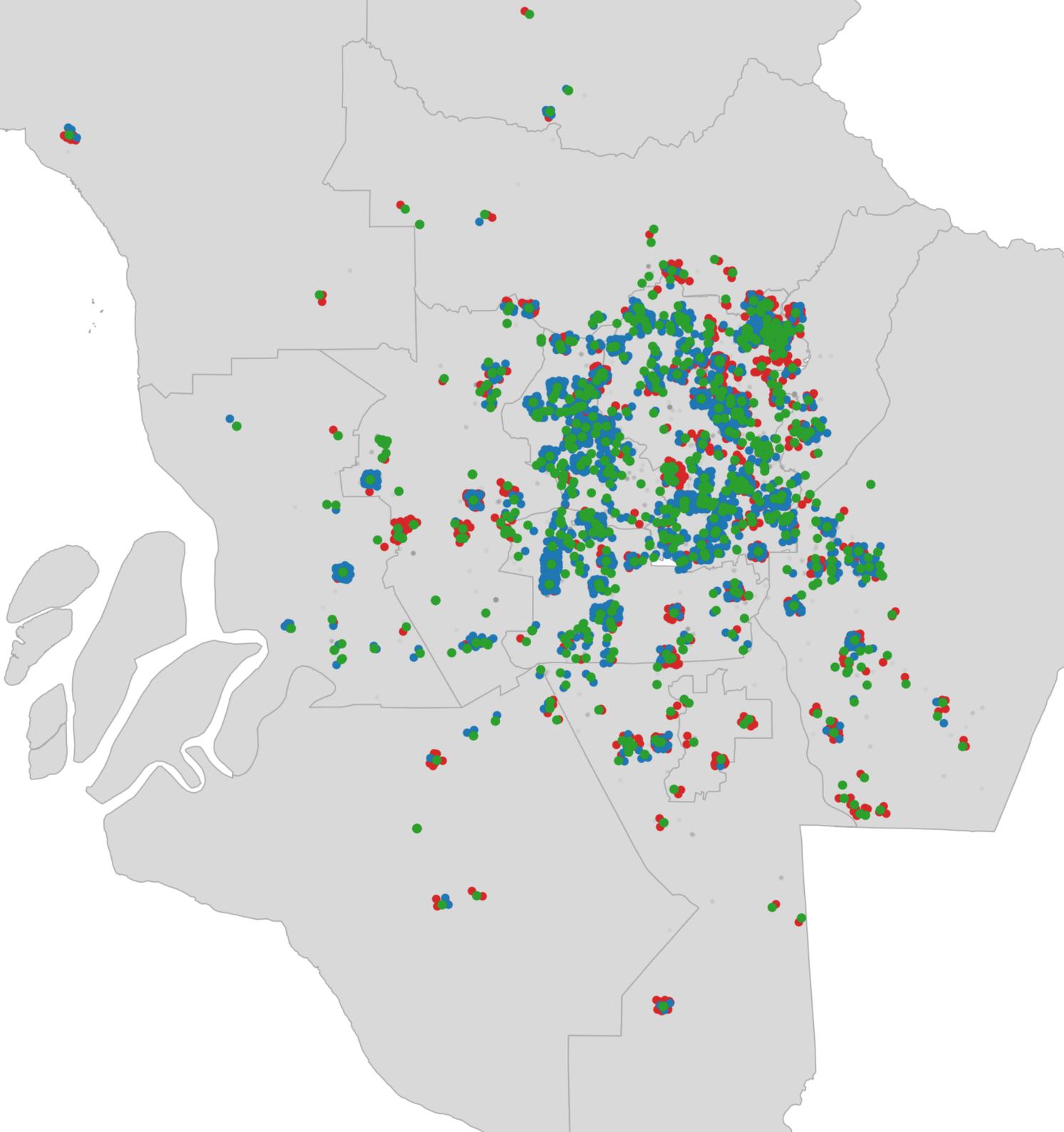




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# ROOM RENTAL DISCRIMINATION

VOLUME 1: THE KLANG VALLEY REPORT





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Persatuan Pendidikan Diversiti  
(PPM-025-10-24022021)

**Room Rental Discrimination. Volume 1: The Klang Valley Report.**

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AI use disclosure: This report was produced with AI assistance for scraping script generation and deployment, data analysis and map generation using Google Antigravity, Claude Opus 4.5/4.6 and Gemini 3/3.1 Pro.

Credits: geojson files for the Klang Valley were obtained from Tindak Malaysia's public repository.

Email contact@[aodmalaysia.org](mailto:aodmalaysia.org) for access to data.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides the first systematic quantitative analysis of explicit racial discrimination in the room rental market across the Klang Valley. Using a dataset of 35,367 room rental listings scraped from the iBilik platform between 2–3 February 2026, the study measures how frequently landlords and agents use the platform’s built-in race preference function to exclude prospective tenants from three major racial groups: Malay, Chinese, and Indian.

The findings indicate that racial discrimination is a dominant feature of the online room rental market. Across the full dataset, 42.8% of listings explicitly exclude at least one racial group, exceeding both the share of listings that are explicitly inclusive (22.6%) and those with no stated preference (34.6%). In practical terms, a renter searching the platform is statistically more likely to encounter a listing that excludes a racial group than one that explicitly welcomes all tenants.

Discrimination is not evenly distributed across racial groups. Indian renters face by far the highest level of exclusion. 31.7% of all listings in the Klang Valley explicitly exclude Indian renters, compared to 7.6% for Malay renters and 3.9% for Chinese renters. While 96.1% of listings accept Chinese renters and 92.4% accept Malay renters, only 68.3% of listings are open to Indian renters, meaning roughly one in three listings is inaccessible to them at the outset.

Geographically, discrimination is widespread across the Klang Valley but varies significantly by area. Several suburban and outer-urban areas record particularly high discrimination rates, with Ampang, Taman Desa and Bangi among the most restrictive markets. By contrast, areas closer to the Kuala Lumpur city core tend to display lower discrimination rates and higher shares of explicitly inclusive listings.

