thus government policies need to take these perceptions and this discontent seriously and create policies in which people feel that they are being fairly treated across the various spheres of their life, and that their ethnicity does not define and circumscribe their opportunities and abilities to succeed. A first step to such policies could be for the government to publish data concerning various indices related to social mobility. The public discourse in Malaysia often suffers from a lack of data on which to base assertions and recommendations. By publishing such data, the government would show its willingness to be accountable and evaluated by the public. This suggestion may seem, at first, to hold the risk of destabilizing inter-ethnic relations (if people see that some groups are doing better than others). However, if the data is disseminated in the spirit of establishing a baseline for where the country is (and where it wants to be), and is used to formulate policies that improve everyone's life chances, such a move has the potential to lead to a more stable and integrated country over the medium- to long-run. Such a step could help stem the brain drain that is often talked about in Malaysia, which has negative consequences for national income and productivity.

We also found a significant relationship between discrimination and mental health, such that those who felt more discriminated against (at the group and personal levels) reported lower levels of health and well-being. We believe that this is an extremely significant finding – if people feel that their ethnicity disadvantages them, and this perception is associated with poorer health, then this can have substantial knock-on effects in terms of national productivity and may restrict

people's willingness to engage with others (socially and professionally) in a multicultural context. Thus feeling discriminated against can have far-ranging consequences and is a factor that must be addressed by the government and various institutions and organisations with great urgency (we discuss this further in the interview section presented below).

Finally, we found that there was a high degree of agreement amongst ethnically diverse Malaysians in terms of how integration could be promoted. There was strong agreement across groups that neighbourhoods should be ethnically mixed, that political parties should be ethnically mixed and that all religions should be treated equally in government policy (between 60-90% of respondents across all three ethnic groups strongly endorsed these suggestions). There are areas on which groups did not see eye-to-eye, most notably doing away with vernacular education (low levels of Chinese support for this) and doing away with special privileges for the Malays (low levels of Malay support for this). We believe that these findings offer valuable perspectives which should be included in any national conversation on integration.

1.6 Limitations and Future Directions

While the data we collected has yielded a rich haul of findings, we believe that the force of the findings and the recommendations based on them could be improved in two straightforward ways. First, any discussion of ethnoreligious diversity in Malaysia is incomplete without an investigation of trends in East Malaysia. There is a strong bias in the national conversation to talk about diversity and integration as if it relates only to the Malays, Chinese and Indians, when in fact the diversity of Malaysia is far greater and more complex. East Malaysia has a very different ethnoreligious composition and history of inter-group relations than Peninsular Malaysia, and future work should include an equally rigorous investigation of this neglected territory in order to present a more representative account of, and recommendations for, the country as a whole. Second, our data is cross-sectional, and in order to really understand how one factor leads to change in another factor, we need to collect longitudinal data, in which the same set of respondents are followed up over time, ideally over some years. Current statistical knowledge suggests that this would improve our sense of causality (rather than only providing correlations, as we have done), and this would provide a much firmer foundation on which to base policy recommendations.

Section 2: Recommendations for Interventions

In this final section, we lay out some ideas for possible prejudice/conflict-reducing and integration-promoting interventions which can be conducted in workplaces and schools, based on our reading of the relevant literature which has examined interventions across the world. We also base our recommendations on the specific findings that emerged from the Malaysian survey data that we just presented.

2.1 Theoretical background and emphasis for interventions

In recommending interventions, we are influenced by Kurt Lewin's (1951) interactionist perspective on the person and the situation, in which the situation is made up by the social, cultural, and political forces in a person's environment. As Adams and Markus (2004) argue, individuals and their environments "make each other up", in an iterative, reciprocal manner. Thus the interventions that we recommend seek to transform the individual, and their individual-level construals of their situation, but also seek to transform the situation itself.

2.2 Methodological commitment

Though the various fields of psychology (e.g., social psychology, peace psychology, cultural psychology and political psychology) and other social sciences are very interested in effecting substantial and sustained prejudice and conflict-reduction, there are very few studies which have systematically and rigorously evaluated whether prejudice-reducing interventions are effective.

