SUPPORTED PROJECTS FOR THE 2016 SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH THEMATIC GRANT CALL

Projects receiving Type A funding

S/n	1
Project Title	**Christianity in Southeast Asia: Comparative Growth, Politics and Networks in Urban Centres**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Dr Terence Chong** **Senior Fellow, Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute**
Details of Project	The project seeks to understand the growth of Christianity in Southeast Asia, specifically, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam, and its impact on these multi-cultural and multi-religious societies, as well as the role of religion in shaping political and public discourse. The study will be the first of its kind to involve a comprehensive survey of contemporary Christianity in Southeast Asia, and will also examine the transnational connections that have influenced the growth of Christian churches in each locality. The project will study how regional megachurches adopt a capitalist ethos and at the same time, harness local histories and politics for socio-political and cultural change. In studying the beliefs, teachings, strategies, and practices of the megachurches, their local, national, and transnational networks will be examined. Of specific relevance to Singapore would be the project's study of how the growth of Christianity in our neighbouring countries might affect our multi-cultural and multi-religious society, and the implications of the transnational connections of Christian churches on the sense of national identity and global outlook of its Singaporean congregations.

S/n	2
Project Title	**Develop a Contemporary Theory of Harmony**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Professor Li Chenyang** **Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University (NTU)**
Details of Project	As turmoil and conflict become increasingly common, harmony has become absent in the general mindset of societies. In light of this vacuum in both philosophical and public discourse, this project aims to develop a theory of harmony that encompasses

social, political, environmental, and philosophical dimensions, and which is rooted in the various rich cultural traditions of the world.

The theory of harmony aims to conceptualise Singapore's achievements in social harmony, to provide a philosophical perspective for understanding identity formation and social integration in Singapore, and to offer a theoretical framework for its continuous success in the future. Such a theory could help to identify social forces that positively influence identity formation, and to achieve outcomes of unity in diversity, cohesion in complexity, and resilience in crises.

S/n	3
Project Title	**Fostering Harmonious Intergroup Relations in Early Childhood**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Assistant Professor Setoh Pei Pei** **Department of Psychology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NTU**
Details of Project	In Singapore's ethnically diverse community, promoting intergroup harmony is essential. As racial biases are known to be firmly entrenched and resistant to change once we enter adulthood, it is crucial to understand the nature and early development of such biases in order to develop early prevention and intervention strategies. The project aims to investigate the development of race preferences in Singaporean children with the goal of gaining knowledge about the major contributors to pro-in-group behaviour during childhood, as well as key insights about the relationship between identity development and social attitude formation. Insights from the project will lay the empirical foundation for developing novel early intervention methods, and an evidence-based, experimentally-validated pre-school intergroup harmony curriculum. The latter will help shape children's identity to encompass the values of inclusivity, diversity, and unity. The project will contribute to the enhancement of pre-school education, through Nanyang Technological University's collaboration with NTUC First Campus, which will include the implementation of the intergroup harmony curriculum at NTUC First Campus pre-schools.

S/n	4
Project Title	**Identifying Positive Adaptive Pathways in Low-income families in Singapore**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Associate Professor Esther Goh** **Department of Social Work, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), National University of Singapore (NUS)**
Details of Project	The project is the first academic longitudinal study on how multi-stressed low-income families in Singapore adapt to extreme financial constraints. While studies conducted by economists typically underscore the risks of poverty to the families and the potential danger of social instability if income divide remains unchecked, this study adopts an innovative approach to studying low-income families by looking not merely at the risks of poverty, but the strengths of their adaptive behaviour as well. The study will refine the understanding of such families by distinguishing trajectories of adaptive capacities, so that policies and interventions can be more targeted in their areas of support. The findings of the study also has the potential to inform social policies and programmes, such that they move away from problem-focused interventions to human capacity building by tapping into the strengths and capacities of low-income families.