The data also reveals meaningful differences across price segments. Indian renters face the highest exclusion rates in the lowest price tier, with 43.9% of listings below RM400 excluding them, though exclusion remains substantial even in higher-priced listings. Chinese exclusion is concentrated almost entirely in the lowest-cost segment, while Malay exclusion remains relatively consistent across price tiers.

Price comparisons further show that listings excluding Indian renters are, on average, 11.2% cheaper than listings that do not exclude them. This suggests that the cheaper segments of the rental market are disproportionately closed off to Indian renters, leaving them with a smaller and more expensive pool of available housing.

Because this analysis captures only listings where landlords explicitly state racial preferences, the results likely underestimate the true prevalence of discrimination, which may also occur informally during enquiry or screening stages. Nevertheless, the dataset provides a clear and measurable picture of how racial exclusion operates openly within the digital rental marketplace.

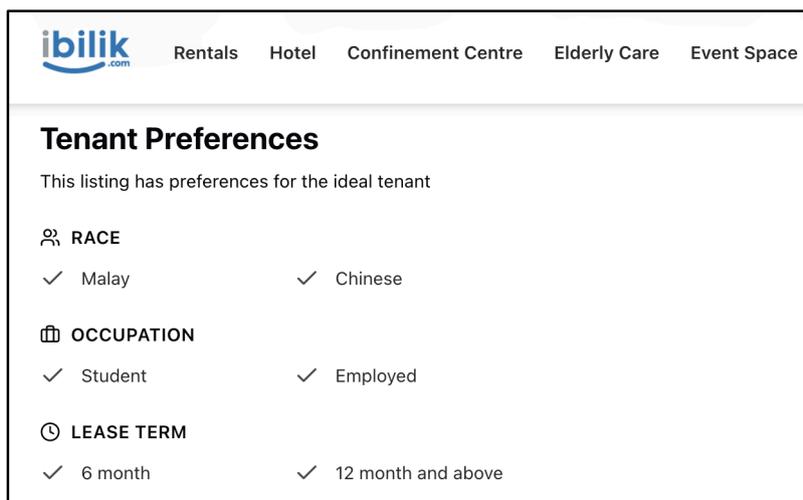
Taken together, the findings demonstrate that racial discrimination in the Klang Valley room rental market is systemic, measurable, and unevenly distributed, with Indian renters facing the most pervasive barriers to housing access. The results provide an empirical foundation for further research, policy discussion, and scrutiny of platform design choices that enable explicit racial filtering in housing listings.

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# METHODOLOGY & LIMITATIONS

## Data Collection

Rental listing data was collected between 2-3 February 2026 via a custom Python web scraper deployed to Google Cloud Run, targeting the publicly accessible listings at ibilik.com. The scraper was designed to paginate systematically through up to 990 pages of listings and extract relevant fields from each individual listing page, including rent price, stated race preferences (including per-group inclusion/exclusion flags for Malay, Chinese, and Indian renters, as well as Others), location name, area name (if available) and provided geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude). Duplicate listing URLs were filtered in real time during collection.



*Screenshot of a section of a ibilik.com listing where racial preferences are activated and used.*

## Data Cleaning and Discrimination Classification

The raw dataset was processed through several stages of quality filtering before analysis. First, URL duplicates were removed to ensure each listing was counted only once. However, units listed separately twice may still exist. Second, full-apartment listings inadvertently captured alongside room rentals were excluded by filtering out entries with "studio" in the listing URL, as these represent a structurally different segment of the market with distinct pricing dynamics.

Strict numerical bounds were then applied to rental prices. Listings without a valid price field were dropped entirely. A price floor of RM200 and a price ceiling of RM1,500 per month were enforced, excluding entries outside this range. The upper bound was set to conservatively filter out whole-unit rentals, while the lower bound excluded implausible entries such as car park rentals and placeholder listings. These thresholds were selected to capture the mainstream room rental market while limiting the influence of outliers at both extremes.

A listing was classified as discriminatory if the landlord/agent had enabled the Race Preference option and had explicitly marked one or more racial groups (Malay, Chinese, Indian, Other) as excluded. Conversely, a listing was classified as explicitly inclusive if the landlord had enabled Race Preference and marked all groups as permitted. Listings with no stated race preference were classified as No Preference Listed and treated separately in aggregations.

The final dataset retained 35,367 valid listings. 96.2% had area-level specification.

## **Statistical Analysis**

Discrimination rates were computed as the proportion of total listings (within each geographic or price segment) that explicitly excluded a given racial group. Price differentials were calculated by comparing the mean rent of listings that excluded a specific group against listings that did not discriminate against that group. The non-discriminatory reference category includes both listings with no stated preference and listings explicitly marked as inclusive.

## **Geospatial Visualisation**

Geographic boundaries for the local authority areas comprising the Klang Valley were sourced from Tindak Malaysia's publicly available GeoJSON repository.

## **Limitations**

This analysis is limited to listings that explicitly state race preferences using iBilik's built-in preference fields. Informal discrimination, including landlords/agents who screen applicants by name, photograph or enquiry language without flagging preferences in the listing, is not captured here. The true prevalence of racial discrimination in the Klang Valley rental market is therefore likely to differ from the figures reported.

The dataset represents a cross-sectional snapshot of available listings and does not account for variation over time, seasonal patterns or listings removed before data collection. Listings marked as No Preference Listed may include landlords with unstated preferences, making it impossible to distinguish genuinely non-discriminatory listings from those where preferences are communicated through other channels.

Price differential analysis should be interpreted with caution. Differences in mean rent between discriminatory and non-discriminatory listings may partly reflect neighbourhood composition or property type rather than a causal effect of the discrimination itself.

Finally, the racial categories used in this report (Malay, Chinese, Indian) reflect the classification options available on the iBilik platform and do not capture the full diversity of ethnic communities in the Klang Valley, including other Bumiputera groups and minority races.

# RESULTS

## OVERALL DISCRIMINATION RATES

The data reveals that discrimination is the single most common landlord stance in the Klang Valley rental market. Across the full dataset of 35,367 listings, 42.8% carry explicit racial exclusions, a figure that exceeds both the share of explicitly inclusive listings (22.6%) and those with no stated preference (34.6%). In other words, a renter searching the platform is statistically more likely to encounter a listing that excludes at least one racial group than to encounter one that is explicitly open to all.

