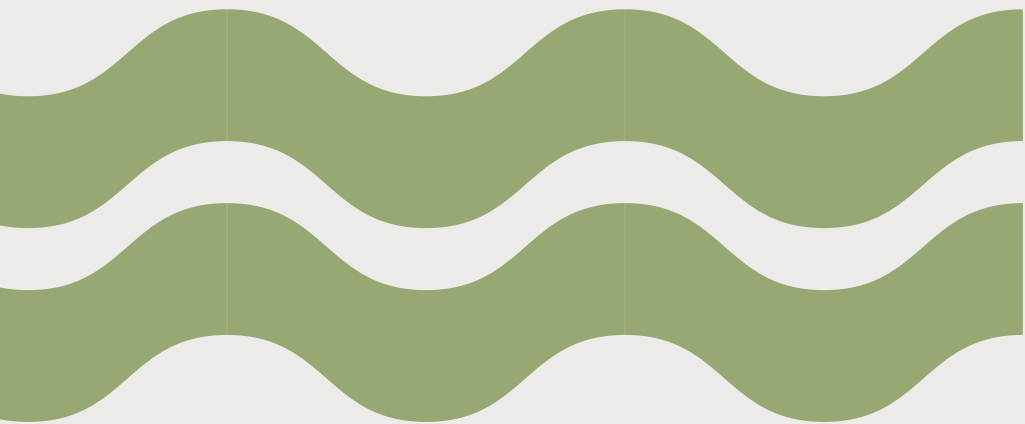




Daniel PS Goh
National University of Singapore

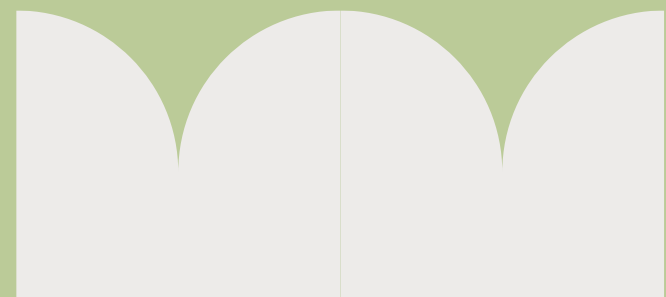


holding onto multiculturalism
**SUPER/DIVERSITY IN
SINGAPORE**





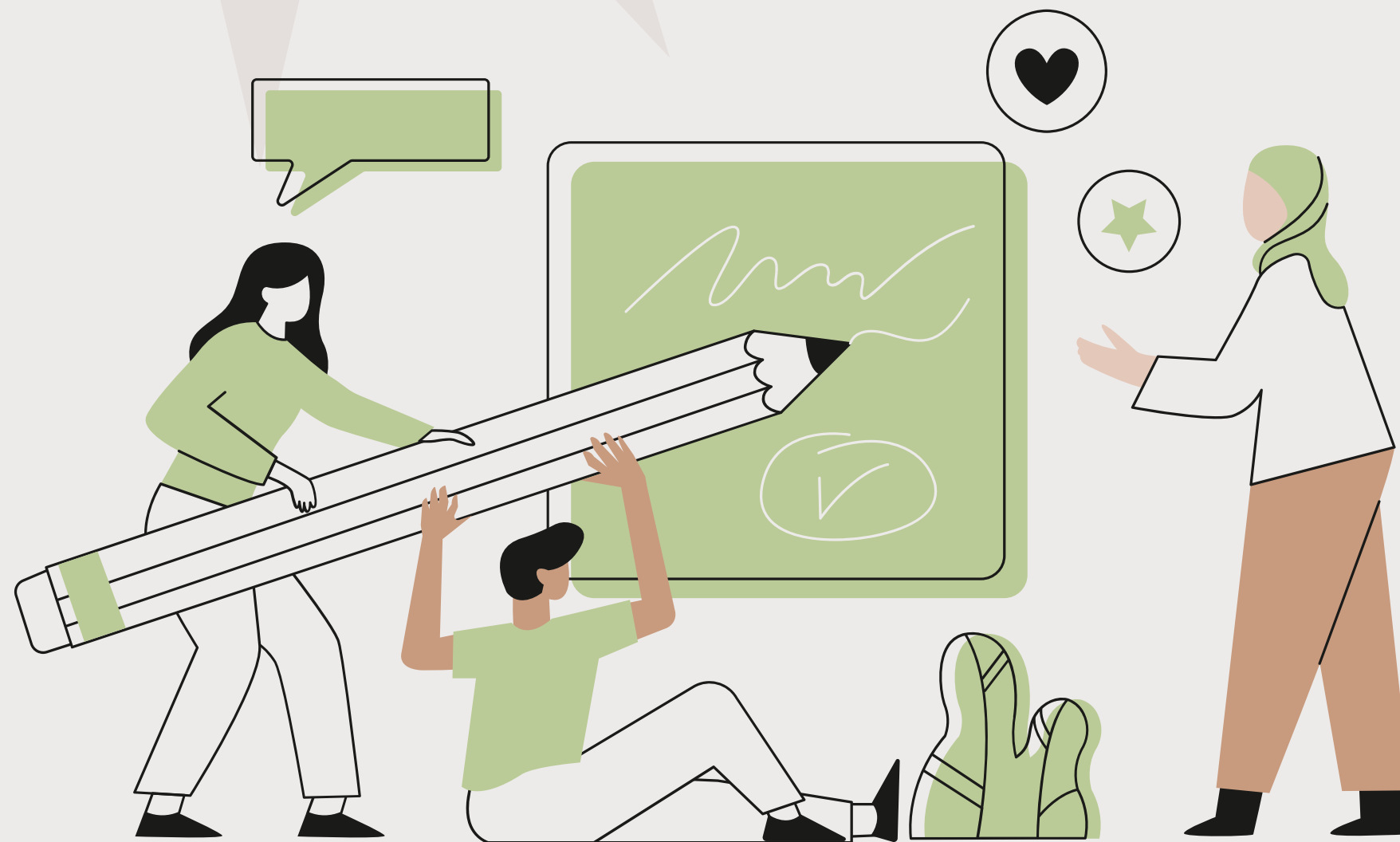
- Cross-ethnic, cross-national marriages
- Immigration: new citizens, permanent residents
- Internationalisation of work and culture
- Marketplace religions and spiritualities
- Maturing identity politics
- More-than-mother-tongue language policies
- 4th Gen society: multi-modal flexibility
- **CMIO grid is now more like a dynamic word cloud**