S/n	5
Project Title	**Influence of Social Motivations on Cultural Learning, Adjustment, and Integration**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Associate Professor Krishna Savani** **Department of Strategy, Management and Organisation, Nanyang Business School, NTU**
Details of Project	When immigrants come to a new country, they will need to learn its norms and values. The project will examine cultural learning as a key mechanism that helps immigrants identify, integrate, and experience less conflict with the new culture. The project seeks to identify the socio-psychological factors that would facilitate the process of cultural learning, and provide insights on the dynamics of identity formation, specifically, about the forces that help people acquire new cultural identities and become integrated in new cultures. As such, the project has the potential to inform Singapore's social integration initiatives to help new citizens learn the local norms and values, and support their adjustment, acculturation, and integration in Singapore.

S/n	6
Project Title	**Making Identity Count in Asia: Identity Relations in Singapore and its Neighbourhood**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Professor Ted Hopf** **Provost's Chair Professor, Department of Political Science, FASS, NUS**
Details of Project	The project seeks to establish Singapore's identity relations with its neighbours in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and selected East Asian territories such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea. It also undertakes an in-depth examination of Singapore's national identity, including how the concept of national identity differs among different communities, and the implications on national resilience and social integration. The project has the potential to inform Singapore's foreign and security policy, through an understanding of our national identity, as well as that of our neighbours in Asia; and the identity relations among them and how Singapore's national identity relates to them. Our policies could also be informed by insights on national identity relations at home, in particular, how widely and deeply the predominant discourse of Singaporean national identity is shared, what cleavages exist, and the lines along which those cleavages manifest themselves.

S/n	7
Project Title	**Population Ageing, Old Age Labour & Financial Decisions in Singapore**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Associate Professor Liu Haoming** **Department of Economics, FASS, NUS**
Details of Project	Singapore's population is ageing as a result of increased life expectancy and declining fertility. Similar to other developed countries. Singapore's labour force participation rate of elderly men declined slightly in the 1980s and 1990s. Whether or not Singapore can successfully overcome these challenges would, in part, depend on an understanding of household financial decisions concerning retirement. This project capitalises on the introduction of the Central Provident Fund Lifelong Income for the Elderly (CPF LIFE) plan in 2013 to study the different aspects of household saving decisions – first, the existence of and reasons behind bequest motives and the determinants of bequest; second, the availability of annuities on people's saving decisions; and third, the availability of annuities on the labour force participation rate of the elderly. The project findings would provide useful insights to facilitate further refinement of existing CPF policies so that the elderly

	population of the future can enjoy better financial security in the later stages of their lives.

S/n	8
Project Title	**Salutogenic Healthy Ageing Programme Embracement (SHAPE) for elderly living alone**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Assistant Professor Wang Wenru** **Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies, Yong Loo Ling School of Medicine, NUS**
Details of Project	In view of Singapore's ageing population and its significant impact on health resources and social safety nets, this project seeks to develop and evaluate an evidence-based intervention to achieve better health outcomes and quality of life for elderly living alone, through healthy ageing. Such a programme could reduce healthcare costs in the long run, given that dependent elderly place a large financial burden on healthcare services and society at large. Hence, this study has the potential to benefit the elderly by improving support services, as well as informing eldercare policies on healthy ageing.

S/n	9
Project Title	**Singapore's Islamic Studies Graduates: Their Role and Impact in a Plural Society**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Dr Norshahril Saat** **Fellow, Regional Strategic and Political Studies, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute**
Details of Project	The project seeks to understand the roles played by Islamic studies graduates who have pursued higher religious education locally and abroad, in shaping religious orientations, beliefs, practices, and religious discourse within the local Muslim community; as well as the extent to which they serve as cultural brokers in contextualising religious teachings that facilitate the community's adjustment to and integration with Singapore's multi-ethnic, multi-religious society. The project will examine the nature of religious education received by these graduates, their educational experiences within their religious institutions and beyond, their career paths, channels of religious learning and engagement upon their completion of their studies or return to Singapore; as well as the extent to which these graduates are impacted by informal networks or clerics and scholars beyond the formal institutions they attended. The project will also investigate the pervasive influence of social media in the dissemination of information which shapes people's views and beliefs on religious teachings.

