RHGT, Vol. XVI, Issues 31-32, pp. 37-60

# ISLES AND THEIR STORIES: A STUDY OF THREE ISLANDS OF THE *SINGAPORE ARCHIPELAGO*

## Shaun Tyan Gin LIM

Independent researcher
Email: L170002@e.ntu.edu.sg

## Francesco PERONO CACCIAFOCO

Nanyang Technological University (NTU), College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CoHASS), School of Humanities (SoH), Linguistics and Multilingual Studies Programme (LMS), Singapore
Email: fcacciafoco@ntu.edu.sg

***Abstract:*** *This paper studies three Singaporean islands (with their original Malay names in brackets): St. John's Island (Pulau Sakijang Bendera), Sentosa (Pulau Blakang Mati), and Coney Island (Pulau Serangoon). Using primary sources, such as maps and newspapers, and secondary sources like books on Singaporean toponymy, the authors trace these place names across time. The toponyms conform to the broader trend of naming patterns of Singaporean toponyms. More importantly, the facilities, land uses, and histories of the three islands dovetail with pertinent aspects of Singapore's history and, more broadly, with global discussions on linguistic toponymies and geographies. Through this research, it is evident that the toponyms, or place names, along with their connected stories, are inextricably linked to the history, languages, cultures, and societies of the places they name. This paper ultimately aims to be a starting point for further research on Singapore's island names, an area that has received scant attention in Singaporean toponymy thus far.*

***Keywords:*** *Singapore, Toponymy, Toponomastics, Historical Geography, Islands, Insulonyms, Islotoponomastics, Island Names, Sociolinguistics*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Singapore* is a city-state located at the southern tip of the *Malay Peninsula*. It consists of one main island and about 60 smaller offshore islands[1] (see Figure 1). Research on Singaporean Toponymy and Odonymy often focuses on the main diamond-shaped island, *Singapore*, also known as *Pulau Ujong* 'island at the end', a reference to

[1] Cf. National Parks Board, (2010), p. 9.

*Singapore*'s position on the extreme end of the *Malay Peninsula*[2]. Little is known about the names and stories of the islands surrounding mainland *Singapore*, other than sources on popular media[3], although some research has also been done on islands, for instance, tracing the etymologies of at least five islands using pre-colonial maps[4].

Consequently, this paper aims to add to the small, but growing, literature on island toponymy in *Singapore* by studying the names and histories of three islands: *St. John's Island (Pulau Sakijang Bendera)*, *Sentosa (Pulau Blakang Mati)*, and *Coney Island (Pulau Serangoon)*.

In what follows, the Literature Review comprises three sections representing a history of *Singapore* before going into *Singapore* and its linguistic situation, situating this paper in the broader context of Linguistic Toponymy and Geography. The authors draw on a range of primary sources (maps and newspapers) and secondary sources (books on Singaporean Toponymy) to trace the place names and land uses of these islands. These islands, being historically significant, have also been selected because of the array of primary and secondary sources surrounding their names and land uses, allowing the authors to put together a narrative on the etymology and history of these islets. The names and stories of these islands not only follow established naming conventions of *Singapore* place names, but, crucially, mirror *Singapore*'s development from colonisation to post-independence, ultimately, applying the notion that toponyms are symbols of culture and reflectors of the local geography, history, habitat, and environment[5], into the Singaporean context.

**Figure 1.** A map of *Singapore* Island and some of the smaller offshore islands[6]

---

[2] Cf. Cavallaro, F.P., Perono Cacciafoco, F., Tan, Z.X., (2019), *passim*.

[3] Cf. Island Nation Singapore, (n.d.), *passim*; Cf. Low, J., (2005), *passim*; Cf. Cheow, S.A., Koh, F., (2014), *passim*; Cf. *CNA*, (2020).

[4] Cf. Perono Cacciafoco, F., Shia, D.Z.Z., (2020), *passim*.

[5] Cf. Creţan, R., (2000), *passim*; Cf. Qian, S., Kang, M., Weng, M., (2016), p. 549.

[6] Cf. Lim, K.K.P., Low, J.K.Y., (1998), *passim*.

## 2. *SINGAPORE* HISTORY: A PRIMER

The history of modern *Singapore* is traditionally thought to have begun in January 1819. Sir Stamford Raffles of the British East India Company landed in the island and wanted to develop it as a trading base. Raffles was drawn to *Singapore*'s strategic location at the southern end of the *Malay Peninsula* and the *Straits of Malacca*[7]; the latter is situated along the main trade route between *China*, *India*, and *Europe*[8]. Raffles' decision to colonise *Singapore* might also have been motivated by circumstances, rather than choice. With the Dutch controlling most of *Southeast Asia* by the 19th century, British colonisation of *Singapore* would have served as a bulwark against Dutch influence in the region[9]. What followed was a flurry of treaties that ultimately led to full British control over *Singapore*. In November 1824, the British East India Company signed a treaty of cession with the local Malay rulers to "cede, in full sovereignty and property, to the Honourable the English East India Company, their heirs and successors for ever, the island of Singapore…"[10].

With a deep natural harbour and the British policy to designate *Singapore* as a free port, *Singapore* became a major entrepot port in the late 19th century. When Raffles landed in *Singapore*, there were reportedly about 120 Malays and 30 Chinese on the island[11]. The population grew rapidly as both traders and migrants, especially from *India*, *China*, and *Southeast Asia* made *Singapore* their homes – in part to escape from the wars and famines back home – and in part, enticed by *Singapore*'s economic opportunities. This led to a population boom in the 19th century (see Figure 2).

**Table 1.** Population growth in *Singapore* in the 19th century[12]

| Year | Population ('000) | Annual Growth Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 1824 | 10, 683 | – |
| 1830 | 16, 634 | 7.7 |
| 1840 | 35, 389 | 7.8 |
| 1849 | 52, 891 | 4.6 |
| 1860 | 81, 734 | 4.0 |
| 1871 | 96, 087 | 1.5 |
| 1881 | 137, 722 | 3.7 |
| 1891 | 181, 602 | 2.6 |
| 1901 | 226, 842 | 2.3 |

A turning point in *Singapore*'s history came in February 1942, when *Singapore* fell to the Japanese, who wanted to dominate the Asian region and compete with the West. There are many scholarly works on the reasons and details on how *Singapore* fell, but it can be concluded that the British defence on land, air, and sea were insufficient, to say the least[13]. Within a week of their arrival, *Singapore* fell to the Japanese. The Japanese

[7] Cf. Lim, H.S., (2019), p. 116.
[8] Cf. Francesch-Huidobro, M., (2008), p. 88.
[9] Cf. Ye, J., (2016), p. 28.
[10] Cf. Newbold, T.J., (1839), p. 490.
[11] Cf. Nasir, K.M., Turner, B.S., (2014), p. 17.
[12] Cf. Saw, S., (2007), p. 10.
[13] Cf. Kennedy, J., (1989), p. 1; Cf. Black, J., (2006), p. 138; Cf. Turnbull, C.M., (2009), p. 178.

Interregnum brought hardship to many Singaporeans, especially the Chinese, who were targeted under *Operation Sook Ching*, designed to remove anti-Japanese elements among the Chinese. Europeans and Eurasians were also taken as Prisoners of War (POWs). Fear was pervasive, as were food, water, and housing shortages. More importantly, the Japanese Occupation shattered the myth of White superiority and British invincibility in the minds of many locals[14].

When the British returned, in September 1945, they were no longer revered. Instead, they were greeted with greater demands for local political inclusion and independence[15]. The British wanted a gradual devolution of political power to moderates – nationalists who were prepared to work with the British to safeguard British interests; these included preserving *Singapore* as a port city and naval base, and an eventual merger with neighbouring *Malaya*[16]. Yet, the colonisers were shocked when anti-colonial political parties like the Labour Front (LF) and the Peoples' Action Party (PAP) did particularly well at the 1955 elections[17]. The introduction of mass-based electoral politics ultimately led to the peaceful transfer of power to a popularly elected PAP government that took over self-governing *Singapore* in 1959, and has remained in power ever since.

One of the central promises that the PAP made in the 1959 elections was bringing *Singapore* into a united *Malaya*. With its decisive electoral victory, the PAP believed that it had the mandate to undertake this operation. This was compounded by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's belief that the only way for *Singapore* to survive politically and economically was through merger, going as far as to state that *Singapore* would be "committing national suicide if it refused to merge in Malaysia". Thus, the PAP pushed aggressively to merge with *Malaya*[18].

Merger happened in 1963; *Singapore* and *Malaya* came together to form *Malaysia*, along with the *Borneo* territories of *Sabah* and *Sarawak*. However, this alliance was short-lived. The PAP government and the Malaysian government clashed over their differences for *Malaysia*. The former wanted a Malaysian *Malaysia*, one where all races were treated equally and accused the latter of practicing Malay supremacy[19]. *Malaysia*'s leaders were livid when the PAP participated in *Malaysia*'s elections in April 1964. In September 1964, violence ensued when racial riots broke out. *Singapore* parted ways with *Malaysia*, becoming an independent state in August 1965 with a tearful Prime Minister Lee called the separation a "moment of anguish"[20].