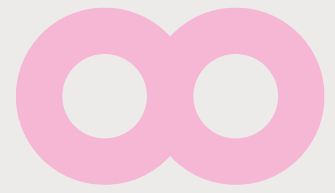
Shifting multiculturalisms

78%

OF EMPLOYEES IN SINGAPORE EXPERIENCED SOME TYPE OF EXCLUSION IN THEIR WORKPLACE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HIGHER THAN GLOBAL AVERAGE OF 73% -- KINCENTRIC'S GLOBAL INCLUSION STUDY 2023



- **Diversity** now more important as concept and affective touchpoint than multiculturalism
- TAFEP: Diversity & Inclusion strategies -- why "equity" left out of DEI?
- **Harmony** between and within groups emphasised over individual equity
- **Inclusion** becomes strategy to engage with expanded notions of bias and prejudice



- On UK's changing multiculturalism, Steve Vertovec (2007): "dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants"
- *TODAY* Singapore (2015): beyond essentialist race and ethnic stereotypes, "diversification of diversity"
- On Singapore's complex migrant spaces, Brenda Yeoh (2023): new entanglements of old and new immigrations

What is super-diversity



Asian Cultural Symphony Orchestra, *The Straits Times* photo

How can we define super/diversity for Singapore?

- Emerging SUPER-NEW cultural identities and practices
- linked to NEW migrants of economic globalisation mixing
- with and within NOT-SO-NEW/OLD ethnic nationalisation (CMIO)
- of OLD colonial racial classifications and ideology (White/Natives)

- Fluid, Flexible, Formative, Fungible, Fickle





ESSAY

Inclusion through Intervention

Living with Diversity the Singapore Way

When it comes to ensuring the harmonious integration of Singapore's diverse ethnic, religious, nationality, income, age or disability groups, nothing is left to chance.

Singapore is multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multiple. As a small sovereign city state without a hinterland nor natural resources, galvanising the people to gel as a community has been fundamental to Singapore's success story. As the founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew shared in his memoir *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story*, his biggest challenge was "how to build a nation out of a disparate collection of immigrants from China, British India and the Dutch East Indies." This, coupled with a significant foreign population that has been attracted to Singapore to live, work and study, has created super-diversity in today's Singapore.

Like many modern cities, Singapore also faces the issues of an ageing population and growing income disparities. These test the resilience of its social fabric. But unlike many cities where instances of cultural intolerances are rife, and different social groups lead separate, seemingly "parallel lives", Singapore has managed to foster a community of togetherness—a *Singaporean intercultural "habitus"* (how people tend to think and act based on socialisation)—despite the differences. What are some of the key principles that have guided Singapore's model of living with diversity?