	The findings would be potentially useful to stakeholders, such as Malay-Muslim community leaders and policy-makers who devise policies and programmes that can harness the contribution of these graduates in strengthening Singapore's social cohesion and resilience.

Projects receiving Type B funding

S/n	10
Project Title	**Service Productivity and Innovation Research Programme (SPIRE)**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Professor Ivan Png** **Distinguished Professor, Departments of Strategy & Policy and Economics, NUS**
Details of Project	SPIRE (Service Productivity and Innovation Research) responds to the national productivity challenge, particularly in service industries. The inter-disciplinary project draws scholars with diverse expertise, including data analytics, optimisation, stochastic modelling, applied microeconomics, and behavioural science. SPIRE will advance new scientific knowledge in the disciplines and develop cost-effective and scalable strategies to raise productivity across multiple industries. The issues to be studied include: increasing customer use of self-service check-outs in supermarkets, optimising shared locker systems for logistics services, optimising management of car-sharing services, and improving patient flow management in healthcare services. SPIRE will collaborate with partners in the public and private sector, including the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Public Service Division, SingHealth, Eastern Health Alliance, Yamato Asia, and Sheng Siong. The project aims to produce research that is relevant and impactful for both industry and policy-makers.

S/n	11
Project Title	**Building Human Capacity in Singapore's Population: Testing Innovations in Human Development**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Professor Jean Yeung** **Provost's Chair Professor, Department of Sociology, Director, Centre for Family and Population Research (CFPR), FASS, Research Leader, Asia Research Institute, NUS**
Details of Project	A major challenge for Singapore is how to raise the next generation to be productive and healthy, particularly, how to

enhance the development of children from disadvantaged families to avoid cyclical poverty. Hence, this project looks at human development in terms of enlarging people's potential to gain skills and capacities to enjoy an adequate standard of living, and to lead a healthy life. It also includes the accumulation of formal education, experiences, cognitive skills, health, social skills (such as cooperation and communication skills), as well as psychological resources (such as motivation, resiliency, and emotional stability). As a start, the project will investigate early childhood development.

The project will employ innovative methods and draw expertise from different disciplines to understand factors that can promote Singaporean children's early childhood development. The main research questions touch on how family, childcare and early education institutions, community, and the state interact to shape the development of Singapore's children, how these investments affect inter-generational mobility and social stratification in Singapore, and the roles which the community and government can play in improving child outcomes.

S/n	12
Project Title	**Sustainable Governance of Transboundary Environmental Commons in Southeast Asia**
Name of Principal Investigator	**Professor David Taylor** **Provost's Chair Professor, Department of Geography, FASS, NUS**
Details of Project	As a small, island city-state, Singapore is economically, environmentally, and politically interconnected, with regional neighbours in Southeast Asia. The resilience and reliability of these interconnections have facilitated economic growth, regional stability, and cordial diplomatic relations. However, development benefits in the region have not come without costs; rising living standards are associated with increasing rates of resource extraction, reduced environmental quality, and impoverishment of biodiversity that have negative ramifications for exposed population groups. In light of the above challenges, this project seeks to: • First, identify the drivers and impacts associated with two major transboundary environmental challenges impacting land, water, and atmosphere in Southeast Asia i.e. biomass burning and haze, and hydropower development and water resources; • Second, to examine these transboundary challenges in the context of governance of transboundary environmental commons, or common pool resources, within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well

	as the identification of relevant best practices worldwide; and • Third, to develop the concept of transboundary environmental commons within ASEAN. The project also aims to contribute to environmental sustainability within ASEAN, as well as provide an evidence-based foundation for policy-making and implementation at both national and ASEAN levels that enhances Singapore's reputation as a responsible neighbour and a leader in sustainability sciences.