## 3. *SINGAPORE* AND ITS LANGUAGES

While the earliest Census in *Singapore* was conducted in 1824, it was not until the 1911 Census whereby language questions were asked. The number of people speaking each language was recorded and the evidence points to an extremely multilingual *Singapore*; over 40 languages were spoken and about 20 languages had at least 500 speakers (see Figure 3).

[14] Cf. Rodan, G., (2001), *passim*.
[15] Cf. Cheah, W.L., (2017), p. 64.
[16] Cf. Tan, T.Y., (2020), pp. 113–115.
[17] Cf. Lee, E., (2008), pp. 105–106.
[18] Cf. Tan, T.Y., (2008), pp. 36–40.
[19] Cf. Chia, Y., (2015), p. 36.
[20] Cf. Lee, K.Y., (1965), p. 21.

**Table 2.** Languages showing the sizes of various speech communities according to the 1911 Census[21]

| **Chinese languages spoken in *Singapore*** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Language** | **Number of speakers** | **Percentage of population** |
| Hokkien | 91, 549 | 29.3% |
| Cantonese | 48, 739 | 15.6% |
| Teochew | 37, 507 | 12.0% |
| Kheh (Hakka) | 12, 487 | 4.0% |
| Hailam (Hainanese) | 10, 775 | 3.5% |
| Hok-chiu | 3, 653 | 1.2% |
| Hok-chhia | 3, 640 | 1.2% |
| Hing-hoa | 1, 925 | 0.6% |
| Mandarin dialects | 252 | 0.1% |
| Kau-chiu | 86 | 0.03% |
| Lui-chiu | 77 | 0.02% |
| Hai-lo-hong | 5 | 0.002% |
| **Malay languages spoken in *Singapore*** | | |
| **Language** | **Number of speakers** | **Percentage of population** |
| Malay | 49, 425 | 15.8% |
| Javanese | 7, 353 | 2.4% |
| Boyanese | 3, 858 | 1.2% |
| Bugis | 686 | 0.2% |
| Arabic | 665 | 0.2% |
| Banjarese | 24 | 0.01% |
| Annamese | 11 | 0.004% |
| Aboriginal dialects | 8 | 0.003% |
| Bundu | 4 | 0.001% |
| Achehnese | 3 | 0.001% |
| **Indian languages spoken in *Singapore*** | | |
| **Language** | **Number of speakers** | **Percentage of population** |
| Tamil | 19, 378 | 6.2% |
| Hindustani | 2, 471 | 0.8% |
| Bengali | 1, 486 | 0.5% |
| Malayalam | 1, 208 | 0.4% |
| Punjabi | 238 | 0.1% |
| Gurumuki | 222 | 0.1% |
| Urdu | 197 | 0.1% |
| Singhalese | 157 | 0.1% |
| Gujarati | 142 | 0.05% |
| Telugu | 136 | 0.04% |
| Hindi | 70 | 0.02% |
| Sindi | 57 | 0.02% |
| Kabuli | 32 | 0.01% |
| Canarese | 4 | 0.001% |
| Gurka | 3 | 0.001% |
| Parsi | 3 | 0.001% |
| Pushtu | 3 | 0.001% |
| Marathi | 2 | 0.001% |

[21] Cf. Tan, G.L.J., (2014), pp. 19–21.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Oriya | 2 | 0.001% |
| Pathani | 2 | 0.001% |

**Table 3.** Speakers of the main languages in *Singapore* based on "the language most frequently spoken at home" (%)[22]

| Language/Year | 1957 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 1.8 | 11.6 | 18.8 | 23.0 | 32.3 | 36.9 |
| Mandarin | 0.1 | 10.2 | 23.7 | 35.0 | 35.6 | 34.9 |
| Chinese dialects | 74.4 | 59.5 | 39.6 | 23.8 | 14.3 | 12.2 |
| Malay | 13.5 | 13.9 | 14.3 | 14.1 | 12.2 | 10.7 |
| Tamil | 5.2 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.3 |
| Others | 5.0 | 1.7 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 2.3 | 2.0 |

The language use in *Singapore* from the second half of the 20th century is shown in Figure 4. While English is the *lingua franca* in present-day *Singapore*, few people spoke the language 50 years ago. Only 1.8% of Singaporeans spoke English in 1957. Under the British, English was the language of the colonial rulers and its main role was to produce English-speaking colonial administrators[23]. Unsurprisingly, most of the population did not speak English. Despite having a majority Chinese population, only 0.1% of the population spoke Mandarin in 1957. The forefathers of these Chinese trace their roots to Southern *China*, and as such, spoke Chinese dialects like Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochew, Hakka, and Hainanese, as seen in Figure 3. Although they were ethnically Chinese, few knew how to speak Mandarin Chinese.

The sociolinguistic situation in *Singapore* changed after independence. In 1966, the government introduced the Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) where Singaporean students had to learn both English and a "Mother Tongue Language" (MTL) assigned based on their ethnicity. This meant that a Chinese Singaporean would be required to study Mandarin Chinese, a Malay would have to study Malay language while an Indian Singaporean would study Tamil as part of their MTL.

In 1979, the government launched the Speak Mandarin Campaign, aimed at getting Chinese Singaporeans to eschew dialects for Mandarin Chinese[24]. Consequently, more Singaporeans spoke English, rising from 1.8% (1957) to 36.9% (2015). Since all Chinese Singaporeans, regardless of which dialects their forefathers spoke, had to study Mandarin Chinese, the percentage of Mandarin Chinese speakers increased greatly. Simultaneously, the number of dialect speakers have fallen sharply.

The use of Malay and Tamil have seen smaller declines; Malay was the most frequently spoken language at home for 13.5% of Singaporeans in 1957. In 2015, this figure dropped to 10.7%. The percentage of Singaporeans who spoke Tamil dropped from 5.2% in 1957 to 3.3% in 2010. This could be due to the success of the BEP, which has led to Malay and Indian Singaporeans speaking English at home rather than Malay and Tamil, respectively.

## 4. LINGUISTIC TOPONYMIES AND GEOGRAPHIES

[22] Cf. Cavallaro, F.P., Ng, B.C., (2014), *passim*; Cf. Department of Statistics, (2015), p. 15.
[23] Cf. Low, E.L., Pakir, A., (2018), pp. 41–44.
[24] Cf. Newman, J., (1988), p. 437.

In the last section of the Literature Review, we will turn our attention to the relationships between Language, Toponymy, and Geography. The links between Language and Toponymy, while not immediately apparent, are clear. Toponyms, although peripheral in linguistic research, "offers insight into how languages actually work"[25]. Poenaru-Girigan notes that a place name, at the synchronic level, is the geographical naming of a place expressed by the laws of the language at a particular period. The synchronic analysis of place names also elucidates the relationships "between the components, the way and joint sequence in forming words"[26]. Yet, because toponyms can be traced back to a remote past and may contain linguistic elements and/or principles that have since disappeared in current and attested languages, place names "that have lost the morphological touch with basic words and the structure of these names is determined after an etymological analysis"[27]. Toponyms are "linguistic fossils"[28], which, because of their preservation of linguistic elements of the past, "permit historical inferences about languages and the people who spoke them"[29]. In his article entitled *Drawing, Toponymy, and Linguistic Pilgrimage*, Nash posits that toponyms are edges – peripheral spaces where language is the most volatile yet dynamic and it is in these areas where toponyms come to occupy. In a somewhat philosophical take, Nash argues that "Although language lives, breeds, and breathes in all of these elements and spaces, it is the most vibrant at the boundary space, the almost invisible lines which can involve merging, movement, and reconciliation of realms, ideas, and culture: language, toponyms, drawings, cartography"[30].

Another connected discipline with Language and Toponymy is that of Geography. As Radding notes, "no place is purely geographical; places are connected to human society through their names"[31]. A place name is not merely a geographical descriptor, it also imbues on the locality certain characteristics, qualities, values, (his)stories that give it a sense of place – the geographical concept that expresses the feelings of attachment and belonging that people associate with a place. Helleland also poignantly notes that "place names are abstractions of the places they refer to, substituting physical features with a wide range of impressions; they open up for a broader and more intimate knowledge of places"[32]. This is further supported by Jordan, who, in his essay on Linguistic Geography, notes that language (this includes the formation of place names using linguistic elements) supports the formation of an identity that gives an area a sense of place[33]. Jordan also argues that the different language functions like dialects/standard languages/minority languages (all of which are sociolinguistic issues) are also connected with the spatial functions of language and the differing levels of power and prestige that various varieties have in different places.