There are three essential components which we believe an intervention should have in order to rigorously evaluate how and for whom the intervention can be maximally effective: (i) it must be firmly based on individual-level and group-level processes that have been carefully tested (possibly in the laboratory and in other field settings) and which inform the latest theoretical thinking in psychology (and cognate disciplines such as sociology and political science), (ii) it must use random assignment in which people are randomly assigned to being part of the control or intervention groups and should capture pre-intervention levels of attitudes, experiences and behaviours for both groups, and (iii) it should ideally be studied in the real-world, i.e., in the context in which such an intervention (e.g., diversity training) might actually take place (rather than in a laboratory), and there should be a thorough investigation of conditions on the ground (e.g., political climate, ethnic composition of neighbourhood, anti-discrimination laws which are in place) in that particular situational context. Employing carefully designed and theoretically-based field experiments is the best way to achieve these components. Evaluations must also follow the effects of interventions across time, in a way that captures sequential or downstream effects.

2.3 Workplaces

Workplaces in Malaysia range from being mono-ethnic to being highly diverse. In this section, we propose some interventions (and evaluations of them) which we believe have the potential to change attitudes and behaviours in diverse workplaces.

The most frequent intervention used in workplaces across the world (and particularly in the United States) is diversity training, which is an umbrella term for a heterogeneous set of interventions ranging from discussion groups, to awareness-raising programmes (e.g., regarding the effects of stereotypes and implicit prejudice), to sensitivity training (to highlight the particular sensitivities that particular groups may have in a multicultural setting, and how to deal with these in a sensitive manner), to multicultural education (about the historical and cultural backgrounds and traditions of various groups), to information sessions explaining equality commitments and the legal constraints of discrimination in the workplace. The main aim of diversity trainings is to reduce prejudice and discrimination, and increase tolerance and inclusion in the workplace. Diversity training is a pervasive and long-term feature of many American workplaces over the last 30 years (in 2005, 66% of US employers used diversity training, Compensation and Benefits for Law Offices, 2006), despite little rigorous evaluation of such programmes (Paluck & Green, 2009).

2.3.1 Proposed intervention at the workplace: Diversity training with social network analysis

We propose to design a diversity training intervention that is anchored in well-tested prejudice-reduction strategies from the social psychological literature. The diversity-training programme could focus on perspective-taking (Batson & Ahmad, 2009; Brookman & Kalla, 2016) as the primary means of reducing prejudicial attitudes and behaviours, and promoting inter-group prosocial behaviours and empathy, since perspective-taking has been shown to be effective in leading to such outcomes (e.g., Ku, Wang & Galinsky, 2015). The main mechanism through which we would expect to see change in attitudes and behaviours, is via social norms that had been changed as a result of having attended the diversity-training; individuals tend to pay attention to the behaviour of certain people in their community to understand what is socially normative, and adjust their own behaviours accordingly (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Norms are also guided by significant others; and seeing a video of the CEO endorsing positive norms around diversity during such a workshop would make these pro-diversity norms clear.

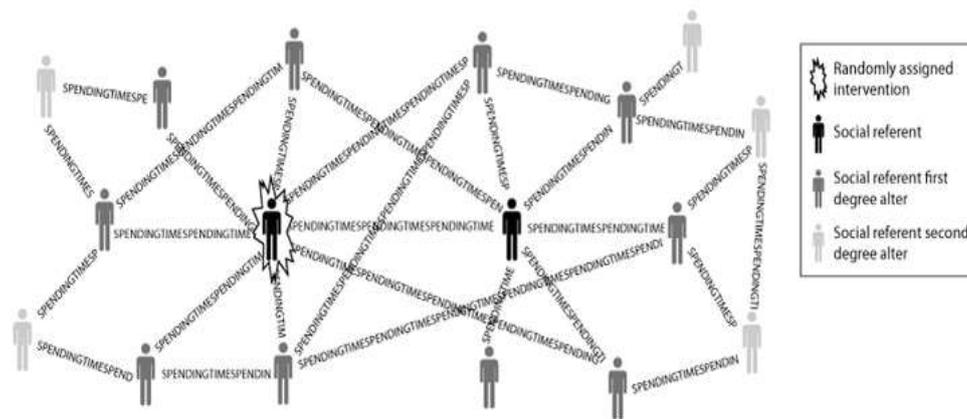
We would nominate certain individuals within work teams/divisions to participate in a diversity-training programme (e.g., participating once weekly in the programme across several weeks/months, with face-to-face and online training components). These nominated individuals