Region	Total Listings	Discriminatory	Explicitly Inclusive	No Preference Listed
Klang Valley	35,367	42.8%	22.6%	34.6%
Selangor	21,077	45.4%	18.1%	36.5%
Kuala Lumpur	14,290	39.0%	29.2%	31.9%

Selangor accounts for the majority of listings in the dataset (21,077 listings) and exhibits a higher discrimination rate (45.4%) than Kuala Lumpur (39.0%), while KL has a notably higher share of explicitly inclusive listings (29.2% versus 18.1% in Selangor). This divergence suggests that the more urban and centrally located KL market may face somewhat different social norms or tenant pool dynamics compared to surrounding Selangor localities.

Region	Total Listings	Malay Discrimination	Chinese Discrimination	Indian Discrimination
Klang Valley	35,367	7.6%	3.9%	31.7%
Selangor	21,077	7.0%	3.9%	36.4%
Kuala Lumpur	14,290	8.5%	3.9%	24.8%

Indian renters are excluded from 31.7% of all Klang Valley listings, more than four times the rate for Malay renters (7.6%) and over eight times that for Chinese renters (3.9%). When viewed from the perspective of which listings are open to each group, 96.1% of listings accept Chinese renters, 92.4% accept Malay renters, but only 68.3% are open to Indian renters. This means that roughly one in three listings is actively inaccessible to Indian renters before any other factors are considered.

Included	Excluded	Total Listings	Percentage
	No Preference	12,242	34.6%
Malay, Chinese, Indian		11,648	32.9%
Malay, Chinese	Indian	7,550	21.3%
Chinese	Malay, Indian	2,364	6.7%
Malay	Chinese, Indian	1,196	3.4%
Chinese, Indian	Malay	182	0.5%
Malay, Indian	Chinese	49	0.1%
Indian	Malay, Chinese	26	0.1%

Open to	Total Listings	Percentage
Malay	32,685	92.4%
Chinese	33,986	96.1%
Indian	24,147	68.3%

*\*calculations excluding Other as a category for simplification*

The breakdown by listing combination (not considering Others category) reveals that the most common discriminatory pattern is the simultaneous exclusion of only Indian renters while accepting Malay and Chinese renters (21.3% of all listings). Exclusion of Malay and Indian renters while accepting Chinese renters only accounts for 6.7% of listings, while exclusion of Chinese and Indian renters while accepting Malay renters only accounts for 3.4% of listings.

## DISCRIMINATION BY AREA

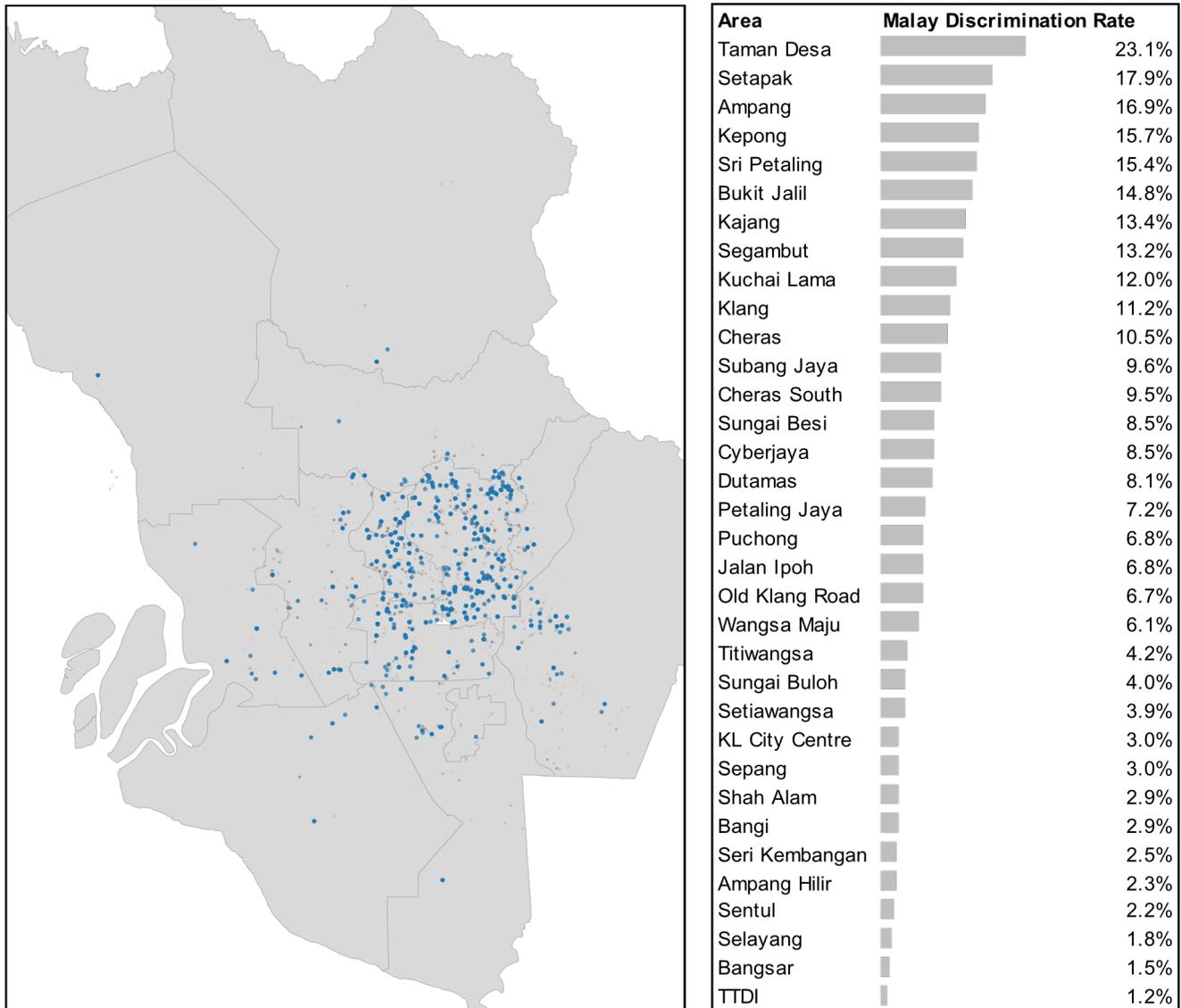
Discrimination rates vary substantially across the 34 areas studied, ranging from a high of 57.5% in Ampang to a low of 25.7% in Titiwangsa. The highest discrimination rates are concentrated in areas along the outer urban fringe and in established residential suburbs: Ampang (57.5%), Taman Desa (56.2%), Klang (54.8%), Setapak (51.1%), Bangi (50.5%), and Shah Alam (50.4%) all exceed the 50% threshold.