In the last decade or so, the focus on Critical Toponymy, which sees the place-naming process as interwoven with the political, economic, and social struggles over the production of "place"[34], has not diminished the intersections between Language,

[25] Cf. Nash, J., (2015), p. 234.
[26] Cf. Poenaru-Girigan, O.-M., (2013), p. 156.
[27] Cf. Poenaru-Girigan, O.-M., (2013), p. 157.
[28] Cf. Wang, Y., Ge, D., Zhang, T., Wang, Y., (2019), *passim*.
[29] Cf. Campbell, L., (2013), p. 436.
[30] Cf. Nash, J., (2018), p. 142.
[31] Cf. Radding, L., (2008), p. 18.
[32] Cf. Helleland, B., (2012), p. 109.
[33] Cf. Jordan, P., (2015), p. 41; Cf. Jordan, P. (2012), pp. 127–129.
[34] Cf. Rose-Redwood, R., Alderman, D., (2011), p. 2.

Geography, and Toponymy. Rather, the connections between Toponymy, Language, and Geography have become more apparent given that place names are increasingly commodified with language[35] and language is used to shore up, perpetuate, or dispute power structures[36], be they in colonial contexts [37] or even modern ones in the renaming of entertainment facilities[38], sports stadia [39] and sports clubs[40].

Notwithstanding, the study of island names, known as insulonyms, or island toponymy, or Islotoponomastics, is often glossed over in the fields of Toponymy, Onomastics, and Island Studies. As Nash concludes from his studies on the place naming process of islands on *Pitcairn Islands* in the *South Pacific*, the islanders naming of neighbouring toponyms and hydronyms are "practical linguistic and historical tools used for narrating stories, utilitarian situating within landscape, and locating fishing grounds"[41]. These toponyms and fishing grounds "are not only astute examples of land and sea based cultural heritage; they illustrate how perceptions and processes of naming an island with no toponymic record prior to the arrival of the Bounty has taken place and changed over time"[42]. From a linguistic, cultural, geographical, and historical viewpoint, there is certainly much worth in studying in studying the names of islands which demonstrate elements of language change and migration patterns, safeguard the cultural heritage and stories of the place, and crucially, represent the oral/mental map of the earliest settlers on the islands. This is something the present study hopes to pick up in the Singaporean context.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts a Historical Toponomastics' approach to trace the names of three islands and their concomitant land uses. The authors rely on numerous historical maps sourced from the *National Archives of Singapore* and the *National Library Board*. These maps denote how cartographers, explorers, and naming authorities name these islands – be it in the pre-colonial era or under British rule. The authors also studied old photographs and newspaper articles as primary sources, which tell compelling stories of what happened on these islands and how these isles were used over *Singapore*'s history. The authors have cross-referenced the names given to an island over the years, and in so doing, uncovering the etymology, history, landscapes, and anthropic features of the particular toponym.

Finally, to further ensure the validity of analysis, the authors cross-referenced against scholarly sources on Singaporean toponymy such as *Singapore Street Names: A Study of Toponymics* (2013), and *What's in the Name? How the Streets and Villages in Singapore Got Their Names* (2018). These books are valuable and highly cited references that provide literature and analysis on *Singapore*'s toponyms.

## 6. ISLAND 1: *ST. JOHN'S ISLAND (PULAU SAKIJANG BENDARA)*

[35] Cf. Light, D., Young, C., (2015), *passim*.
[36] Cf. Puzey, G., (2016), *passim*.
[37] Cf. Bigon, L., (2008), pp. 489–491; Cf. Bigon, L., Njoh, A., (2015), *passim*; Cf. Yeoh, B.S.A., (1992), pp. 320–321; Cf. Smith, B., (2017), pp. 35–44.
[38] Cf. Vuolteenaho, J., Wolny, M., Puzey, G., (2019), *passim*.
[39] Cf. Gillooly, L., Medway, D., Warnaby, G., Roper, S., (2021), *passim*.
[40] Cf. Creţan, R., (2019), *passim*.
[41] Cf. Nash, J., (2017), p. 89.
[42] Cf. Nash, J., (2017), p. 90.

The first attestation of *St. John's Island* was in a 1604 map. Erédia, a Portuguese-Eurasian cartographer and explorer, marked the island as *Pulo Siquijan*. This was probably a misspelling of the Malay name of the island, *Pulau Sakijang*[43]. The island also appeared in Franklin and Jackson's 1828 map as *St. John's Id.* or *Po. Sakijang* (see Figure 5).

**Figure 2.** Franklin and Jackson's map shows *St. John's Island* as *St. John's Id* or *Po Sakijang* (marked in red)[44]

*Sakijang* combines two Malay words – *si* 'barking'[45] (or 'roe') and *kijang* 'deer'. However, there is no trace of barking or roe deer on the island. *Si* or *sa* (the short form of *satu*) is also the Malay expression for 'one'[46]. In this context, *St. John's Island* could mean 'one deer island'. Older residents of the island recount stories of how *St. John's Island* got its name. A 1981 newspaper article interviewed Encik Jaafar bin Hussein, a former chief of one of the smaller islands, which, together with *St. John's Island*, forms the *Southern Islands*. Encik Jaffar mentions the existence of two deer in the *Southern Islands*. However, the deer eventually split up; one went to *Pulau Sakijang Bendera* while the other went to *Pulau Sakijang Pelepah* (this island is popularly known as *Lazarus Island* and is connected to *St. John's Island*). Since both islands had one deer each, they were known as *Pulau Sakijang* 'one deer island'[47].

While it is difficult to ascertain the validity of such accounts and whether the deer

[43] Cf. National Parks Board, (n.d.), p. 3.
[44] Cf. Agios Nikolaos Shipping Services, (n.d.).
[45] The barking deer was commonly found in *Southeast Asia* and *Singapore* in the 1800s.
[46] Cf. Savage, V.R., Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 332.
[47] Cf. Jamari, O.Z., (1981), p. 3.

occupied the island as early as in Erédia's map, the case of *St. John's Island* reflects how legends and anecdotes are used to explain toponyms. Locals hear stories on how places got their names from their parents and grandparents. They believe these events occurred and continue telling these myths to future generations as part of their culture and identity. This naming pattern is evident in other Singaporean place names[48] and more importantly, shows the central role of stories in explaining how places are named, especially in pre-literate societies.

Another aspect worth studying is how *Pulau Sakijang Bendera* became known as *St. John's Island*. *St. John's Island* is an English corruption of the Malay word *Sakijang*. While the 1604 map also incorrectly spelt *Sakijang* (which became *Siquijan*), a similar mistake was recorded when Raffles arrived in *Singapore*. British sailors who manned the ship which brought Raffles to *Singapore* asked locals what the island's name was. According to John Crawford, who was in Raffles' delegation, the British were told that the island was called *Sakijang* but mistook it for *St. John's Island*[49].

The uses and anthropic facilities on *St. John's Island* largely mirrors *Singapore* history right from the outset. On 28 January 1819, Raffles, and his fleet of eight ships anchored on *St. John's Island* when they arrived[50]. There, Raffles was directed to meet the local ruler, the *Temenggong*, and both men discussed about setting up a trading post in *Singapore*[51].

In the late 19th century, as more immigrants arrived, the outbreak of diseases became more widespread. This was a major cause of concern for the British. In 1873, after a major cholera epidemic which killed 357 people, the Acting Master Attendant, Henry Ellis, wrote back to *London* on 15 November 1873 proposing a lazaretto at *St. John's Island*. Ellis even suggested that the adjacent *Peak Island* be made a burial ground for the deceased[52]. The quarantine station was completed in 1874 (see Figures 6 and 7). The same year, the quarantine station welcomed the steamer, *The Milton*, with between 1200 and 1300 Chinese passengers from *Swatow* on board. A cholera outbreak occurred in the vessel and about 700 passengers, who were *en route* to *Penang*, were placed under quarantine on the island[53]. Later, *St. John's Island* was used to quarantine pilgrims after their religious pilgrimage to *Mecca*[54]. The quarantine facility was praised for enabling *Singapore*'s port to be one of the healthiest in the *East* as the initial 48 to 72 hour detention period was "valuable in 'screening' passengers for leprosy, tuberculosis, syphilis trachoma, and other diseases"[55].

---

[48] Cf. Perono Cacciafoco, F., Tuang, S.Q., (2018), *passim*; Lim, S.T.G., Perono Cacciafoco, F., (2020), *passim*.
[49] Cf. Savage, V.R., Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 332.
[50] Cf. Kwa, C.G., Heng, D.T.S., Tan, T.Y., (2009), p. 89.
[51] Cf. Turnbull, C.M., (2009), p. 28.
[52] Cf. Shih, T.S., (2004), *passim*.
[53] Cf. *Straits Times Overland Journal*, (1874), p. 2.
[54] Cf. *Morning Tribune*, (1947), p. 2.
[55] Cf. *Malaya Tribune*, (1948), p. 8.