Louisa-May Khoo is adjunct researcher at the Centre for Liveable Cities.

- 01 Events at void decks of public housing range from funerals to weddings.
- 02 Five families gather along the corridor of their flats to break fast.
- 03 Programmes like Community in Bloom bring neighbours together for a common purpose.



01



02



03



Super/diversity represented

SUPERDIVERSITY AND CULTURAL POLICIES IN POST-PANDEMIC SINGAPORE

MICHELLE LOH
LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Constitutional multiculturalism in Singapore is reflected by four racial categories: Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others, known as the **CMIO multicultural construct or the CMIO multiracial framework**. This framework has been continuously highlighted by leading scholars Chan, Chua, Yeoh, Kwok and Rocha before covid-19, calling for our national discourse to enlarge the acceptance of different diversities and address existing issues, complexities beyond a simplistic CMIO multiculturalism (Chan et al., 2020; Chua, 2003; Chua & Kwok, 2018; Rocha & Yeoh, 2020). The pandemic only served to augment ongoing multiplicities in global, transversal, migratory, cultural and digital realities of diversity. On the other hand, cultural policies seem to steer away from the CMIO multiracial framework and place heavy emphasis where diversities are inherent to Singapore's identity (National Arts Council, 2018a). This tracker aims to provide a glimpse of the evolution of cultural policy in Singapore and its roles in diversity before the new Arts Plan 2023-2027 is announced.



Tracking diversity and multiculturalism in Singapore's cultural policies

National Arts Council (NAC) has commenced engagements with spaces, arts audiences and patrons in preparation for the next arts plan 2023 to 2027 (National Arts Council, 2022). Although public participation and community engagements were pre-planned, disrupted the arts, live performances, collaborative events, international and cross-cultural hybridisations of arts, cultural and heritage events. During the pandemic, the council launched the **Arts and Culture Resilience Package to promote digitalisation, enhance digital capabilities as well as provide short term business recovery grants to ease arts companies through the constant shifts between in-person and digital presentations** (National Arts Council, 2021). Under the resilience package, grants such as Capability Development Scheme for the Arts and the Digital Presentation Grant for the Arts were reactionary measures and time-limited schemes which were provided in addition to an existing Digitalisation

Although Vertovec's superdiversity was used with respect to the UK from the 1990s, such diversities were already present in Singapore before 1990s and is more prevalent nowadays due to global physical and digital mobilities. Chinese descendants of the early migrants and current migrants have origins from different provinces in China. **Hailing from China, these Chinese may speak one or a combination of Mandarin with their origin dialect such as Teochew, Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Hainanese, Foochow, Henghua, Shanghainese and Hokchia just to name a few major dialects that can be found in Singapore.** There is significant diversity amongst the Singaporean Chinese, descendants of first generation Singaporean Chinese and new Chinese immigrants. **Similarly, the Malay language spoken in Singapore constituted the Johor-Riau dialect, which can be further distinguished into colloquial Malay and standard Malay, Javanese, Boyanese and others (Jain, 2021).** Indians in Singapore were also highly diverse, speaking Tamil, Malayalee, Hindi, Sikh, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindustani, Gujarati, Singhi, Sinhalese and other dialects (Ministry of Trade and Industry & Department of Statistics, n.d.). In religion, Islam alone has several traditions within the faith, such as Sufi, Barelvi, Sunni, Shi'a, Ibadi, Ahmadiyya. Christianity has even more denominations such as Methodist, Presbyterian, Evangelistic, Charismatic, Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Baptist, etc. **Major religions and their various factions are present in the modern context of Singapore's society, and the diversities are multiplied with the breadth of origins among new migrants to Singapore.**



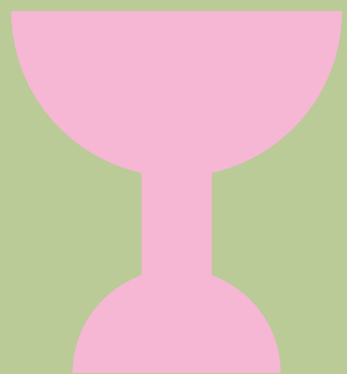
This above is the current stage of development for cultural policies in Singapore, and the following explores an evolutionary track of how cultural policies discuss, represent and exemplify diversities through the arts. Singapore's cultural policies often take the form of plans, reports, documents and policy statements. This tracker will refer to all the above as cultural policies for ease of reference for the reader.