would be either a manager who leads the team or another person in the team who is highly visible and potentially influential because they have a good network of friends and colleagues (known as a 'social referent'). Various theories of social change suggest that the most effective way to bring about change in one's environment is to work with people who embody the solution to the problem at hand. The particular individuals who are selected for the intervention have the opportunity to be such agents of social change. By having at least two people from each work team attend the training, we can test whether perceived norms and actions are more effectively changed by a manager (who is in charge and explicitly sets the tone in a unit/team), or by a peer. This is an interesting and important question given that Malaysia has a reputation for being high in power-distance (Hofstede, 1984); in the 2014 global power-distance index (PDI), Malaysia emerged as the country with the highest power-distance score. Power-distance is a score of inequality, defined by the degree to which power inequality is accepted and endorsed by followers/subordinates as much as it is by leaders. Having knowledge about which kinds of people in an organisation/community serve as the most effective agents of social change will allow us to design future workplace interventions more effectively.

We would expect that changes in attitudes and behaviours originating from the nominated individuals (i.e., the manager and social referent) would diffuse through their social network of friends, colleagues and acquaintances at work in a series of ripples, thereby having the potential to envelop the group in a new social norm. We propose to study these diffusing effects through social network analysis, which is a very powerful way of studying the scale and rate of this diffusion. Social network analysis is a scientific approach used by sociologists and epidemiologists, and increasingly psychologists and political scientists, and is based on mapping out entire networks of individuals within particular environments (such as workplaces).

We propose to compare the effects of diversity training (based on perspective-taking) with a control condition, using a randomized field intervention. We will investigate the impact of the training using social network analysis (which will allow us to observe how the effects of the intervention cascade across members of a network, e.g., a work team/division) and how changes in norms, attitudes and behaviours differ depending on whether people are part of a network which received the intervention or are part of a control group. We draw upon the work of Paluck and her colleagues who have conducted network analysis in the context of field experiments to assess how and to what extent prejudice reduction occurs in school settings (e.g., Paluck, 2011; Paluck, Shepart & Aranow, 2016). Figure 40 below provides a sense of how a social referent, randomly selected to participate in an intervention, could exert and diffuse effects through the social network.

Figure 40: Experimental design of an intervention in a complete social network



Source: Paluck & Shepherd, 2012; Shepherd & Paluck, 2015

In addition to assessing change at the individual-level, we plan to include general, population-wide measures of social climate (e.g., company-wide reports of discrimination) to see if there is change in such population-wide variables which could signal a change in the environment as a whole. Thinking back to our survey and the interviews with CIMB employees, perceived discrimination of one’s ingroup is something that people spontaneously reported (in the interviews) and reported at quite high levels (in the interviews and the survey). We would also collect a rich database of the conditions on the ground, such as ethnic composition of work teams, primary languages spoken in the teams, ethnicity of key clients interacted with, awareness of diversity policies in the company, etc., in order to test whether any of these factors moderated the impact of any effects we observed.

All participants would be assessed at intervals before, through and after the intervention. One of the benefits of an intervention of this nature, in which only a select few people in an organization are given training and then change is observed among members of their social network, is that such an intervention is highly cost and time effective, which would be an important consideration in any busy workplace.

Since this is a somewhat complex intervention, we briefly summarize the main phases of the intervention and evaluation below:

Phase 1: Collect information on various conditions in the company to understand better the climate within the organisation.

Phase 2: Conduct a company-wide survey on attitudes and experiences (including friendship and work-team networks with colleagues in the organisation).

Phase 3: Based on social network analysis from that company-wide survey, we would:

- i. create a set of teams/units to serve as the group to receive the intervention, and a matched set of teams/units to serve as the control group (which receives no intervention)
- ii. select two individuals from each of the teams/units to undergo the intervention – these would be the manager/leader of the team and another peer social referent (we would also nominate two people from every team in the control group, but these people would be told that they would undergo the training at a later date rather than during the study period. This would be done to keep the intervention and control conditions as similar as possible, except for the actual diversity-training component). Both individuals selected, independently of their status, would be centrally integrated in the social network in order to be able to potentially distribute prejudice-reducing norms.