**Figure 3.** The quarantine station on *St. John's Island*, photographed in 1909[56]

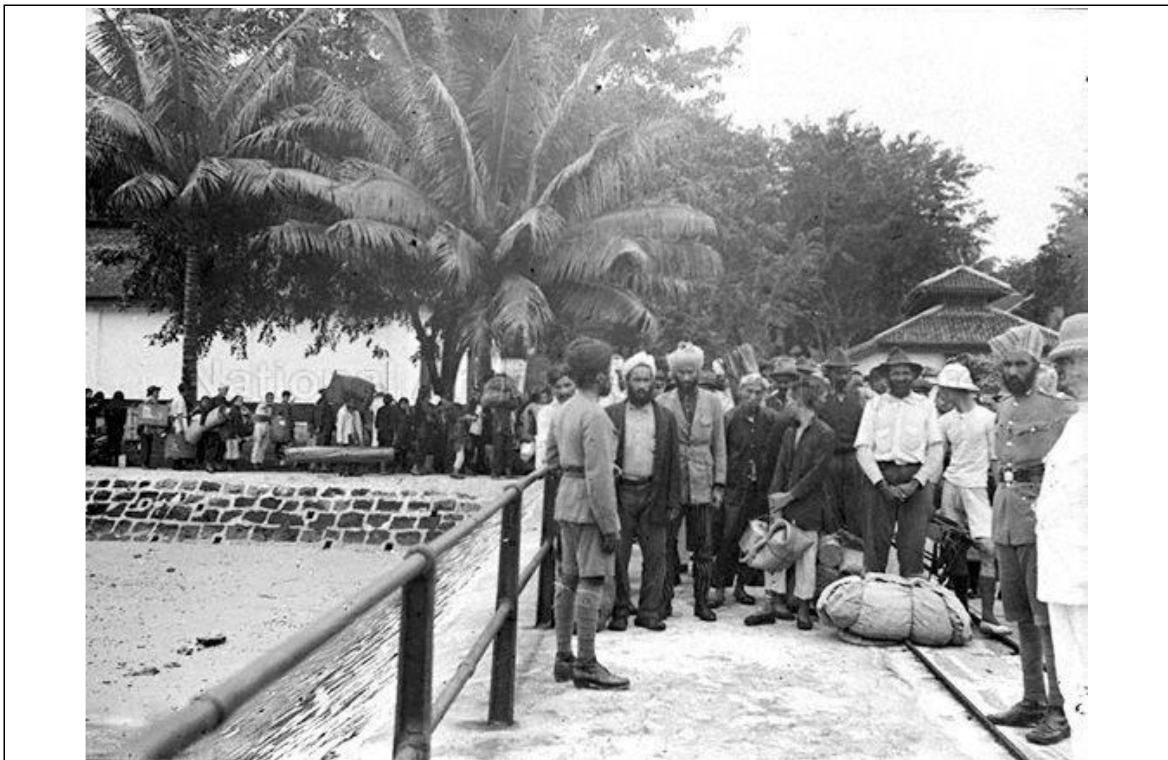

**Figure 4.** New arrivals to *Singapore* being screened at the quarantine station on *St. John's Island*[57]

[56] Cf. Wellington, A.R., (1909).
[57] Cf. National Archives of Singapore, (1930).

In the Japanese Occupation years, *St. John's Island* was used to house POWs. After World War II (WWII), the British used the isle to intern political detainees. One such detainee was Devan Nair, who would later become *Singapore*'s third President. Nair was placed at *St. John's Island* from 1951 to 1953 because he was involved in anti-colonial activities[58].

In February 1955, an Opium Treatment Centre opened at *St. John's Island*, where opium and other drug addicts underwent rehabilitation. The rehabilitation centre stood at *St. John's Island* till 1975, where both the rehabilitation facility and quarantine station had to make way for a holiday resort (see Figure 8). Today, *St. John's Island* is a research centre for deep sea fish farming and is the site of a Marine Aquaculture Centre[59].

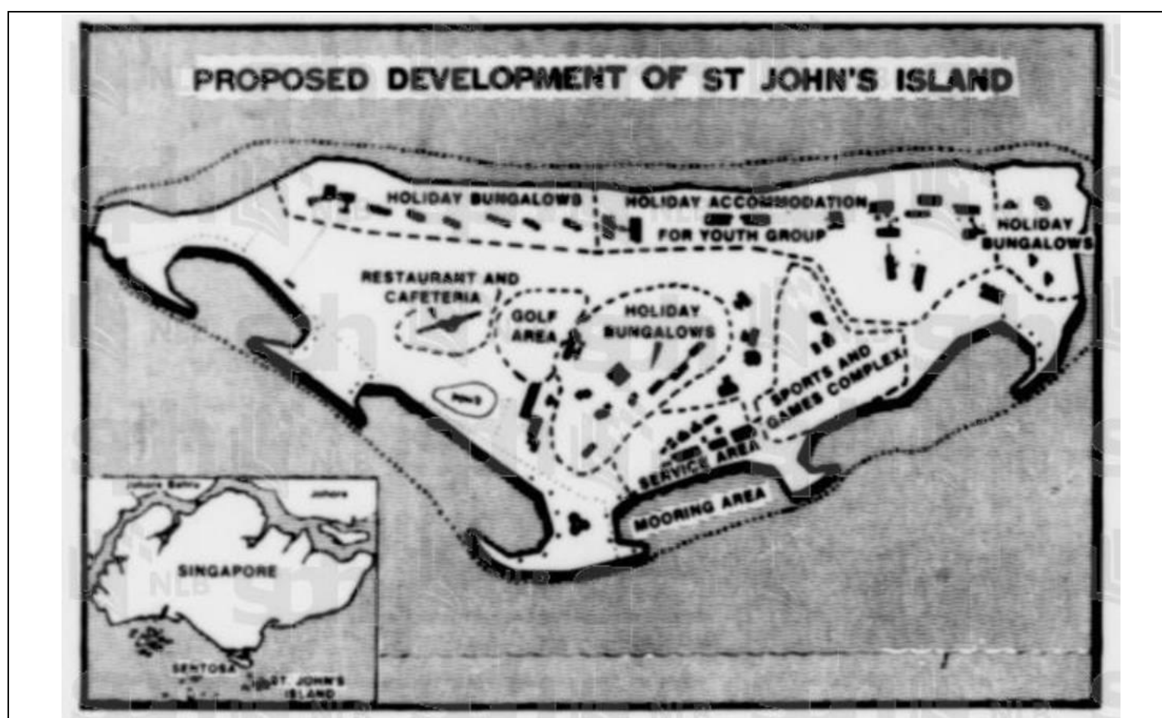


**Figure 5.** The proposed holiday resort on *St. John's Island*, announced in 1976[60]

### 7. ISLAND 2: *SENTOSA (PULAU BLAKANG MATI)*

Variants of the name *Blakang Mati* appear in early maps. In Erédia's 1604 map of *Singapore*, the island was identified as *Blacan Mati* (see Figure 9). Likewise, Franklin and Jackson's 1828 map spells the island as *Balaken Mati* (see Figure 10). Located just off the southern coast of the main island of *Singapore*, the island is also known as *Pulau Panjang* 'long island'[61]. Other early references to *Pulau Blakang Mati* included *Burne Beard Island* (Wilde's 1780 map), *Pulau Niry*, and *Nirifa* (from 1690 to 1700)[62]. However, scholars have different opinion on the ways these early names demarcated,

[58] Cf. Ong, T., (2017), *passim*.
[59] Cf. Savage, V.R., Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), pp. 332–333.
[60] Cf. *The Straits Times*, (1976), p. 13.
[61] Cf. Ng, Y.P., (2017), p. 98.
[62] Cf. Savage, V.R., Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 302.

given that names such as *Pulau Panjang* were also used to refer to the whole of *Singapore*[63].

