



Observing and Interpreting Territorial Transformations in Singapore

Speaker: Professor Rodolphe De Koninck
The University of Montreal

Chair: Assoc Prof Pow Choon Piew, Department of Geography, NUS

Date/Time: Friday, 21 August 2015, 3.30pm – 5.00pm

Place: Earth Lab (AS2 02-03), Department of Geography, NUS

Abstract

"Territorial land is the essence and foundation of a nation"
(Linda Lim, 2014)

Ever since its modern foundation in 1819 and particularly over the last half-century, the geography of the Republic of Singapore has been constantly remodeled. The Singaporean territory has been extended and redesigned, with its overall as well as detailed configuration and morphology along with its contents and attributes being the object of apparently everlasting transformation. This physical transformation has been accompanied by profound cultural, social and economic transformations, when not causally correlated to them. To a point where one could ask: has change been ingrained into Singaporean culture? And if so, what does it really entail?

My presentation will consist in a candid summary of how, since 1967, having resided, studied and taught in Singapore during long and short periods of time, coming in and out of the Island Republic on a near yearly basis, I have become involved. Impressed and at the same time puzzled by constant change, I have been trying to interpret it, to the point of daring to write about it!

About the Speaker



Rodolphe De Koninck is a graduate of the universities of Bordeaux (License *ès Lettres*, 1965), Laval (MA, 1967) and Singapore (PhD, 1970). He also holds the notable distinction of being the then-University of Singapore's first PhD student. A member of the Royal Society of Canada, he has been the Canada Chair of Asian Research at the University of Montreal since 2002. Active in Southeast Asian studies since the late sixties, he has published twenty-one books and more than 160 journal articles in five languages. These include four books on Singapore, such as *Farmers of a City State. The Chinese Smallholders of Singapore* (Montreal, CSAA, 1975), and *Singapore, An Atlas of Perpetual Territorial Transformation* (Singapore, NUS Press, 2008).

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