Phase 4: The individuals selected for the intervention would undergo diversity-training once a week over several weeks/months (we would ensure that this would not be too time-consuming for the participants). They would be administered a survey after each training session, and their work teammates would also be administered a survey at the same intervals (these surveys would be relatively short, web-based and quick to complete).

Phase 5: Once the training is over, we would administer a survey to all participants in the study (from both the intervention and control groups), and do so again after 1 and 3 month lags.

If our evaluation finds that the intervention was effective in changing attitudes and/or behaviours and the social climate, we would be in the enviable position of being able to recommend a theoretically-based and empirically evaluated intervention to other workplaces in Malaysia (and around the world). We believe that the size, structure and ethnic composition of CIMB makes this an ideal intervention to test here. As discussed in the introduction to this subsection, while many workplaces in other countries use various forms of diversity training for their employees, rarely have these interventions been rigorously evaluated, and thus we have very little understanding of just how effective they *really* are in promoting integration. The danger of unevaluated programmes being widely-adopted is that it gives stakeholders the sense that a meaningful effort is being made to promote integration, without any reliable data on its efficacy. This then potentially represents a missed opportunity to make a meaningful change, have a maximal impact on the desired outcome, and can be a poor use of resources. Given that CIMB occupies an important place among Malaysian companies and is an influential organisation in this region, we have high hopes that the findings from the evaluation of such an intervention can

have far-reaching consequences for other workplaces and also for any context (including schools and neighbourhoods) in which people are in a group setting, and in which they pay attention to the norms of significant people within their social networks. Thus we believe that this would be a very significant and concrete contribution from CIMB Foundation to the nation and beyond.

We acknowledge that this is only one possible intervention that could be tried at the workplace. There are several others, built upon findings in a range of research areas, such as the benefits of inter-group contact, cooperative working, increased self-disclosure, and an emphasis on a common (e.g., Malaysian) identity versus a dual (e.g., Chinese and Malaysian) identity. We have chosen this particular intervention because we believe that it is based on a robust foundation of research (on the benefits of perspective-taking) and involves the fostering of new social norms (which have been shown to powerfully shape our thoughts and behaviours). Moreover, this is done in a manner that is relatively unobtrusive and cost-effective (because the training is only given to a select few individuals in the company), and yet (as past research has shown) such influence can be shown to percolate down to many other members of the organisation.

2.4 Schools

Schools are a unique environment in which to study and promote integration. Young people are at various stages of identity development, and their relatively malleable attitudes and orientation towards acquiring knowledge and new perspectives make them an ideal and extremely important population on which to test prejudice-reduction interventions. Students at school are also in a natural situation, one which they experience multiple days a week, and yet in which social interventions can be implemented with considerable experimental control (see also Wölfer, Jaspers, & Hewstone, in press). In this section, we propose a few interventions which we believe have the potential to substantially impact integration-related attitudes and behaviours, and we provide an outline for evaluating them rigorously. These suggested interventions are, once again, based on findings from the education and psychology literature and from findings from the Malaysian survey discussed above.

2.4.1 Proposed intervention in schools: Cooperative learning and inter-ethnic contact

The first intervention that we propose is based around cooperative learning and intergroup contact. Cooperative learning has its roots in social interdependence theory (Deutsch, 1949), which states that members of groups who depend on one another to achieve their individual goals will cooperate with and feel more positively toward one another. There are many different ways to learn cooperatively. One of the methods that has been most widely studied is

the “jigsaw classroom” method created by Aronson and his colleagues (e.g., Aronson & Bridgeman, 1979), which was first used in the United States in 1971 in a school that had been recently desegregated and in which racial tensions between White, Black and Hispanic students ran very high. The researchers found that the key reason for the inter-ethnic tensions was a competitive environment in the school, which the jigsaw classroom method helped to diffuse. In cooperative learning interventions, students are arranged into learning groups for an assignment (or over a term or a year), and are given (or asked to learn about) one essential piece of the information needed to complete each assignment. Because each piece of the puzzle is essential, each student who has that information becomes essential, and is treated as a collaborator rather than a competitor. Meta-analyses of the many studies of cooperative learning interventions demonstrate that such interventions lead to greater and more positive peer relationships and to more helping behaviours across multi-ethnic groups, and groups composed of students with varying intellectual and physical abilities (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Such designs are also related, among other things, to better performance at school, higher levels of self-esteem and greater enjoyment of school (Roseth, Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