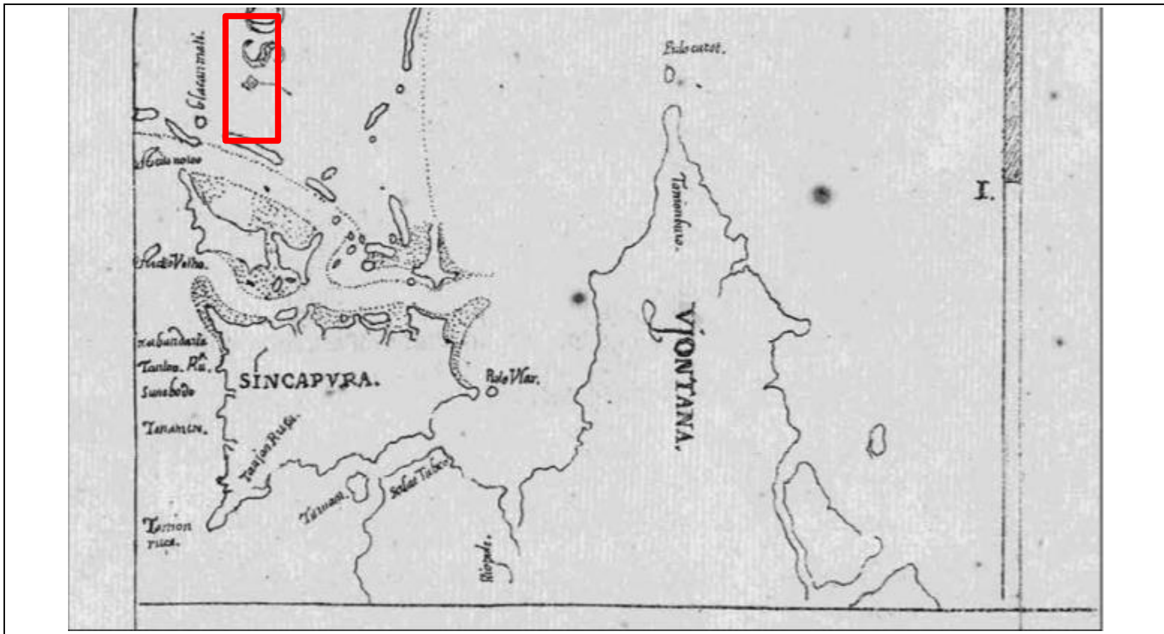


**Figure 6.** Erédia's map of *Singapore* labelled the island as *Blacan Mati* (marked in red)[64]

**Figure 10.** Franklin and Jackson's map shows *Pulau Blakang Mati* as *Balaken Mati* (marked in red)[65]

[63] Cf. Borschberg, P., (2004), p. 98.
[64] Cf. Teo, E., (2019), p. 27.
[65] Cf. Agios Nikolaos Shipping Services, (n.d.).

The Malay name for the island is literally translated as 'dead back' or 'behind the dead' or 'island of death behind' (*blakang* means 'at the back' or 'behind' while *mati* means 'dead'). There are different stories on how the island acquired its name. One account attributes the island's name to pirates savagely pillaging the area, killing and maiming many; another claimed that the island was the burial site of warrior spirits buried at the adjacent *Pulau Brani*. A third version mentions about an epidemic in the 1840s which killed the original settlers, the Bugis people, on the island[66]. A fourth interpretation is that the island derived its name from the sterility of the soils on the hills[67].

During British colonial rule, *Pulau Blakang Mati*, with its strategic location at the southern shores of *Singapore*, was used as a military installation. The British built three fortifications, there – *Fort Serapong* in 1885, *Fort Connaught* in 1878, and *Fort Siloso* in 1898. Together, these forts formed an integral part of *Singapore*'s coastal defence against naval attacks. In the pre-war years, these forts were the sites of heavy firing and gun practice[68]. The British forts were reminiscent of other forts installed by the British – they had tunnels, bunkers, observation posts, guns, and administrative buildings. During WWII, the fort's three 9.2-inch guns, facing the south in anticipation of a naval attack, destroyed a Japanese troop transport and key oil installations. Although this slowed the Japanese, they continued to advance from the north on foot. These fortifications ultimately did not prevent *Singapore* from falling into the hands of the Japanese who outsmarted the British military strategy[69].

The gloomy and bloody picture of *Pulau Blakang Mati* continued during the Japanese Occupation. Gunners stationed at *Fort Siloso* reportedly saw bodies floating in *Keppel Harbour*. Some of these bodies were washed ashore *Pulau Blakang Mati*. These bodies belonged to *Operation Sook Ching* victims whose bodies had drifted over after being shot at sea or other beaches in *Singapore*[70]. *Fort Siloso* was also used to house Australian and British inmates who were taken as POWs by the Japanese during WWII[71].

After the war, *Pulau Blakang Mati* was still used for military purposes. From 1947, the 1st *Singapore* Regiment of the Royal Artillery (SRRA) used the island as a base until the force disbanded 10 years later. The elite Gurkha units were also based on the island.

As the British planned to withdraw its troops from *Singapore* by the early-1970s, *Pulau Blakang Mati* was returned to the *Singapore* government in 1967. Several government ministries staked their claims on the island, as noted by the Minister for Law and National Development E. W. Barker, who said at a *Singapore* Tourist Association dinner: "The Defence Minister wants the security guns there first. The Finance Minister wants part of the island for industries and the Port of Singapore Authority needs it for more deep water berths… I sincerely hope tourism will not be left out"[72].

Although *Pulau Blakang Mati* had great economic potential, it was eventually used for tourism. A key figure behind this was Dr Albert Winsemius, a Dutch economist sent by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to advice the *Singapore*

[66] Cf. My Community, (2019), p. 5.
[67] Cf. Haughton, H.T., (1889), p. 78.
[68] Cf. *The Straits Times*, (1913), p. 8.
[69] Cf. Muzaini, H., Yeoh, B.S.A., (2016), *passim*.
[70] Cf. National Heritage Board, (2013), p. 21.
[71] Cf. Robert, G., (2019), p. 4.
[72] Cf. *The Straits Times*, (1967), p. 10.

government's economic strategy in its early years. Dr Winsemius predicted that Singaporeans' standard of living would eventually increase. Thus, there should be recreational spots for locals to spend their money and leisure time. He endeavoured to reserve the island for recreation and tourism purposes. In his words, "[it was] the only large empty place in Singapore. I got hold of the Urban Renewal Administration [sic Department], Mr Alan Choe, and with him... Blakang Mati was… reserved for recreational purposes, and changed its name into Sentosa"[73]. *Sentosa* means peace and tranquillity in Malay, derived from the Sanskrit word *santosha* 'contentment' or 'satisfaction'[74].

In February 1974, *Singapore*'s first cable car system was completed. It linked *Sentosa* to *Mount Faber* on mainland *Singapore*, with the ride offering a "breath-taking view of Singapore and the Southern Islands" as the journey took place at a height of 60.95 metres (200 feet)[75]. The completion of the cable car system meant that Singaporeans could also access *Sentosa* by both cable car and boats; boats had been the sole mode of transportation to the island for the last 150 years.

More tourist attractions were opened. These included the *Sentosa* Golf Club, the *Sentosa* Coralarium, the World Insectarium, and the Musical Fountain. *Sentosa's* wartime history was also preserved through the museum at *Fort Siloso*, which contains, among others, coastal guns, remains of tunnels, and wax figures of Japanese and British soldiers re-enacting the scene of British surrender in February 1942[76]. Over time, what was called 'island of death behind' has become a popular tourist destination for both local and international tourists, and is concomitant with the state's policy of developing small islands as tourist attractions[77].

## 8. ISLAND 3: *CONEY ISLAND (PULAU SERANGOON)*

*Coney Island* was originally known as *Pulau Serangoon* (sometimes spelt as *Pulo Serangoon*). The name could be given due to the island extending from the *Sungei Serangoon* river (see Figure 11).

---

[73] Cf. Centre for Liveable Cities, Singapore, (2015), pp. 16–17.
[74] Cf. Robert, G., (2019), p. 4.
[75] Cf. *The Straits Times*, (1974), p. 8.
[76] Cf. *Sentosa*, (n.d.), *passim*.
[77] Cf. Henderson, J.C., (2001), *passim*.

**Figure 11.** A 1985 map showing *Coney Island*, or *Pulau Serangoon* (marked in blue as *P. Serangoon*), extends from the *Sungei Serangoon* river (marked in red as *S. Serangoon*)[78]

Colonial records allude to the presence of a *Coney Island*. An 1825 survey of the coastal areas around *Singapore* by the *Singapore* Resident John Crawford and his team mentioned the *Rabbit and Coney Islets*. This led to a writer of the *Singapore Chronicle* newspaper remarking that "the whimsical application to these two islets suggests some observations upon the fantastic names which have been given to places in this part of the world… There is scarcely any sense or meaning in the best of them. Pray, what is the difference between a rabbit and a coney?"[79]. Although the name *Pulau Serangoon* is still used occasionally, the island's English name is more popular today, perhaps reflecting the popularity of English in modern *Singapore*.

However, it is unsure which *Coney Island* the above survey was referring two. There appears to be two *Coney Islands*; one also known as *Pulau Serangoon*. The second *Coney Island* refers to *Pulau Satumu* 'one tree island', where the Raffles Lighthouse stands. A 1907 article reads: "It is notified that on and after 1st May, 1907, Raffles Light on Coney Island will be an all-round light visible from all bearings except where obscured by land."[80]

The story of *Coney Island (Pulau Serangoon)* starts in the 1930s. The island was then owned by Aw Boon Haw and Aw Boon Par, the brothers behind the famous brand, Tiger Balm, who built a resort on the island. The brothers christened the island *Haw Par Island*, reflecting an eponymous naming practice of toponyms that has been documented in research on Singaporean toponymy[81].