Super/diversity represented



Singapore HeritageFest

- Go beyond the politics of representation & recognition
- Don't use CMIO grid as mainframe but understand it as a legacy frame
- Allow for pluralities, multiplicities, intersections
- Observe and question how groups include/exclude
- Choose inclusion as operational principle

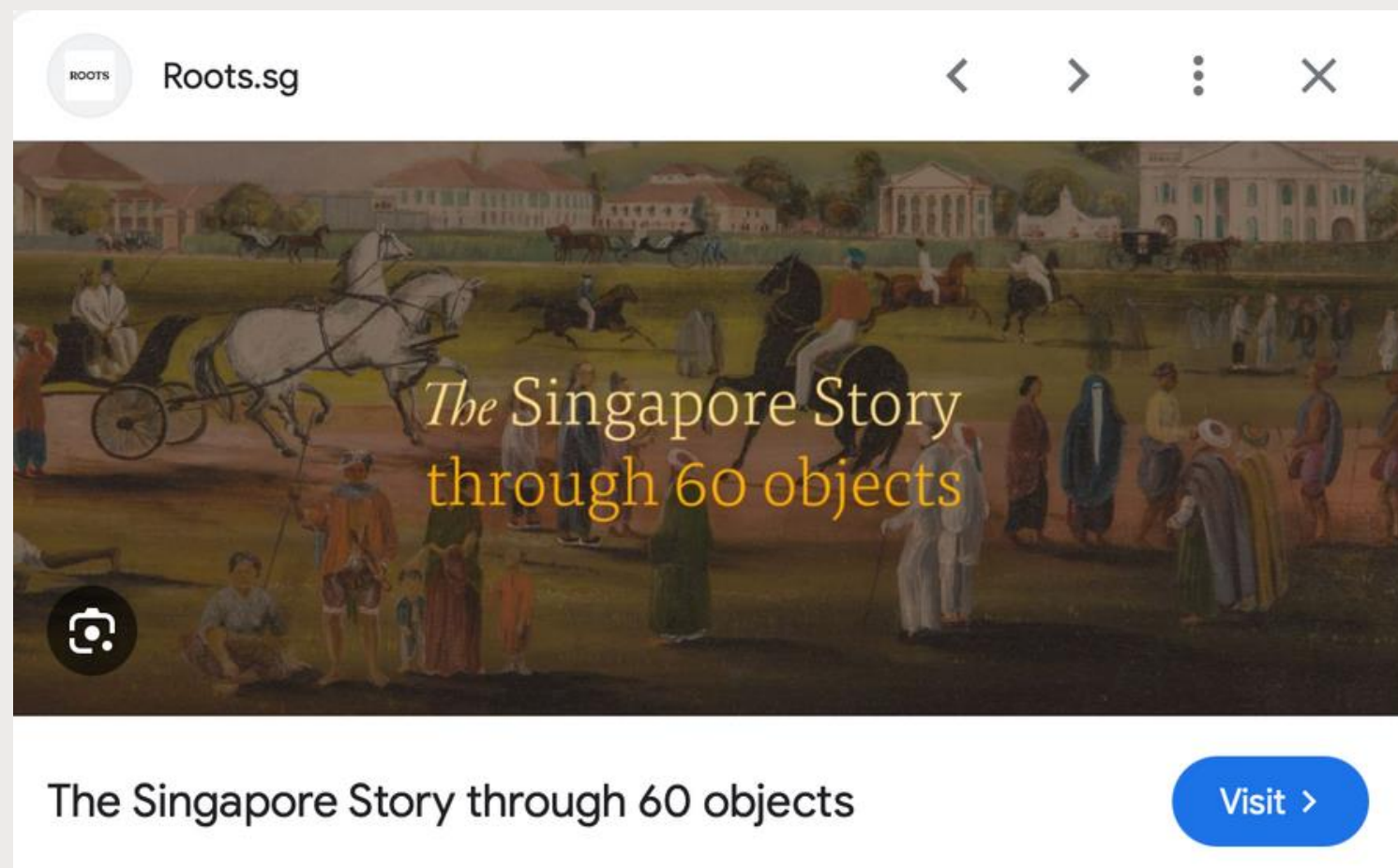


How can we operationalise super/diversity?