At the lower end of the scale, areas in or near the Kuala Lumpur city core tend to show lower discrimination rates but higher explicit inclusivity. Titiwangsa (25.7%), Kuchai Lama (26.4%), Sentul (27.5%), Sepang (26.7%), and KL City Centre (31.3%) all fall below the regional average. KL City Centre also records the highest share of explicitly inclusive listings among high-volume areas at 43.8%, suggesting that the more cosmopolitan and transient nature of central KL's rental market may be associated with greater openness to diverse tenants.

Area	Total Listings	Discriminatory	Explicitly Inclusive
Ampang	207	57.5%	23.7%
Taman Desa	121	56.2%	12.4%
Klang	438	54.8%	16.4%
Setapak	1372	51.1%	21.1%
Bangi	105	50.5%	9.5%
Shah Alam	2784	50.4%	13.9%
Cheras South	475	50.1%	9.5%
Puchong	1970	48.7%	21.1%
Kepong	811	48.3%	16.8%
Sungai Besi	386	47.2%	23.8%
Cyberjaya	270	46.7%	16.3%
Petaling Jaya	9709	46.1%	17.4%
Sri Petaling	208	44.7%	16.8%
Cheras	2334	44.6%	25.9%
Sungai Buloh	276	44.6%	2.9%
Jalan Ipoh	280	44.3%	28.6%
Old Klang Road	1396	42.3%	19.1%
Wangsa Maju	115	39.1%	47.0%
Kajang	476	38.2%	24.8%
Subang Jaya	2532	38.2%	13.0%
Setiawangsa	103	36.9%	46.6%
Bukit Jalil	777	36.7%	20.6%
Ampang Hilir	171	36.3%	30.4%
Selayang	166	36.1%	53.0%
TTDI	244	35.7%	43.0%
Seri Kembangan	991	35.3%	36.3%
Bangsar	204	31.4%	39.2%
KL City Centre	2689	31.3%	43.8%
Segambut	106	31.1%	45.3%
Dutamas	124	30.6%	50.8%
Sentul	644	27.5%	33.1%
Sepang	101	26.7%	41.6%
Kuchai Lama	258	26.4%	26.7%
Titiwangsa	144	25.7%	34.0%

