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## **Race Relations in Singapore:**

### **Policies for the Management of Race and their Unintended Consequences**

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In his presentation, Dr Mathew Mathews shared his views on some of the effects, including unintended consequences, of the race management policies in Singapore. The following is a summary of the major points:

- Singapore's race management policies are directed towards unifying the population based on a sense of shared citizenship and national identity. Three key aspects of the policy management are (i) multicultural framework and minority rights protection (e.g. GRC, self-help groups), (ii) nudging intercultural interaction (e.g. ethnic integration policy), and (iii) legal apparatus and deterrence (e.g. Sedition Act).
- Some of the drawbacks of racial categorisation include entrenching of race schema, excluding some and forces some identities amongst the people, reducing sense of national identity, and stifling adaptive cultural and demographic shifts.
- Government intervention on race issues helps maintain harmony but it may reduce community involvement in the management of tension. People may become less motivated to challenge prejudices and more afraid to discuss issues surrounding race and religion which are deemed as sensitive.
- Although some criticisms of current race management policies are valid, they should be evaluated against the broader outcomes that the current management strategies achieve. An important question is: "If we depend on the natural processes of societal development, is it likely that the better angels will prevail?"