In 1950, businessman Ghulam Mahmood bought the island from the Haw Par

[78] Cf. National Archives of Singapore, (1985).
[79] Cf. Savage, V.R., Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 92.
[80] Cf. *Eastern Daily Mail and Straits Morning Advertiser*, (1907), p. 3.
[81] Cf. Perono Cacciafoco, F., Tuang, S.Q., (2018), *passim*; Lim, S.T.G., Perono Cacciafoco, F., (2020), *passim*.

brothers. Mahmood aspired to create a Singaporean version of New York's *Coney Island*, calling it *Singapore Coney Island*, with plans for swimming, boating, fishing, and sporting facilities, a skating rink, a dance hall, and six cottages for honeymooning and/or family holidays[82]. The name *Coney Island* was not restricted to this island. Other places with the name *Coney Island* included a proposed holiday resort by the sea at *Tanjong Balai* (1947) and a miniature entertainment park between *Geylang Road* and *Serangoon Road* (1949). Taken together, this illustrates that borrowing, a common naming strategy where Singaporean toponyms are borrowed from foreign places and languages, in this case, the world-famous *Coney Island*, has been utilised previously. Yet, the SGD$ 100,000 plan for a *Singapore Coney Island* never materialised and by 1955, the island was up for sale[83].

The island was later owned by a Thai businessman, who tried to sell *Coney Island* at a million dollars, without success[84]. In 1974, the government then acquired the islet and announced that an initial SGD$ 14.5 million would be spent on land reclamation to increase the size of *Coney Island* by five times. The island would also house a multi-million dollar recreation resort, modern beach facilities, holiday chalets, and several marinas[85]. No resort was built eventually, although *Coney Island* was the site of camps and picnics in the mid-1970s[86]. More recently, in 2015, a 50 hectare *Coney Island Park* was opened on *Coney Island*, which today measures 100 hectares after further land reclamation works. The rustic and natural Park features a beach, a boardwalk, and basic amenities.

## 9. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The discussions on these three islands bring about certain themes in relation to the section on linguistic geographies and toponymies. On the relationship between Toponymy and Language, it is true that studying the etymologies of place names have provided a glimpse on the morphosyntactic structure and semantics of terms, particularly in the Malay language (e.g. *si*, *kijang*, *blakang*, *mati*). Crucially, this study extends Poenaru-Girigan's argument that place names, at a synchronic level, are telling in the relationships between various forces in the formation of words. An observation here is the transliteration mistakes made by the British colonialists as they arrived in Singapore in the early 19th century. Malay and local sounding names like *Pulau Sakijang* were spelt as *St. John's Island* to better match lexical items that were common in the English language. Furthermore, seemingly comical Anglicised names like *Rabbit and Coney Islands* were given to islands. The misspelling and forced changes of toponyms could have occurred due to linguistic errors, but are also indicative of the British's imposition of the supremacy of the English language on toponyms, something that was observed in other Malay sounding toponyms like *Sa-ranggong*, which was modified to suit English (the place eventually was named as *Serangoon*)[87]. One begins to see that it is not merely the linguistic forces that affect the construction (or changes) in toponyms. Rather, the laws of the language are intersected with issues of governmentality and control, along

[82] Cf. *The Straits Times*, (1950), p. 7.
[83] Cf. *The Straits Times*, (1955), p. 4.
[84] Cf. *New Nation*, (1971), p. 1.
[85] Cf. *New Nation*, (1974), p. 3.
[86] Cf. *The Straits Times*, (1976), p. 13; Cf. *The Straits Times*, (1977), p. 7.
[87] Cf. Yeoh, B.S.A., (1992), p. 317.

with how power shapes the prestige that different varieties are accorded, particularly in the colonial context. In this sense, language in the toponymic landscape can also be used as a tool of control, as has been explored in Critical Toponymies.

The basic words and structure of these names are also connected with oral stories and traditions that describe the traits and histories of the locality, thereby providing a sense of place. This is seen in the example of *St. John's Island*, where locals tell oral traditions on how the island got its name from the deer on the island. In the case of *Sentosa*, whose original name *Pulau Blakang Mati* meant 'dead back' or 'behind the dead', locals described four ways on how the island came to acquire its unpleasant sounding name, all of which are connected with death (from the word *mati* 'dead'), and in some cases, linked to less savoury happenings behind the island (stemming from *blakang* 'behind'). Toponyms, thus, are, as what Nash argues, practical linguistic and historical tools in knowing how languages function and the stories associated with them.

It is not just the "little" stories that get embedded in these place names; the macro-histories of places dovetail with the names and uses of the islands as well. In tracing the history of how *St. John's Island* was used, one begins to see a snapshot of *Singapore*'s history. The Anglicised name, as aforementioned, denotes some form of British influence over the place, and can be argued to be a result of colonisation. Preliminary agreements regarding the British establishing a port were discussed on the island. Later, as more immigrants came by boat to *Singapore* in the 19th century, the diseases was rampant in the densely packed vessels that ferried the immigrants. *St. John's Island* acted as a quarantine facility for incoming ships. During WWII, POWs were held at *St. John's Island*. The post-WWII era saw heightened anti-British sentiment and the colonisers placed political prisoners on *St. John's Island*. The rehabilitation centre was regarded as one of the earliest measures in *Singapore*'s "tough road to success in drug war"[88]. The uses of the isle captured the *zeitgeist* of Singaporean history and in this sense, looking at the toponym and its connected stories provides a gateway to *Singapore*'s past.

Finally, the role of language in toponymic rebranding is also evident in the case study of *Sentosa*. Toponymic rebranding might occur when brand or place names change to fulfil place marketing goals, for instance, to improve the place image or boost investment or tourist expenditure to the locality increasing tourist arrivals[89]. The very act of changing the name of *Pulau Blakang Mati* to *Sentosa* means that the toponym is now called a place of peace and tranquillity, ideals that are commonly associated with tourist destinations, and hence, ridding the place of its gory image. This did not mean that all of *Sentosa*'s history was bulldozed nor its characteristically deadly past was lost; these aspects were somewhat maintained when the authorities strategically marketed places like *Fort Siloso* as sites to learn more about *Singapore*'s wartime defence and history. However, numerous other tourist attractions were built and the island was seen as living up to its name as a peaceful and serene place, a picture further reinforced by golf courses and numerous sea-front hotels. This commodifies the place, turns it into a "marketable product" and lends *Sentosa* a brand identity, ultimately realising the vision of *Sentosa* as a "paradise island" for "millions of tourists seeking the sun"[90].

A final note on the use of language in toponymic branding. The story of *Coney Island* is instructive. Its name represents a common naming practice of borrowing, particularly from other parts of the world, and is indicative of how naming practices of

---

[88] Cf. *The Straits Times*, (1982), p. 18.
[89] Cf. Medway, D., Warnaby, G., (2014), p. 160.
[90] Cf. *The Straits Times*, (1969), p. 4.

Singaporean places reflects the state's vision of being a cosmopolitan city-state. Indeed, from the 1990s, the words "cosmopolis" and "cosmopolitanism" are regularly inserted into government speeches and documents envisioning *Singapore* in the post-Y2K era, one which is not just economically vibrant and socially cohesive, but culturally vibrant as well [91]. One-time owner of *Coney Island*, Ghulam Mahmood's goal of creating a Singaporean version of New York's *Coney Island*, shows initial attempts to adopt an international outlook, to adapt the best practices from abroad, and add culture and character to the island through the arts, sports, and architecture – ambitions which are articulated through the naming process of naming places after the renowned *Coney Island*. The borrowed name, replicated from America, becomes at once, a marketing tool to capitalise on the positive connotations of the name elsewhere, and articulate Singapore's early visions of cosmopolitanism. Thus, cosmopolitanism was not new in *Singapore*; toponymic naming patterns in the case of *Coney Island* in the 1950s is preliminary evidence of conceptualising *Singapore* as a culturally vibrant city modelled after that of global metropolises.

In conclusion, island names is a widely unexplored field in the discipline of *Singapore* Toponymy, as it is in Toponymy and Toponomastics. Hence, this paper aims to be a starting point for further research on *Singapore*'s island names and more broadly, Islotoponomastics. In each of the three islands surveyed, the link between society (be it the languages spoken or history of the place or societal characteristics), linguistic geographies, and place names is strong and widespread. Ultimately, this further gives credence to the argument that place names are a useful entry point in understanding the history, language, culture, and society of a region. As this paper demonstrates, this can be done using a Historical Toponomastics approach in analysing these place names, in terms of the language used and naming patterns, combined with understanding the land uses and Historical Geography of territories and landscapes, can unveil much about the history and social features of these fascinating places.