\* Not shown: Figures for listings that did not list preferences

## DISCRIMINATION BY AREA: MALAY

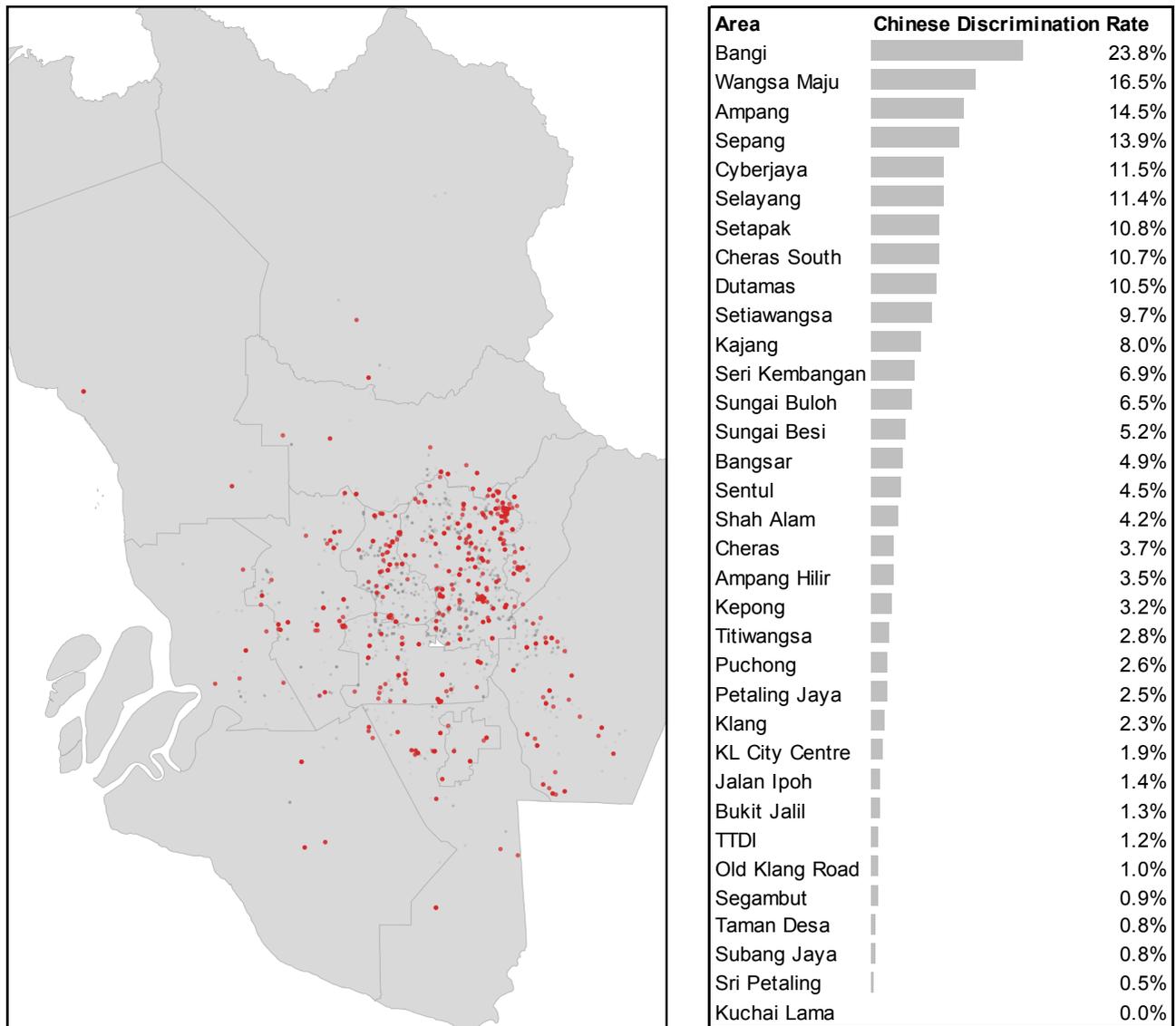


Malay renters face the second-highest overall exclusion rate at 7.6% of all Klang Valley listings. However, this rate is unevenly distributed geographically, with a handful of areas showing markedly elevated exclusion of Malay renters relative to the regional average.

Taman Desa records the highest Malay discrimination rate at 23.1%, more than three times the regional average, followed by Setapak (17.9%) and Ampang (16.9%). Kepong (15.7%), Sri Petaling (15.4%), and Bukit Jalil (14.8%) also show notably elevated rates.

At the opposite end, areas such as TTDI (1.2%), Bangsar (1.5%), Selayang (1.8%), and Sentul (2.2%) show very low rates of Malay exclusion. Shah Alam, one of Malaysia's most Malay-majority cities, records a Malay discrimination rate of only 2.9%, which is consistent with the demographic composition of its landlord base. Similarly, KL City Centre (3.0%) and Ampang Hilir (2.3%) show low exclusion rates.

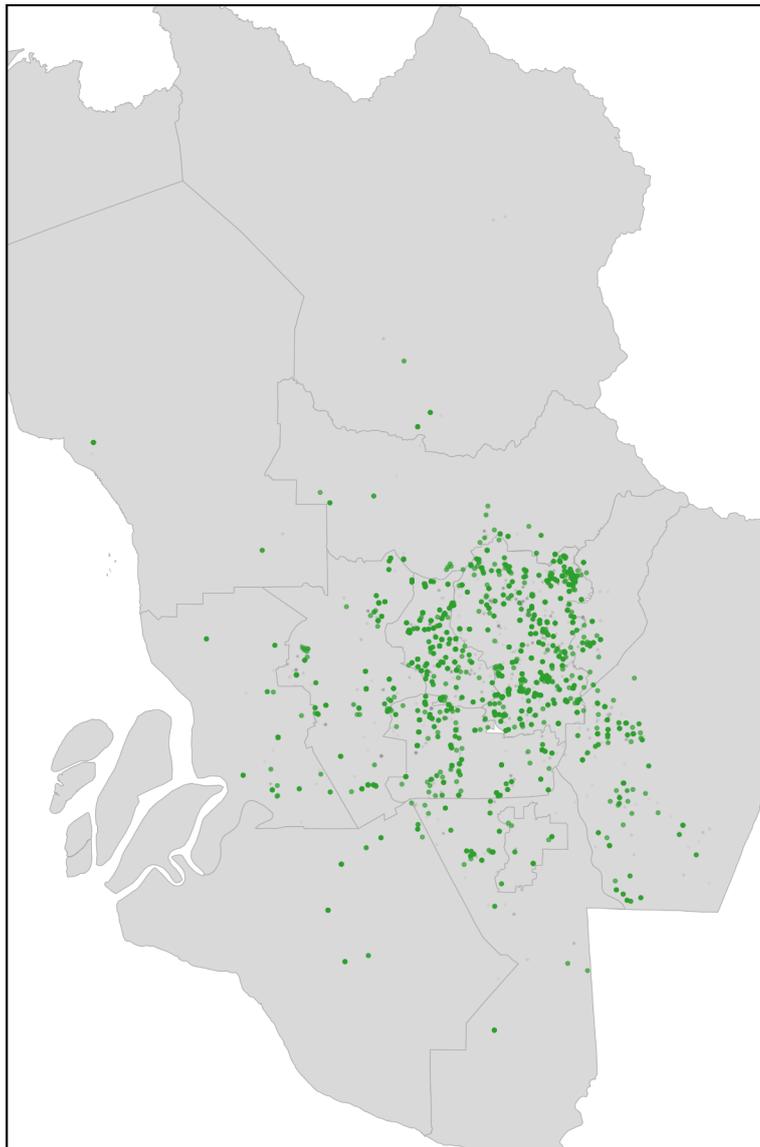
## DISCRIMINATION BY AREA: CHINESE



At 3.9% across the Klang Valley, Chinese renters face the lowest overall exclusion rate among the three groups studied. However, this aggregate figure masks significant variation at the area level, with several localities recording Chinese exclusion rates that are several times higher than average. Bangi stands out sharply with a Chinese discrimination rate of 23.8%, six times the regional average, making it by far the most restrictive area for Chinese renters. Wangsa Maju (16.5%), Ampang (14.5%), and Sepang (13.9%) also record substantially elevated rates.

In contrast, several areas record very low Chinese exclusion rates. Kuchai Lama records 0.0%, and Sri Petaling (0.5%), Subang Jaya (0.8%), Taman Desa (0.8%), and Segambut (0.9%) all fall below 1%. These are generally areas with established Chinese-majority communities, where Chinese renters are effectively never excluded.