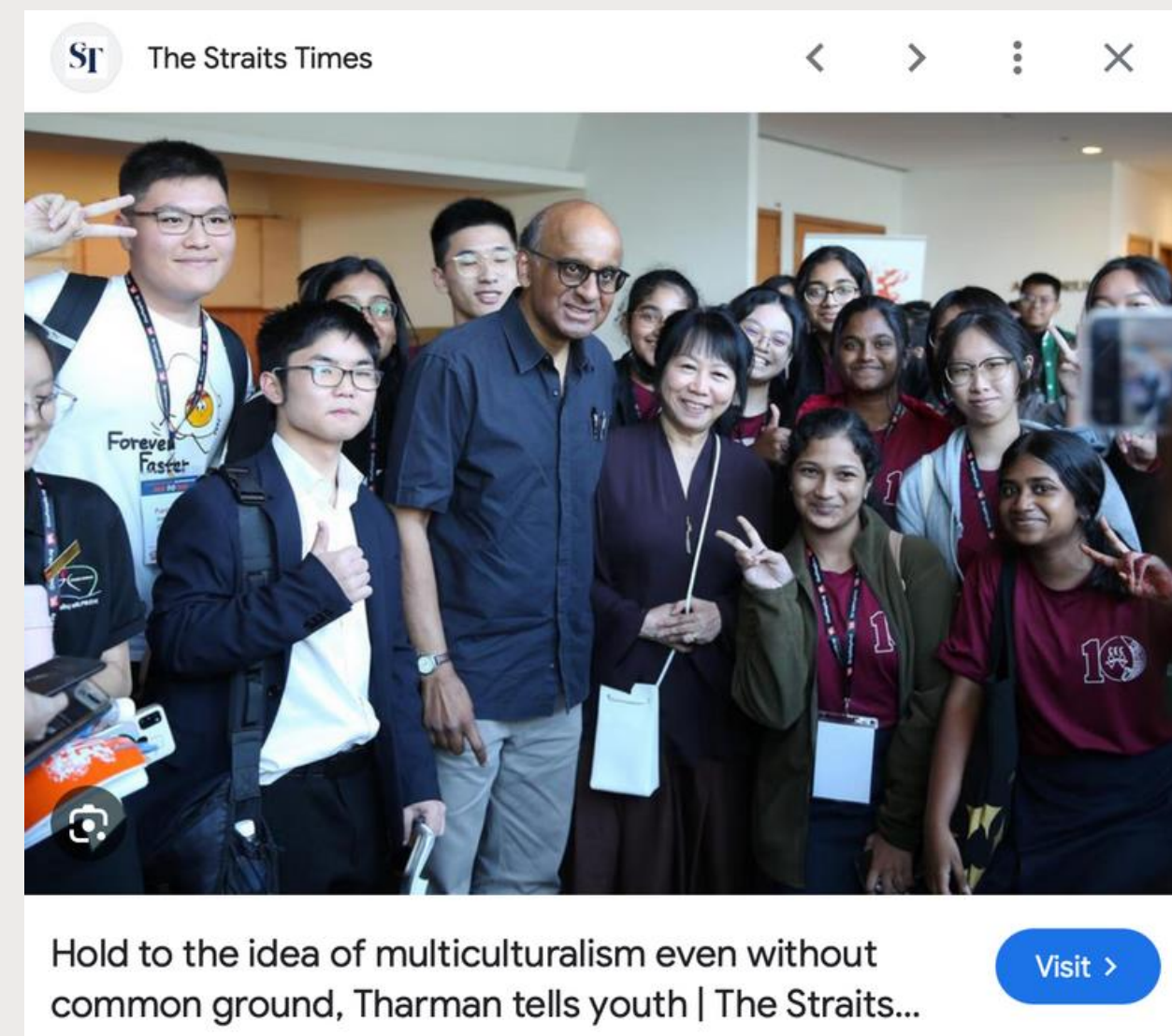
Tactics for doing super/diversity



TALK: DIALOGUES, NARRATIVES, LIFE HISTORIES



LISTEN, UNDERSTAND, ACCEPT, FIND, HOLD



Strategies for a super/diverse Singapore



01

CULTURES OF BELONGING BECOMING

- From “Who are we?” to
- “What are we becoming?”
- “Do we like what we are becoming?”
- “Are there other possible pathways of becoming?”

02

AFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP

- What emotions are important for becoming a citizen?
- What emotions are not?
- Who do the negative emotions affect?
- How do we encourage the positive emotions?

03

INCLUSION AS WORK IN AND OF PROGRESS

- Who are included/excluded?
- How are we included/they excluded?
- Why are they excluded?
- How do they want to be included?
- Can we include them, why not?