

Research article

Revitalization of the Kuto Besak Fort in Palembang as an Indonesian Defense Heritage Asset

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Abstract. This research investigated the meaning of the revitalization process of colonial forts in Indonesia as defense heritage assets. This was a case study of the revitalization of Kuto Besak Fort in Palembang, South Sumatera. The researchers also analyzed the importance of studying defense heritage in defense diplomacy courses. The aim of this paper was to raise awareness about the defense heritage concept in Indonesia, as well as to create a framework that stakeholders could use to carry out the revitalization process. Qualitative methods were used through a literature review and examining references about the Kuto Besak revitalization process and Palembang history. Three theories were employed: the concept of defense heritage from Dr. Jeanne Francoise, defense diplomacy theory, and the revitalization definition from the Regional Revitalization Guidelines of the Indonesian Ministry of Public Works No.18/PRT/M/2010. It is hoped that this analysis can be used as an academic reference for the South Sumatera government to revitalize Kuto Besak fort, as well as to promote the idea of defense heritage in young people in Palembang, to increase their interest in the defense heritage values behind historical objects or buildings around them.

Keywords: Indonesia, defense heritage, Kuto Besak fort, Palembang, South Sumatera, defense diplomacy, historical building, revitalization

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1. Introduction

In Revitalization success story, we have Baltimore city, Serbia historical buildings, and Hong Kong. We said those projects are success because they have been really realized, not just concept or idea. In Indonesia, we have many revitalization projects such as Benoa Bay reclamation project since 2013, or Kota Tua revitalization for Unesco World Heritage since 2017, but none of this idea ever happens.

Now in 2020 Year of Corona, we have viral issue about Kuto Besak Fort Revitalization project in Palembang. The idea had been printed on the official website (1) of Public Works Service Year 2001-2004 (there are 30 locations of revitalizations). The news also had been appeared during the year 2014 (2) and 2017 (3).

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It is assumed that the idea of Kuto Besak Fort Revitalization has been coming up again after Palembang city became the second Host of Asian Games 2018. It is normal to do that because Palembang city government wants to be seen as international multicultural city and the most easiest indication is the international tourism adaptive ambience with heritage buildings or monuments that contain Palembang or Sriwijaya history. Kuto Besak Fort is one of this potential tourism aspect.

Based on Farida's research on Palembang bundle in Indonesian National Archive (*Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia / ANRI*) (4) Palembang has several palaces before the Kuto Besak palace was founded. The first palace known as Kuto Gawang is located at the location of PT. Fertilizer Sriwijaya. After the earth burned the palace, the ruler of Palembang at that time founded the palace which is located in the current area of Beringin Janggut. The next palace is the Lamo palace (now the location of the Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II Museum). The last palace is Kuto Besak. This palace was founded in 1780, on the initiative of Sultan Muhammad Bahauddin. This palace stands on a large, rectangular-shaped land overlooking the Musi River, 274.32 meters long and 182.88 meters wide. It is surrounded by a large wall, up to 9.14 meters high, 2.13 meters thick. with four camps (bastion in each corner). with a number of cannons made of iron and brass. The palace has a large courtyard, a grand hall, a large gate. Inside there is also a Keputren, Paseban, a room for receiving guests, the residence of the sultan and empress. In the middle of the palace there is a pond with boats, a garden and fruit trees. Between the Kuto Besak palace and the Lamo palace, there is a road to the main mosque of the kingdom.

Based in historical archive in *Bataviasche Courant*, 18 December 1824 number 5, after being formally appointed on July 1, 1821, Sultan Najamuddin III and Susuhunan occupied a building which was one shot away from the Kuto Besak palace. Meanwhile, Kuto Besak functioned as the residence of Resident R. Keer, and the shelter for four hundred Dutch soldiers. So, it is clear that the Kuto Besak palace is a symbol of the supremacy of the sultan. This was proven by the absence of the Sultan and the Susuhunan in the palace, because the ruling at that time was the Dutch colonial. Kuto Besak became the headquarters where they carried out various activities, as well as protection from attacks by Palembang residents. This is inseparable from the condition at that time, that only the Kuto Besak palace was the largest and most robust building (4).