## REFERENCES

**Agios Nikolaos Shipping Services**, (n.d.), *Ship Agency Services ~ Singapore Port Area* [Retrieved from http://agios.com.sg/].

**Bigon, L.**, (2008), Names, Norms and Forms: French and Indigenous Toponyms in Early Colonial Dakar, Senegal, *Planning Perspectives*, vol. 23, nr. 4, pp. 479–501. https://doi.org/10.1080/02665430802319021

**Bigon, L., Njoh, A.J.**, (2015), The Toponymic Inscription Problematic in Urban Sub-Saharan Africa: From Colonial to Postcolonial Times, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, vol. 50, nr. 1, pp. 25–40. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0021909613510246

**Black, J.**, (2006), *A Military History of Britain: From 1775 to the Present*, Connecticut, Praeger.

**Borschberg, P.**, (2004), Remapping the Straits of Singapore? New Insights from Old Sources, in Borschberg, P., (Ed.), *Iberians in the Singapore-Melaka Area and Adjacent Regions (16th to 18th Century)*, Wiesbaden, Germany, Harrassowitz, pp. 93–130.

**Campbell, L.**, (2013), *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction*, 3rd ed, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

[91] Cf. Yeoh, B.S.A., (2004), *passim*.

**Cavallaro, F.P., Ng, B.C.**, (2014), Language in Singapore: From Multilingualism to English Plus, in Hajek, J., Slaughter, Y., (Eds.), *Challenging the Monolingual Mindset: A Book in Memory of Michael Clyne*, Bristol, United Kingdom, Multilingual Matters, pp. 33–48.

**Cavallaro, F.P., Perono Cacciafoco, F., Tan, Z.X.**, (2019), Sequent Occupance and Toponymy in Singapore: The Diachronic and Synchronic Development of Urban Place Names, *Urban Science*, vol. 3, nr. 3, 98, https://doi.org/10.3390/urbansci3030098.

**Centre for Liveable Cities, Singapore**, (2015), *Planning for Tourism: Creating a Vibrant Singapore*.
[Retrieved from https://www.clc.gov.sg/docs/default-source/urban-systems-studies/plan-for-tourism.pdf].

***CNA***, (2020), *The Islands That Made Us*
[Retrieved from https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/video-on-demand/islands-that-made-us/the-islands-that-made-us-12036220].

**Cheah, W.L.**, (2017), Oaths of Allegiance in the Singapore Trials, in von Lingen, K., (Ed.), *Debating Collaboration and Complicity in War Crimes Trials in Asia, 1945–1956*, Cham, Switzerland, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 61–78.

**Cheow, S.A., Koh, F.**, (June 11, 2014), *The Straits Times*, *Singaporean Islands You May Not Have Heard Of*
[Retrieved from https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/singapore-islands-you-may-not-have-heard-of].

**Chia, Y.**, (2015), *Education, Culture and the Singapore Developmental State: "World Soul" Lost and Regained?*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, United Kingdom; New York, NY, Palgrave Macmillan.

**Creţan, R.**, (2000), *Toponimie Geografică [Geographical Toponymy]*, Timişoara, Editura Mirton.

**Creţan, R.**, (2019), Who Owns the Name? Fandom, Social Inequalities and the Contested Renaming of a Football Club in Timişoara, Romania. *Urban Geography*, vol. 40, nr. 6, pp. 805–825. https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2018.1472444

**Department of Statistics**, (2015), *General Household Survey 2015*
[Retrieved from https://www.singstat.gov.sg/-/media/files/publications/ghs/ghs2015/ghs2015.pdf].

***Eastern Daily Mail and Straits Morning Advertiser***, (April 27, 1907), *Untitled*, p. 3
[Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/easterndaily19070427-1.2.31].

**Francesch-Huidobro, M.**, (2008), *Governance, Politics and the Environment: A Singapore Study*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Publishing.

**Gillooly, L., Medway, D., Warnaby, G., Roper S.**, (2021), 'To us it's Still Boundary Park': Fan Discourses on the Corporate (Re)naming of Football Stadia, *Social and Cultural Geography*, https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2021.1910990

**Haughton, H.T.**, (1889), Notes on Names of Places in the Island of Singapore and its Vicinity, *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 20, pp. 75–82.

**Helleland, B.**, (2012), Place Names and Identities, *Oslo Studies in Language*, vol. 4, nr. 2, pp. 95–116.

**Henderson, J.C.**, (2001), Developing and Managing Small Islands as Tourist Attractions, *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, vol. 3, nr. 2, pp. 120–131. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23746720

**Island Nation Singapore**, (n.d.), *Islands From The Sky*
[Retrieved from http://islandnation.sg/story/islands-from-the-sky/].

**Jamari, O.Z.**, (August 30, 1981), *Berita Minggu*, *Asal usul nama pulau2 di selatan*, p. 3
[Retrieved from https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/beritaharian19810830-1.2.21].

**Jordan, P.**, (2012), Place Names as Ingredients of Space-related Identity, *Oslo Studies in Language*, vol. 4, nr. 2, pp. 117–131.

**Jordan, P.**, (2015), Thoughts on a Concept of Language Geography, *Review of Historical Geography and Toponomastics*, vol. 11, nr. 21–22, pp. 33–46.

**Kennedy, J.**, (1989), *When Singapore Fell: Evacuations and Escapes, 1941–42*, Basingstoke, United Kingdom, Palgrave Macmillan.

**Kwa, C.G., Heng, D.T.S., Tan, T.Y.**, (2009), *Singapore, A 700-Year History: From Early Emporium to World City*, Singapore, National Archives of Singapore.

**Lee, E.**, (2008), *Singapore: The Unexpected Nation*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Publishing.

**Lee, K.Y.**, (1965), *Transcript of a Press Conference Given by the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, at Broadcasting House, Singapore, at 1200 Hours on Monday 9th August, 1965*
[Retrieved from https://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/data/pdfdoc/lky19650809b.pdf].

**Light, D., Young, C.**, (2015), Toponymy as Commodity: Exploring the Economic Dimensions of Urban Place Names, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 39, nr. 3, pp. 435–450. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12153

**Lim, H.S.**, (2019), Social Structure and *Bang* Interactions, in Kwa, C.G., Kua, B.L. (Eds.), *A General History of the Chinese in Singapore*, Singapore, World Scientific Publishing, pp. 115–134.

**Lim, K.K.P., Low, J.K.Y.**, (1998), *A Guide to Common Marine Fishes of Singapore*, Singapore, Singapore Science Centre.

**Lim, S.T.G., Perono Cacciafoco, F.**, (2020), Then and Now: A Comparative Historical Toponomastics Analysis of Station Names in 2 of Singapore's Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Lines, *Urban Science*, vol. 4, nr. 3, 37, https://doi.org/10.3390/urbansci4030037.

**Low, E.L., Pakir, A.**, (2018), English in Singapore: Striking a New Balance for Future-Readiness, *Asian Englishes*, vol. 20, nr. 1, pp. 41–53, https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2018.1423455.

**Low, J.**, (2005), *Names of (Some) Singapore Islands*
[Retrieved from http://habitatnews.nus.edu.sg/articles/singaporeislands/].

***Malaya Tribune***, (December 23, 1948), *S'pore Port Is Healthiest*, p. 8
[Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/maltribune19481223-1.2.94].

***Morning Tribune***, (December 13, 1947), *Chinese Muslims Here After Pilgrimage To Mecca*, p. 2
[Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/morningtribune19471213-1.2.15].

**Medway, D., Warnaby, G.**, (2014), What's in a Name? Place Branding and Toponymic Commodification, *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, vol. 46, nr. 1, pp. 153–167, https://doi.org/10.1068/a45571.

**Muzaini, H., Yeoh, B.S.A.**, (2016), *Contested Memoryscapes: The Politics of Second World War Commemoration in Singapore*, London, United Kingdom; New York, NY, Routledge.

**My Community**, (2019), *My Mount Faber & Sentosa Heritage Tour Media Release: Recollect the Stories of World War II through the Military Encampment, Underground Complexes and Secret Reservoirs at Mount Faber and Sentosa*
[Retrieved from https://mycommunity.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/My-Mount-Faber-Sentosa-Heritage-Tour_Media-Release.pdf].

**Nash, J.**, (2015), Is Toponymy Necessary?, *Studies in Language*, vol. 39, nr. 1, pp. 230–235, https://doi.org/10.1075/sl.39.1.08nas

**Nash, J.**, (2017), Pitcairn Island, Island Toponymies and Fishing Ground Names: Toward the Possibility of a Peaceful Onshore and Offshore Reconciliation, *Journal of Territorial and Maritime Studies*, vol. 4, nr. 1, pp. 86–96

**Nash, J.**, (2018), Drawing, Toponymy, and Linguistic Pilgrimage, *Journal of Cultural Geography*, vol. 35, nr. 1, pp. 133–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/08873631.2017.1377496

**Nasir, K.M., Turner, B.S.**, (2014), *The Future of Singapore: Population, Society and the Nature of the State*, London, United Kingdom; New York, NY, Routledge.