We understand that CIMB Foundation works with select schools in various capacities, and therefore we believe that the Foundation might be well-situated to recommend such an intervention to a handful of the schools it works with. We could design the intervention to be carried out in a school holiday programme so as to get the buy-in of schools, pupils and their parents, and not disrupt the delivery of the regular curriculum.

As an example, the actual intervention could involve a classroom-based lesson in an enrichment course during the school holidays. Say there is a science enrichment class of 20 pupils, whose lesson is on animal cells and plants cells:

Step 1: The class is divided into five assignment groups of four pupils each, and each pupil is assigned to learn about one piece of the puzzle. For example, in each of the groups, the pupils could be placed in the following assignment groups:

		ASSIGNMENT GROUP				
		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
EXPERT GROUP	Membranes	Mary	Chee Leong	Mansur	Meena	Ifaat
	Cytoplasm	Siu Yen	Faridah	Raja	Joseph	May Lee
	Nucleus	Ariff	Saravanan	Min Yee	Fairuz	Jacob
	Mitochondria	Lakshmi	Suraya	Lalitha	Ting Ting	Ahmad

Step 2: Each pupil then goes away and learns about their piece of the puzzle. Once this is done individually, they meet up to have discussions with classmates who are working on the same area; pupils working on the same piece of the puzzle form an expert group (e.g., Mary will discuss membranes with her four other classmates who are studying membranes too).

Step 3: The expert groups then break up and each student returns to their original assignment group. At this stage each student in the group must present what they have learned; it is their job to communicate clearly to their team mates and their team mates must elicit information from them in the most effective way possible.

Step 4: Pupils are then tested individually on animal and plant cells to assess their understanding.

The teacher (whom we would provide training to) acts as the facilitator of this process and works to create an environment that is conducive for cooperative learning, which would include establishing certain rules around how to interact respectfully and effectively with one another. In our experimental design, we would want to have one set of enrichment classes undertaking the cooperative learning intervention (detailed above) while another set of classes would be randomly assigned to be the control group who would learn the material in the usual teacher-led manner, and the two conditions would be compared on a range of indicators.

We argue that given the high degree of competition in most Malaysian (and in general, Asian) schools, and parents' and teachers' focus on results, such a cooperative learning paradigm might prove particularly effective. The intervention could take the form of a classroom-based school holiday programme as we outlined above, or could be based on other non-classroom activities and tasks that require a degree of knowledge and skill, such as building a small hut from scratch or working together in a sporting activity (though we would need to be cautious about the competitive element in any such activity).

If we evaluate such an intervention and find it effective in promoting integration, CIMB Foundation could package this as its school holiday programme, and in the future, could use it to bring together pupils from vernacular and national or religious schools. If we can show the success of such a paradigm on both integration and educational attainment, the Foundation could make the case to the Ministry of Education to consider piloting such an intervention on a larger scale.

2.4.2 Proposed intervention in schools: Multi-faith religious education and inter-faith contact

Our research findings on religious tolerance (from the Malaysian survey we conducted) did, however, find that those who had more knowledge of outgroup religions also had more favourable attitudes towards the religious outgroup, especially when they had high levels of

religious identification. This suggests to us that education about outgroup religions may have the potential to lead to greater inter-religious integration. In addition to religious knowledge, we found an even greater effect of having friends from outgroup religions on attitudes towards religious outgroups, especially for those who were highly religiously identified.