## DISCRIMINATION BY AREA: INDIAN



Area	Indian Discrimination Rate
Taman Desa	47.1%
Klang	43.4%
Puchong	42.0%
Kepong	41.6%
Shah Alam	40.1%
Sri Petaling	39.4%
Bangi	39.0%
Cheras South	38.7%
Petaling Jaya	38.3%
Setapak	35.7%
Ampang	33.8%
Old Klang Road	32.7%
TTDI	32.4%
Sungai Besi	31.6%
Subang Jaya	31.0%
Sungai Buloh	30.8%
Wangsa Maju	28.7%
Bangsar	28.4%
Cheras	28.2%
Kajang	27.3%
Bukit Jalil	27.2%
Segambut	26.4%
Cyberjaya	25.6%
Ampang Hilir	22.8%
Selayang	21.7%
Seri Kembangan	19.9%
Kuchai Lama	19.4%
Dutamas	19.4%
Jalan Ipoh	18.2%
Sepang	15.8%
Setiawangsa	14.6%
Titivangsa	12.5%
KL City Centre	10.7%
Sentul	8.5%

Indian renters face by far the most pervasive exclusion across the Klang Valley, with 31.7% of all listings explicitly excluding them. This exclusion is not confined to particular areas. Every single area in the study records Indian discrimination rates that are substantially higher than those for Malay or Chinese renters, and the regional average exceeds the highest area-level rate for either of the other two groups.

Taman Desa records the highest Indian discrimination rate at 47.1%, meaning nearly half of all listings in the area explicitly exclude Indian renters. Klang (43.4%), Puchong (42.0%), Kepong (41.6%), and Shah Alam (40.1%) all exceed 40%. These are large, well-populated areas with substantial listing volumes, meaning the absolute scale of Indian exclusion in these localities is very high. Even in areas with comparatively lower Indian discrimination rates, the figures remain significant. Sentul, the area with the lowest rate, still records 8.5% exclusion of Indian renters.

The geographic distribution of Indian exclusion listings distinguishes Indian exclusion from both Malay and Chinese exclusion patterns, which are more spatially concentrated. The data suggests that anti-Indian discrimination in the rental market is a region-wide norm rather than a localised phenomenon.

# PRICE AND DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination patterns differ meaningfully across rental price segments, suggesting that exclusion is not uniform across the market but shaped in part by the price tier in which properties are listed.

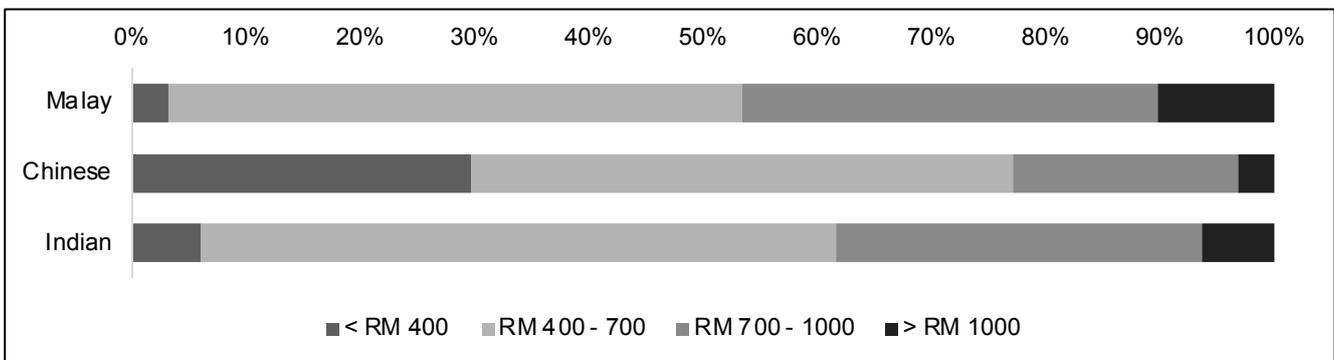
For Indian renters, exclusion is highest in the lowest price bracket: 43.7% of listings priced below RM400 explicitly exclude Indian renters, compared to 39% of listings in the RM400–700 range, 25% in the RM700–1,000 range, and 21.5% at above RM1,000. While Indian exclusion declines with price, it remains substantial even at the upper end of the market, meaning Indian renters are not only shut out of the cheapest accommodation but face meaningful barriers across all segments.

Price Bin	Total Listings	Malay Discrimination	Chinese Discrimination	Indian Discrimination
< RM 400	1532	5.5%	26.6%	43.7%
RM 400 - 700	15570	8.5%	4.1%	39.0%
RM 700 - 1000	14597	6.8%	1.9%	25.0%
> RM 1000	3468	7.9%	1.3%	21.5%

Chinese exclusion shows the opposite price distribution. The highest Chinese exclusion rate (26.6%) occurs in the sub-RM400 tier, the most affordable segment, and falls sharply to 4.1% in the RM400–700 range, 1.9% in the RM700–1,000 range, and 1.3% above RM1,000. This pattern suggests that Chinese exclusion is heavily concentrated in the very lowest end of the market.

Malay exclusion is relatively consistent across price tiers, ranging from 5.5% in the sub-RM400 segment to 8.5% in the RM400–700 range, with little systematic variation at higher price points. This consistency suggests that Malay exclusion is not strongly price-driven, and may reflect the geographic distribution of property owners across price segments rather than price-specific landlord preferences.

**Distribution of Discrimination by Price Range per Race**

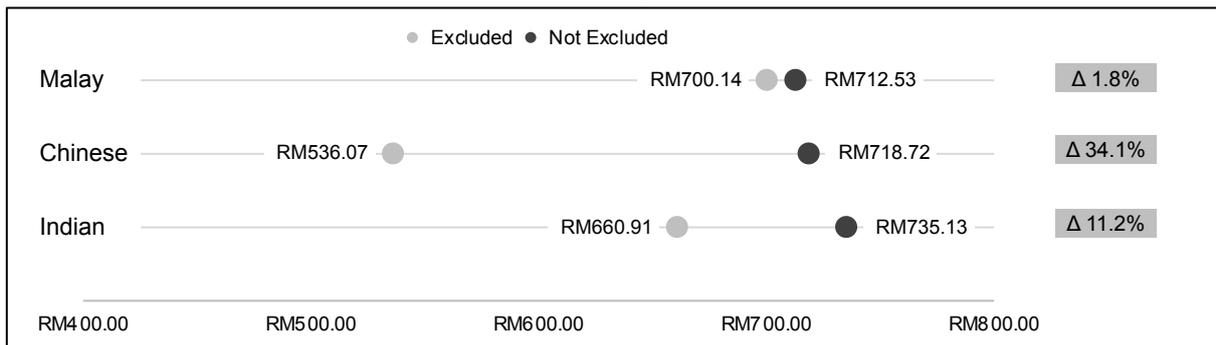


# DISCRIMINATION PREMIUM

Comparing the mean rental price of listings that exclude a given racial group against those that do not reveals listings that discriminate are priced differently from those that are open, with the direction and magnitude of that difference varying by group.

