

# What kind of nature does foster social ties?

## Learning from Singapore and Tokyo.

Rosita SAMSUDIN



SCIENCE OF CITIES  
SYMPOSIUM

NUS  
CITIES

URBAN, NATURE, SOCIAL TIES/ SOCIAL CAPITAL, PERCEPTIONS

## BACKGROUND

- **Social ties** is a key of **health and well-being**.
- **Paradox of densification**: social ties VS social withdrawal
- **Nature in cities** [in various forms] can help to **shape urban social life** and **fosters social ties**.
- Policies and studies largely focus on physical attributes of nature. But people's **perceptions** can drive **motivations** to **visit and use nature**.

### RESEARCH GAPS

- The **interactions** between **physical and perceived attributes of nature** have yet been fully understood.
- The **relationship mechanisms** between **attributes and perceptions nature and social ties** remain fuzzy.

## FINDINGS

**Perceptions** of nature are associated with **social ties stronger** than physical attributes.  
**Perceptions shape Spatial Experiences.**



## CONCLUSIONS

- The role of nature in fostering social ties is mediated by **perceptions**, which shape different **spatial experiences**.
- Spatial experiences suggest **motivations** to visit and use green space, which are linked to the strength of social ties.
- **No association** between **physical attributes** and social ties but, physical attributes inform perceptions of space.
- Understanding **preferences/ needs** and **contexts** is a key in planning and designing nature for social ties.

## OBJECTIVES

- To identify **which attributes of nature in cities**, physical or perceived, are important in fostering social ties.
- To investigate **the relationship mechanisms** between nature and social ties in cities.
- To understand **the relationship patterns** across cities.

## METHODS

- **Localised-scale** nature provides **the spatial context** for **everyday-life social interactions** and **social ties formation**.

### 9 SINGAPORE

precinct green spaces

**810** respondents

### Perception Study: Household Survey

//SES profiles  
//16 items on perceptions of green space  
//4 Social Capital measures (Networks, Trust, Solidarity, Collective Action) & Social Cohesion

### Spatial study

physical attributes:  
//size  
//green cover

### 6 TOKYO

neighbourhood green spaces

**260** respondents

### Social Capital

### NETWORKS

### TRUST

### SOLIDARITY

### COLLECTIVE ACTION

### Future studies

- Need to include more case studies to understand better the mechanisms of the relationship between nature and social ties across different contexts.
- Translational study: How do the findings inform policies and design interventions?
- Transformative: How do we assess the change in social ties, mediated by nature, over time?
- Systemic planning: How are the findings integrated with and/or influence other urban systems and apparatus?

### Contact

Dr. Rosita SAMSUDIN, Lecturer NUS Cities,  
rosita.s@nus.edu.sg

### Acknowledgements

Great gratitude to Prof. TAN Puay Yok (NUS), Assoc. Prof. Vincent CHUA (NUS), Prof. YOKOHARI Makoto (UTokyo) for their invaluable guidance and insights.

DOA  
NUS  
ARCHITECTURE

Funded by

JSPS