In the context of these findings, we propose an intervention based on participating in a multi-faith religious education course (taught either by an ingroup or outgroup expert) and on increasing inter-religious contact among school pupils. We propose that such an intervention be carried out over a school holiday camp, and ideally with pupils who have not had much prior exposure to religious outgroups. Having said that, we appreciate the sensitivity of questions to do with religion and religious education in Malaysia, and also acknowledge that the country does not have a long (or even short) history of promoting inter-faith efforts, particularly not with young people. While our research findings suggest that interventions along these lines could prove powerful in reducing religious intolerance, we understand that CIMB Foundation may consider such an intervention risky in the current social and political climate. However, if this is something the Foundation would like to learn more about, we would be happy to prepare a detailed intervention plan. We also suggest that this could be one of the recommendations that the Foundation makes to the Government, if it writes to them about the findings of this research (see below).

We conclude this section on recommended interventions by acknowledging that while there are many integration programmes across the world (undertaken by governments, corporations, and non-governmental organisations) we have taken caution not to recommend any that are based on principles that have not been pre-tested and whose outcomes have not been carefully evaluated. We have previously conducted an evaluation on the National Service Programme in Malaysia and found only negligible improvement in any of the integration-related variables that we tested, when compared to a matched control group (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2012). Our research team, led by Miles Hewstone, is currently evaluating the National Citizenship Scheme in the UK in order to make recommendations on the effectiveness of this programme and ways in which it can be strengthened.

2.5 Proposal for recommendations to the government

In the deliverables section outlined in our research proposal (dated June 13, 2016), we suggested that the findings from the survey could be used by CIMB Foundation as the basis for creating a set of recommendations and guidelines for policy that they could share with the Government. In this sub-section, we briefly outline what some of these recommendations for policy to the Government could be.

Our findings indicate a general dissatisfaction with government policy, about people's perceived ingroup standing relative to other groups, and high feelings of discrimination. We also found that a significant number of Malaysians (particularly non-Malays) see emigration from Malaysia and/or collective action as a way to improve things for themselves and their groups. The government may consider publishing data on social mobility indicators to convey their commitment to fairness, transparency and accountability. Periodically providing such data would indicate how the country is evolving over time, and can be used to formulate policies that improve everyone's life chances. This has the potential to lead to a more stable and integrated country.

Our results also indicated that inter-group contact should be a key plank of the Government's integration efforts. This could inform the government's social housing efforts. Community cohesion within neighbourhoods could be strengthened by creating and maintaining more public social and leisure facilities in which people from different backgrounds can come together.

The Government also needs to be aware that some of its integration efforts which may be seem uncontroversial (such as its effort to strengthen the Malaysian identity through programmes such as 1Malaysia), may not be perceived in the same way by majority and minority group members. Our findings showed that Malays associated 'Malaysian-ness' with being Malay (and not with increasing their integration with ethnic outgroup members), while non-Malays associated 'Malaysian-ness' with being more integrated with ethnic out groups. Over time, this asymmetry may push groups further apart and create an anxiety within non-Malays in particular, that calls for Malaysian-ness by the majority-led government are an attempt to assimilate, rather than meaningfully and respectfully integrate all Malaysians. The government should work with the general public, civil society organisations and academics to kick-start a conversation on the question of what it means to be Malaysian.

There is also evidence that multi-faith education may be an important way for people to increase religious tolerance, particularly in a context in which religion is becoming a more defining social identity. Further research, particularly of a longitudinal nature, would be needed in order to firm more data-driven recommendations to the government on multi-faith education. Such data would also benefit recommendations in other areas which the Government can focus its efforts.

Conclusions

Our results paint a picture of a country that is finding ways to negotiate diversity and difference, but that could profit from theory-driven and empirically-grounded recommendations to negotiate this sometimes tricky path with greater success. The purpose of our investigations was to understand the lived experiences of a wide-range of Malaysians in multicultural Malaysia, their responses to government policies, and their ideas for improving integration.

On the whole, we found much to be hopeful about. In general, there was evidence of inter-ethnic and inter-religious friendships for all groups, and a consistent association between such friendships and positive outgroup attitudes. We also found quite high levels of friendship and positive contact in the workplace and the neighbourhood, which were similarly related to positive attitudes to ethnic outgroups. In addition, neighbourhood positive contact and ethnic diversity were associated with better mental health outcomes. Respondents also reported low levels of anxiety when thinking of interacting with ethnic outgroups. These findings bode very well for treating inter-group contact as a central plank of efforts to reduce prejudice and promote national integration.