The most striking differential is for Chinese renters. Listings that exclude Chinese renters have a mean rent of RM536, compared to RM718 for non-discriminatory listings, a gap of 34.1% (RM183). This large negative differential reflects the geographic and market concentration of Chinese exclusion in very low-cost listings, particularly in the sub-RM400 tier, and likely in areas with predominantly Malay landlord bases.

**Mean Price Differentials by Discriminated Race**



*\* Not excluded includes both listings without preferences and listings which were exclusively inclusive*

For Indian renters, listings that do not exclude them have a higher mean rent (RM735) than listings that do (RM661), producing a discrimination premium of 11.2% (RM74). This suggests that the cheaper segments of the rental market are disproportionately closed off to Indian renters, leaving them with a smaller and more expensive pool of available housing.

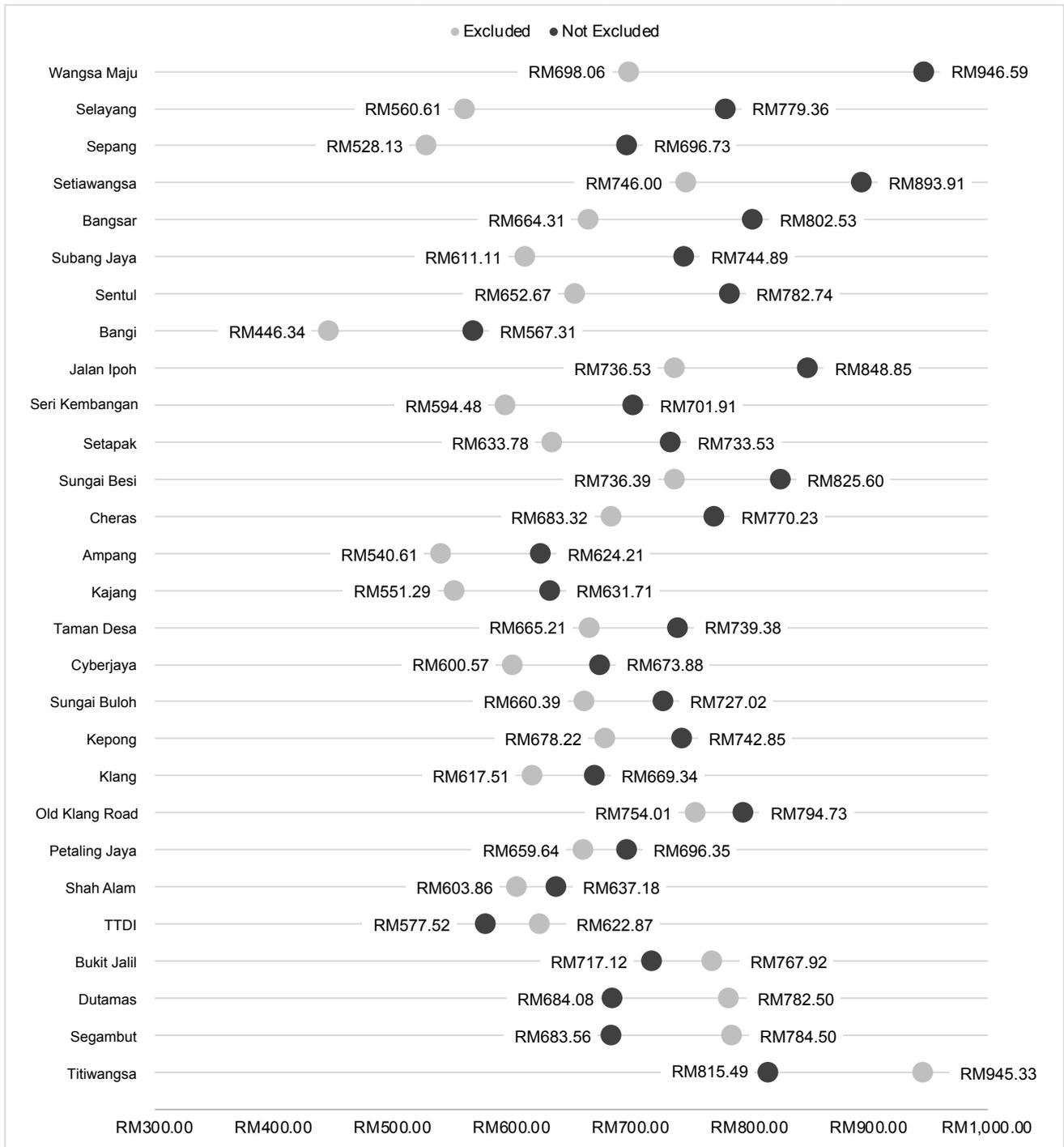
Malay renters show the smallest differential. Listings excluding Malay renters have a mean rent of RM700, compared to RM712 for non-discriminatory listings, a gap of just 1.8% (RM12). This minimal difference suggests that listings excluding Malay renters are broadly priced in line with the overall market, with no strong concentration at either the low or high end.

# DISCRIMINATION PREMIUM: INDIAN RENTERS

Area-level price differentials for Indian renters reveal that the discrimination premium is geographically widespread, with statistically significant differences recorded across most of the Klang Valley. Areas where the price differential did not reach statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ) are excluded from the chart.

