

Territory: Relevance for the city

RELEVANCE FOR THE CITY

In planning or developing a city, knowledge of the territory is crucial for two reasons:

1. **The planner needs to understand what the citizens and the city can take from or give to the territory:**
 - **Area of influence and attraction - import:** where do citizens come from, where do goods come from
 - **What can the city offer to the territory - export:** know-how, goods, finances, culture
2. **The planner needs to understand the territorial decision makers' view on the city:**
 - **What does the city need in terms of flows – import:** people, water, energy, materials, tourists
 - **What can the city offer to the region or the country – export:** goods, services, culture

In the beginning of human settlement, there was only territory. Today, the territory is mainly conceived as the hinterland, or in the age of the automobile, as the countryside surrounding cities and settlements. The originally vast stretches of open countryside, forests, deserts, jungle and tundra have been converted into patches of cultivated land. The last large areas of undisturbed territory can be found in South America in the Amazonas Forest, in Siberia, and in some islands of the Pacific Ocean, mainly in Papua New Guinea.

Only a few years ago, islands such as Sumatra, Java, Borneo and New Guinea were almost undisturbed by modern civilisation. The territory was the dominating force. In the name of progress, deforestation, land reclamation, and oil palm plantations replaced the original prime growth which hosted the largest variety of animal and plant species.

Today, when we fly over Siberia, Mongolia, the Himalayas or northern China, we can still imagine how the original territory stretched for hundreds , or even thousands of kilometres without human intervention. When we fly across Europe or North America, we see entire continents of so-called cultivated land, which is the original territory converted into productive areas for human habitat. The impact of the territory on the human settlement becomes more visible in those areas where countries are urbanising rapidly, such as Southeast Asia and Africa

Siberian Territory

Siberia appears as a seemingly endless territory, reaching from the Ural mountains to Vladivostok. Over an area larger than 13,000,000 km² live less than 40 million people. Yet seen from the night sky, large heat and light emissions are evident. Responsible for this are the natural gas and oil fields in the north of Siberia. In addition, the cities in the South are far apart and spread out along the trans-Siberian Railroad. This manifests an incredible difference to the tightly populated urban and non-urban networks in South East Asia.

Gallery 17.1 System Territory

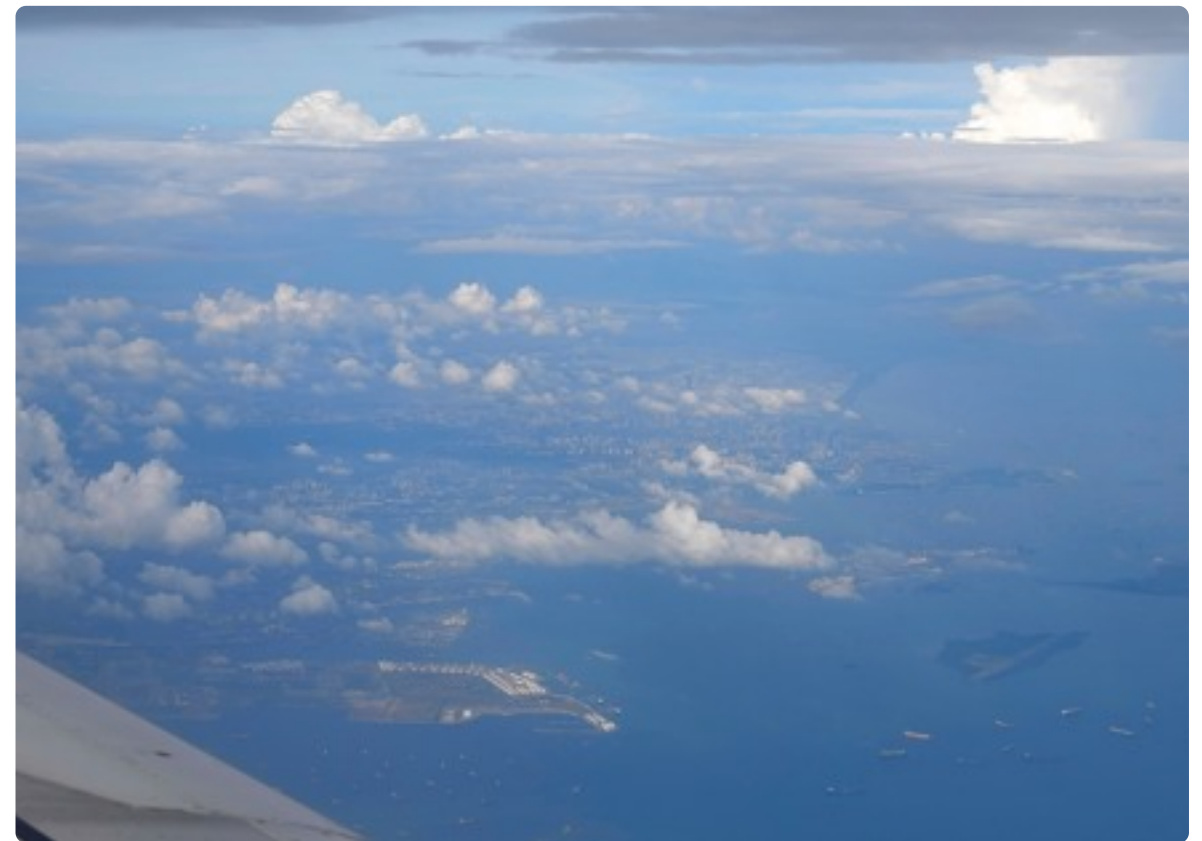


Schmitt, G. 2013. *Siberian territory: A morning in Novosibirsk*. [Photograph]. Siberia, Russia.

Singaporean Territory

In Singapore, more than 5 million people live on 715 km², and more than 250 km² were added to the island in the last 50 years. 100 years ago, Singapore was a scarcely populated island with a few fishing villages in its Northern and Eastern part, with rice fields, extensive jungle and a small concentrated British town - today's central business district- where inhabitants might have had the feeling of a territory with regard to Singapore. Today, the entire island feels more like a city with extensive parks, having completely lost its territorial appearance.

Gallery 17.2 Transformation from territory to city



Schmitt, G. 2013. *Approaching Singapore*. Most of the islands in the front are artificial, or “reclaimed”. [Photograph].

Territories, settlements, cities: Governance

In the second decade of the 21st-century, China plans to enforce one of the largest resettlements of humans from the countryside into cities. More than 250 million people are encouraged to leave their previous homes and move to newly constructed towns, sometimes far away from their original houses. At the same time, in Java, Indonesia, and India, people do not concentrate in cities, but settle in large, densely populated areas without ever forming formal cities. What could be the reason for that?

Gallery 17.3 From territory to city: differences



Schmitt, G. 2012. *Rio de Janeiro, most of the settlement's inhabitants originally coming from the north of Brazil.* [Photograph].

The Haze

Slash and burn used in Sumatra, Indonesia every year, caused severe haze conditions in Singapore in June 2013. Modern technology helped to identify the sources. The Singaporean minister of environment and resources, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan said: "Our hope is that (by) publishing the coordinates of the hotspots, we will allow for crowdsourcing and identification of the companies". (Frenchyywy, 2013)

Gallery 17.4 From territory to city: the haze



BBC, 2013. *Singapore economy suffers from smoke.* [online] (19 June 2013) Available at: <<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-22961572>> [Accessed 20 April 2014].