Relatedly, our data showed that having friends from a religious outgroup has the potential to alleviate the negative effects of high levels of religious identification. We have argued that Malaysia is becoming more polarized along religious lines (in line with global trends), and our finding suggests a constructive way to maintain and promote integration in the face of increasing religious identification. Additionally, our data show that providing people with greater knowledge about outgroup religions may also have the potential to alleviate the negative effects of high levels of religious identification. Thus, diversity – if harnessed to increase knowledge, appreciation and positive experiences with the outgroup – can prove to be a potent force against narrowly defined, exclusive identities and intolerance.

We also note how much support people expressed for greater religious equality and racial mixing in schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods, and even in political parties. Though this is only one study, which would need to be replicated, we feel optimistic about these findings, which suggest that Malaysians do not view diversity as an ill, but rather see it as necessary for achieving integration. Findings such as this provide a counter to the often-repeated idea that Malaysians are defined by race, and that people will react badly to being organised and represented in ways other than along racial/religious lines. Thus the onus is upon the policy-makers, politicians, leaders of organisations (private and public), academics and the general public to find a way to maximise the promise of multicultural Malaysia. This should involve regularly collecting and publishing data on a range of indicators and creating and enforcing policies and laws in which

equality is a central premise. When such data is available, the population become better and more critical consumers of the various social, political and economic arguments put before them by various parties.

There were, however, also signs that suggest challenges associated with diversity. Many respondents felt highly dissatisfied about their group's economic position relative to that of other groups, and felt that their group was highly discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity. Such feelings of discrimination were associated with a desire to emigrate from the country but also with a willingness to engage in collective action to improve the standing of the ingroup. While emigration from Malaysia (particularly at scale) represents a substantial loss for the country, willingness to engage in normative collective action is a means by which people show their commitment to their groups, and a belief that things should and can change in the country. These findings should be taken seriously by policy-makers in understanding the roots of disengagement from the country (which may be expressed via emigration) or engagement in activities that are deemed non-normative in the Malaysian context (i.e., street protests). If discrimination is at the root of such actions, then this needs to be addressed seriously, rather than labelling people (both those who engage and disengage) as unpatriotic or trouble-making.

We also found that discrimination was associated with poorer mental health and feelings of frustration, anger and resignation. This is an important finding which shows just how far-reaching poor management of diversity can be; when people feel unfairly treated and as if their life chances are being hindered, this can exert a significant psychological toll.

Further, there was an indication that being Malaysian meant different things to different groups, and further research is needed to tailor integration efforts based around promoting the national identity so that such efforts do not inadvertently push people further apart.

Though the data we have collected is rich and instructive, the cross-sectional nature of the survey and the small scale and qualitative nature of the interviews mean that caution is needed when interpreting the findings, especially when trying to investigate how changes in one factor may impact on another factor. More robust conclusions await more robust data. Future data collection efforts should ideally be based on longitudinal and quasi-experimental data. We have suggested a few interventions which we believe have the capacity to promote integration and reduce intolerance. These interventions need to be evaluated rigorously before they can be recommended for wide-adoption. We hope that we will continue to have the opportunity to work with CIMB Foundation in the vital next stages of the journey to maximise the potential of this dynamic multicultural nation.

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Appendix A: Sources of News

Appendix A Table 1: Main sources of news

	Newspaper	TV	Internet	Radio
Malays	68.8	91.4	30.4	5
Chinese	59.4	56.4	62.6	12.4
Indians	70.3	88.2	29.3	9.4

Most read newspapers

We found that the highest number of Malay respondents listed Harian Metro (24.9%) and Berita Harian (12.9%) as their most-read newspapers. Chinese respondents listed Sinchew (26.2%) and China Press (13%) as their most-read newspapers, while Indian respondents listed Malaysia Nanban (19.8%) and The Star (17.1%) as their most-read newspapers.

Most watched TV channels

Malay respondents listed TV3 (55.3%) and RTM1 (9.6%) as their most-watched TV channels. Chinese respondents listed 8TV (19%) and NTV7 (7.8%) as their most-watched TV channels, while Indian respondents listed RTM2 (20.8%) and TV3 (17.6%) as their most-watched TV channels.