**National Archives of Singapore**, (1930), *New Arrivals to Singapore Quarantine Station at St. John's Island* [Retrieved from https://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/photographs/record-details/345e6627-1162-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad].

**National Archives of Singapore**, (1985), *Singapore Road Map: Punggol* [Retrieved from https://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps_building_plans/record-details/fad51436-115c-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad].

**National Heritage Board**, (2013), *Singapore in World War II: A Heritage Trail* [Retrieved from https://www.nhb.gov.sg/~/media/nhb/files/places/trails/world%20war%20ii/wwii-text.pdf].

**National Parks Board**, (n.d.), *Your Guide to St. John's Island Trail* [Retrieved from https://www.nparks.gov.sg/-/media/nparks-real-content/gardens-parks-and-nature/diy-walk/diy-walk-pdf-files/st-johns-island-trail.pdf].

**National Parks Board**, (2010), *4th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity* [Retrieved from https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/sg/sg-nr-04-en.pdf].

**Newbold, T.J.**, (1839), *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca, viz. Pinang, Malacca, and Singapore; With a History of the Malayan States on the Peninsula of Malacca*, vol. 1, London, United Kingdom, Stewart and Murray.

**Newman, J.**, (1988), Singapore's Speak Mandarin Campaign, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, vol. 9, nr. 5, pp. 437–448, https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.1988.9994348.

***New Nation***, (August 31, 1971), *It's Yours, If You've a Million to Spare...*, p. 1 [Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/newnation19710831-1.2.5].

***New Nation***, (January 4, 1974), *Big Coney Isle Plan*, p. 3 [Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/newnation19740104-1.2.15.8].

**Ng, Y.P.**, (2017), *What's in the Name? How the Streets and Villages in Singapore Got Their Names*, Singapore, World Scientific Publishing.

**Ong, T.**, (June 27, 2017), Beneath St. John's Island's Tranquillity is A Past Linked to Drugs, Diseases, & Political Detainees, *Mothership.SG*, [Retrieved from https://mothership.sg/2017/06/beneath-st-johns-islands-tranquility-is-a-past-linked-to-drugs-diseases-political-detainees/].

**Perono Cacciafoco, F., Tuang, S.Q.**, (2018), Voices from the Streets: Trends in Naming Practices of Singapore Odonymy, *Review of Historical Geography and Toponomastics*, vol. 13, nr. 25–26, pp. 9–30.

**Perono Cacciafoco, F., Shia, Z.Z.D.**, (2020), Singapore's Pre-Colonial Place Names: A Philological Reconstruction Developed through the Analysis of Historical Maps, *Review of Historical Geography and Toponomastics*, vol. 15, nr. 29–30, pp. 83–124.

**Poenaru-Girigan, O.-M.**, (2013), The Relationship between Toponymy and Linguistics, *ANADISS*, vol. 15, pp. 154–166.

**Puzey, G.**, (2016), Renaming as Counter-Hegemony: The Cases of Noreg and Padania, in Puzey, G., Kostanski, L. (Eds.), *Names: People, Places, Perceptions and Power. Bristol: Multilingual Matters*, pp. 165–184.

**Qian, S., Kang, M., Weng, M.**, (2016), Toponym Mapping: A Case for Distribution of Ethnic Groups and Landscape Features in Guangdong, China, *Journal of Maps*, vol. 12, nr. S1, pp. 546–550, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17445647.2016.1201017.

**Radding, L.**, (2008), *What's in a Name? How Toponyms Connect Language and Society through Place*. Syracuse University Honors Program Capstone [Retrieved from https://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1550&context=honors_capstone]

**Robert, G.**, (November 30, 2019 to December 1, 2019), *The Business Times Weekend*, *Sentosa Golf Club on Top of the World*, p. 4 [Retrieved from https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/sites/default/files/attachment/2019/11/30/BT20191130-BTX-004-00-005.pdf].

**Rodan, G.**, (Ed.), (2001), *Singapore*, Abingdon, Oxfordshire; New York, NY, Routledge.

**Rose-Redwood, R., Alderman, D.**, (2011), Critical Interventions in Political Toponymy, *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, vol. 10, nr. 1, pp. 1–6.

**Savage, V.R., Yeoh, B.S.A.,** (2013), *Singapore Street Names: A Study of Toponymics*, Singapore, Marshall Cavendish Editions.

**Saw, S.**, (2007), *The Population of Singapore*, 2nd ed., Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Publishing.

**Sentosa**, (n.d.), *Fort Siloso* [Retrieved from https://www.sentosa.com.sg/en/things-to-do/attractions/fort-siloso/].

**Shih, T.S.**, (2004), *The Foochows of Sitiawan: A Historical Perspective*, Perak, Malaysia, Persatuan Kutien Daerah Manjung.

**Smith, B.**, (2017), Cartographies of Colonial Commemoration: Critical Toponymy and Historical Geographies in Toronto, *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, vol. 15, nr. 2, pp. 34–47.

***Straits Times Overland Journal***, (November 19, 1874), *The "Milton"*, p. 2 [Retrieved from https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/stoverland18741119-1.2.10?ST].

**Tan, G.L.J.**, (2014), *Charting Multilingualism in Singapore: From the Nineteenth Century to the Present* [Retrieved from http://www.soh.ntu.edu.sg/Programmes/linguistics/Undergraduate%20Programme/Documents/Good%20Sample%20FYP%20Reports/AY2014/Tan%20Lijia%20Gloria.pdf].

**Tan, T.Y.**, (2008), *Creating "Greater Malaysia": Decolonization and the Politics of Merger*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Publishing.

**Tan, T.Y.**, (2020), *The Idea of Singapore: Smallness Unconstrained*, Singapore, World Scientific Publishing.

**Teo, E.**, (2019), *Jalan Singapura: 700 Years of Movement in Singapore*, Singapore, Marshall Cavendish Editions.

***The Straits Times (TST)***, (March 13, 1913), *Untitled*, p. 8 [Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19130313-1.2.34].

***TST***, (April 4, 1950), *'Coney Island' for S'pore*, p. 7 [Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19500404-1.2.109].

***TST***, (September 8, 1955), *Pleasure Isle for Sale: 32 Acres for Fun*, p. 4 [Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19550908-1.2.67].

***TST***, (August 1, 1967), *A New Life Planned for An Old Fortress*, p. 10. [Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19670801-1.2.71].

***TST***, (January 23, 1969), *A 'Paradise Island'*, p. 4 [Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19690123-1.2.20].

***TST***, (February 15, 1974), *First Major Project in Sentosa Resort Completed*, p. 8

[Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19740215-1.2.45.1].

***TST***, (January 23, 1976), *St. John's Island to Become Holiday Resort*, p. 13 [Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19760123-1.2.77].

***TST***, (September 13, 1976), *Youth Picnic*, p. 13, [Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19760913-1.2.74].

***TST***, (December 15, 1977), *Coney Island Canoe Camp*, p. 7 [Retrieved from http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19771215-1.2.30].

***TST***, (June 28, 1982), *Singapore's Tough Road to Success in Drug War*, p. 18 [Retrieved from https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19820628-1.2.67.2].

**Turnbull, C.M.**, (2009), *A History of Modern Singapore*, 1819–2005, Singapore, National University of Singapore Press.

**Vuolteenaho, J., Wolny, M., Puzey, G.**, (2019), “This Venue is Brought to You By…”: The Diffusion of Sports and Entertainment Facility Name Sponsorship in Urban Europe, *Urban Geography*, vol. 40, nr. 6, pp. 762–783. https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2018.1446586

**Wang, Y., Ge, D., Zhang, T., Wang, Y.**, (2019), The Sustainable Development of Choronymic Cultural Landscapes in China Based on Geo-Informatic Tupu, *Sustainability*, vol. 11, nr. 16, 4302. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11164302

**Wellington, A.R.**, (1909), *Jetty, Goods Shed and Distilling Plant on St. John's Island* [Retrieved from https://wellcomecollection.org/works/xxbvdbmw].

**Ye, J.**, (2016), *Class Inequality in the Global City: Migrants, Workers and Cosmopolitanism in Singapore*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, United Kingdom; New York, NY, Palgrave Macmillan.

**Yeoh, B.S.A.**, (1992), Street Names in Colonial Singapore, *Geographical Review*, vol. 82, nr. 3, pp. 313–322. https://www.jstor.org/stable/215354

**Yeoh, B.S.A.**, (2004), Cosmopolitanism and its Exclusions in Singapore, *Urban Studies*, vol. 41, nr. 12, pp. 2431–2445.