The largest absolute premiums where listings not excluding Indian renters are priced considerably higher than discriminatory listings are found in Wangsa Maju (RM698 excluded vs. RM947 not excluded), Selayang (RM560.61 vs. RM779.36), and Sepang (RM528.13 vs. RM696.73). In these areas, Indian

**Mean Price Differentials by Discrimination against Indian Renters by Area**



\* Not excluded includes both listings without preferences and listings which were exclusively inclusive

\*\* Only statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) were included in the above graph. Price differentials in other areas not listed did not reach statistical significance

renters are not only more frequently excluded but are being shut out of listings that would be cost-effective for that particular area. This is a double disadvantage of reduced access and reduced affordability.

In several other areas, the premium is reversed where excluded listings are priced higher than non-discriminatory ones, suggesting that in those localities, Indian exclusion is concentrated in more high-price properties. Titiwangsa shows the sharpest such reversal, with excluded listings at RM945 versus RM815 for non-excluded.

## CLOSING NOTES

This report documents, in systematic quantitative terms, the scale and geographic distribution of explicit racial discrimination in the Klang Valley's private rental market. The analysis is grounded entirely in publicly available listing data, meaning the figures presented here represent the observable floor of a problem that is likely broader when informal screening practices are accounted for.

Several findings deserve particular attention. The exclusion of Indian renters at a rate exceeding 31% across the region and above 40% in multiple high-volume areas constitute a structural barrier to housing access affecting one of Malaysia's largest ethnic minority communities. The discrimination premium data further reveals that this exclusion reaches into mid- and upper-tier market segments, not just the most affordable listings. This undermines any assumption that Indian renters can simply substitute discriminatory listings with equivalent alternatives at comparable prices.

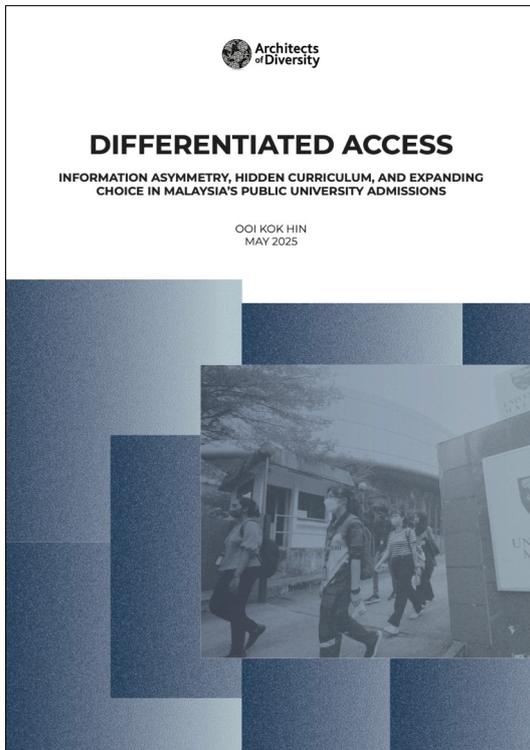
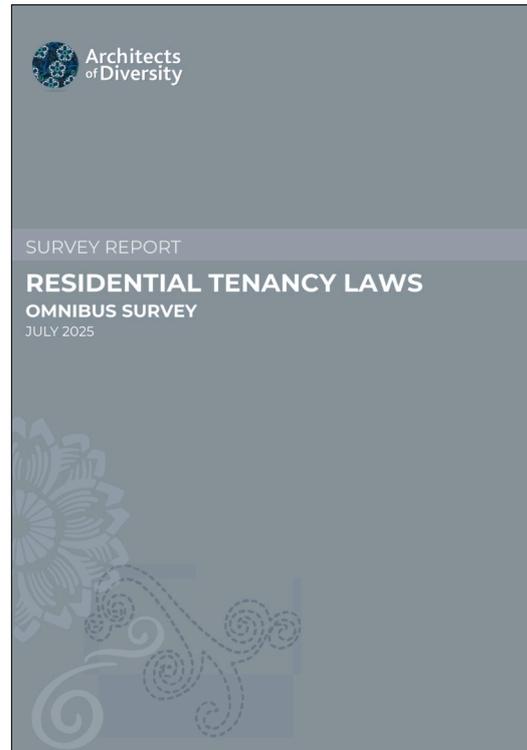
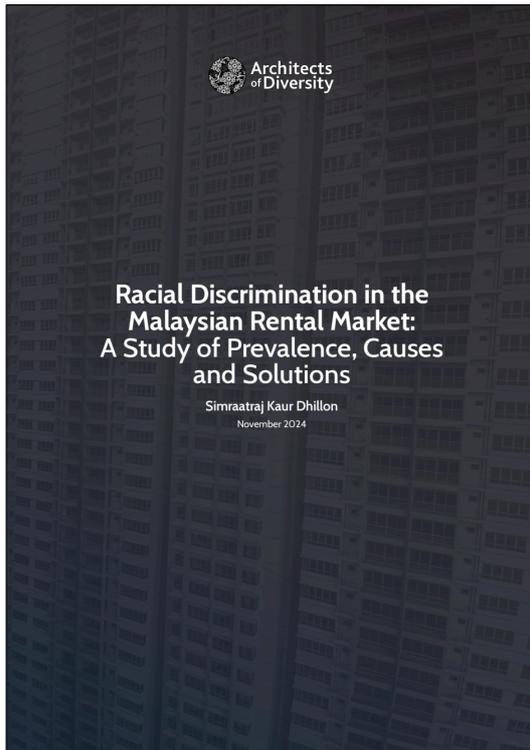
The geographic analysis reveals that discrimination is not uniformly distributed. While high rates cluster in particular localities, no area studied is meaningfully free from discrimination. Areas with high discrimination rates and low explicit inclusivity rates such as Ampang, Bangi, and Taman Desa may warrant particular attention as localities where renters from excluded groups face compounded barriers.

The findings also raise questions about the role of digital platforms in facilitating or normalising discriminatory practices. iBilik's architecture, which allows landlords to explicitly filter prospective tenants by race, makes discrimination searchable, measurable and in doing so, more visible.

Malaysia still does not currently have legislation that explicitly prohibits racial discrimination in the private rental market. In the absence of legal protections, the burden of navigating a discriminatory market falls entirely on renters from excluded groups. This report is offered as a contribution to the evidence base for advocacy, policy discussion, and platform accountability.

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