AWARDEES FOR THE 2018 SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

1.	Name of Awardee	Assistant Professor Laavanya Kathiravelu
	Institution	Division of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University (NTU)
	Project Title	**Does citizenship matter? Interrogating second-generation (im)migrant incorporation in Singapore and Qatar**
Biography of awardee		Asst Prof Laavanya Kathiravelu is a sociologist whose research sits at the intersection of three interrelated themes – migration, ethnicity and urban diversity. These have been the foci of her fieldwork and publications since the start of her academic career, and she continues to build on these strengths while developing a unique perspective as a scholar from outside the traditionally dominant areas of knowledge production (i.e. Europe and North America). She hopes to problematise, interrogate, and reinterpret disciplinary conceptions and established theories and methodologies, by drawing insights from non-Western empirical and intellectual resources.

Asst Prof Kathiravelu obtained her PhD in Sociology from Macquarie University in 2011. She then spent three years at the Max Plank Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity as postdoctoral fellow before being appointed Assistant Professor at NTU, Division of Sociology. Asst Prof Kathiravelu was awarded the Fung Global Fellowship by Princeton University, which supports early career applicants who have demonstrated outstanding scholarly achievement. |
| **Details of Project** | | In this project, Asst Prof Kathiravelu studies the integration of immigrants through legal and informal means, by comparing Singapore and Qatar as models. These two nation-states are both countries that experience extremely high rates of migration.

In Singapore, it is estimated that 40% of the population are foreign-born, and a growing proportion of the population are children of first-generation immigrants. In Qatar, foreigners far outnumber locals and have not had access to any form of more permanent legal affiliation such as citizenship, until the recent institution of a Permanent Resident category. For Qatari-born second-generation migrants, this new possibility of belonging to the state is one that could have significant effects on migration flows, and ways in which they integrate into the nation. Comparing Singapore and Qatar will provide examples of how different models of formal belonging can generate different outcomes for immigrant integration and national solidarity.

Data will be collected through a combination of quantitative surveys in both Singapore and Qatar, as well as qualitative interviews and focus groups to understand how second-generation immigrants integrate into the host country and understand the affective nature of their belonging. |

Findings from this project will be of direct use to policy makers and agencies involved in designing programmes and initiatives to integrate new citizens in Singapore. This research also addresses important issues of national belonging.

2.	Name of Awardee	**Assistant Professor Lin Weiqiang**
	Institution	Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore (NUS)
	Project Title	**Peopling Infrastructure: Aeromobilities, Automation and Labour Mobilisations in Asia**
Biography of awardee		Asst Prof Lin Weiqiang is a leading mobilities geographer who specialises in the areas of air transport, logistics and the production of infrastructure and his work has been well-received internationally. Asst Prof Lin began this theorising work since 2013, when he co-convened a conference on Theorising Mobilities in/of Asia, in collaboration with the Asia Research Institute, NUS. Since then, his work has influenced a wide range of scholarship through critical reflections on air transport, including mobility studies, political geography, science and technology studies, urban studies, and social theory. He currently sits on the editorial board of *Mobilities,* a leading journal of mobility studies, and is a section editor of *Transfers.*
		Asst Prof Lin obtained his PhD in Geography from the University of London in 2014 and was appointed Assistant Professor at NUS Department of Geography in 2016.
Details of Project		With this research, Asst Prof Lin aims to understand the inner-workings of the aviation industry and offer unique research insights on sustainable, responsible, and humane maintenance of airport infrastructures. It will pay particular attention to four airport functions, namely (a) passenger formalities (check-in); (b) airside services (gate and connections); (c) baggage handling; and (d) apron logistics (tarmac operations). Specifically, the project will uncover the daily routines of workers in the aviation industry, how workers are incorporated into the aviation ecosystem, and how they interact with aviation technology.
		Asst Prof Lin will study operations and infrastructures of airports in four cities – Beijing, Dubai, Jakarta, and Singapore. The study employs a number of methods: interviews with airport workers and managerial-level staff to understand their personal experience; site visits to learn about the work environment; as well as textual analysis of new articles and reports to understand the transitions to automotive technologies and practices in labour management.
		This project will advance global theoretical knowledge on airport infrastructures, labour and technology, and inform policies to minimise the risk of attrition, non-cooperation, and disruption that could arise from the poor management of labour. The project will also

contribute to a new awareness of mobility justice by focusing on workers who tend to work long hours, are poorly paid, and are often segregated based on race and gender, migrant workers and/or aged workers who are employed on a 'use-and-discard' basis.

In light of Singapore's pursuit of a larger role for aviation, this project offers unique and significant research insights on the sustainable, responsible, and humane maintenance of airport infrastructures.

3.	Name of Awardee	**Assistant Professor Reuben Ng**
	Institution	Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore (NUS)
	Project Title	**"Now-casting" the Skills-gap to Empower Job Seekers and Policy Makers**
Biography of awardee		Asst Prof Reuben Ng is a behavioural scientist, and an expert at the integration of Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Behavioural Insights (BI) to answer important questions in policy and social sciences. He spent 16 years in the Government, consulting, and research. In Government, he was in the Prime Minister's Office driving evidence-based policy-making through data analytics, and Smart Nation strategies. In consulting, he co-built the Advanced Analytics practice at a top firm, and implemented complex analytics projects across industries and functions. In research, his innovative projects in successful ageing, and the measurement of societal perceptions – over 200 years, across 20 countries, through the analysis of billions of words – have won awards/grants from the US National Institute of Aging and the UK Economic and Social Research Council. His work enjoyed media coverage internationally and locally including *The Washington Post, CNN, The Straits Times, The Business Times*, and *Lianhe Zaobao*.

A Fulbright Scholar, Asst Prof Ng trained at NUS and Oxford, and obtained his PhD at Yale University in 2014. |
| **Details of Project** | | This project leverages innovative Big Data methods to investigate a perennial social problem – the skills gap – and aims to create data-driven models to "nowcast" the skills-gap in Singapore. "Nowcasting" is the granular sensing of current conditions. The insights support policy-makers and training institutes with predictive capabilities to plan for the near-and-long-term so that the skills gap is kept as minimal as possible in a disruptive world.

This project aims to create a standardised skills taxonomy from government and private sector sources. Additional surveys will be launched as appropriate via large platforms and networks to further augment existing skills data. This standardised taxonomy for skills is unprecedented and will pave the way for global benchmarking and cross sectoral comparisons of the skills gap. Apart from contributing significantly to social science and policy, the project hopes to empower individuals with insights on in-demand skills to better guide |

| | their training and career decisions. The insights will also help individuals looking to switch careers to identify the most adjacent jobs and sectors that could leverage their skills fully.

Importantly, this project exemplifies the role of the University as a trusted broker of industry-government partnerships to address societal challenges. Neither Governments nor private companies have all the solutions. In working together, the project hopes to connect the dots that span academia, industry, and Government to produce policy-relevant insights to important social problems, and put Singapore's social sciences on the world map. |
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