The relationship between the concept of "well being" and cultural policy in Singapore

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Singapore is still a city-state with the so-called "controlled freedom" or "curated democracy" (Low and Vadaketh, 2014). In spite of it's undisputed economic and development success (one of the "Asian economic tigers"), Singapore is ranked 90th out of 151 countries where the so called "Happy Planet Index" was measured. In the quest for a more sustainable development, Government of Singapore initiated a platform called "Our Singaporean Conversations" with a goal to connect these results with the needs of Singaporeans. The concept of well being (McNulty and Fincham, 2011) was positioned as central in this investigation, with culture and arts taking a significant part in the findings of these "conversations", where the "voice of people was heard".

This paper will examine the instrumentality of these "conversations" using the connection between the concepts of economic development, well being and the ethics of cultural policy, reflecting it through the recent policy paper by Abigail Gilmore (arts and culture-led regeneration, quality of life and evidence of value and arts policy for quality of life) (Gilmore, 2014) and re-framing it from the UK context to the context of Singapore and wider geopolitical and social context of Southeast Asia.

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