The change in the name and function of the Kuto Besak palace cannot be separated from the role of the colonial (Dutch) party. As the winning party, they need a place that is "suitable" from various aspects, including: robustness, strength of the building, as well as being in a strategic position. They needed shelter from various security threats

from the Palembang population. The right choice for that is to master Kuto Besak. This choice was also to show that they were the rulers in the Palembang Sultanate, even though the sultan's position was still maintained (4).

In the history of Palembang, Kuto Besak Fort is witness of political tension between Sultan, Dutch, British, and Japanese colonization governments. Local Government of Palembang in Racico research, said that The London Convention of 13 August 1814 stipulated that Britain would surrender to the Dutch all its overseas colonies which had been controlled since January 1803 (5). Early July 1818 Muntinghe started his activities in Palembang because he carried out a special task of removing Sultan Ahmad Najamuddin II and afterwards abolishing the Sultanate of Palembang Darussalam.

The first negotiations were held by Muntinghe with Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II, then with Ahmad Najamuddin II. The result was that Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II was reappointed as sultan while Ahmad Najamuddin II was deactivated and received payment if he gave back all the means of the sultan's greatness including the Kuto Besak Palace (5). Now the owner of Kuto Besak Fort is Kodam II/Sriwijaya and inside Kuto Besak becomes the office of Kesda II Sriwijaya, upon before it Kuto Besak Fort had experienced several function changes, including to be military dorm and hospital.

2. Methods and Equipment

2.1. Methods

2.1.1. Defense Heritage

Republic of Indonesia only recognizes the cultural heritage regulation, so that the defense heritage theory is part of cultural heritage analysis. Article 1 of the United Nations (UNESCO) Organizational, Educational and Cultural Convention Year 1972 has three broad categories of cultural heritage; monuments, groups of buildings and sites. The term cultural heritage includes movable heritage objects such as paintings, sculptures, coins and manuscripts, immovable heritage such as monuments and archaeological sites and underwater cultural heritage such as shipwrecks, underwater ruins and cities. It also includes intangibles such as oral traditions, performing arts and rituals (6).

To determine which historical sites and buildings need preservation, this paper uses the analysis that historical buildings or historical sites are defined as official locations where pieces of political, military, cultural, or social history have been preserved because of their cultural heritage values (7):

Level 1 (building of extraordinary achievement): in this type of building, every effort should be made to be preserved where possible.

Level 2 (buildings with special features): in this type of building, efforts should be made to protect selectively.

Level 3 (buildings with several advantages): in this type of building, some form of preservation is desirable and alternative means can be considered if conservation is not possible.

Indonesian Defense Heritage is firstly created by Dr. Jeanne Francoise at the Mediterranean Conference for Academic Disciplines at the University of Malta Valetta Campus, 11-15 February 2018 (8), then perfected on her Doctoral Dissertation Research about Indonesian Defense Heritage (9), that is:

“Indonesian Defense Heritage is historical buildings, monuments, places, sites, and defense values for Indonesian national interest. Defense Heritage has a difference with Cultural Heritage. In determining the categorization of Defense Heritage, a building, place, site, and historical value do not have to be legitimized by Unesco and then determined to be a defense heritage, but must be recognized by the government and the people of the nation concerned, because the value of defense heritage does not have to be universal”.

Dr. Jeanne Francoise also then created the “Francoise Framework of Defense Heritage Protection” (2018) which was scientifically presented at The 13th SEA Regional Scientific Meeting of the International Epidemiological Association and International Conference on Public Health and Sustainable Development.

On the dissertation, Dr. Jeanne Francoise also created the territory division and Level of Defense Heritage. The territory division (9):

1. Defense heritage in defense area I, especially objects of defense heritage according to this study are clearly visible in Aceh (Inong Bale), Palembang (Kuto Besak Fort), Bengkulu (Marlborough Fort), Banten (Surosowan), Yogyakarta (Vrederburg), Gombong (Van Der Wijck), Jakarta (the rest of the Jakarta Fortress), and Surabaya (Yamato Hotel, Jembatan Merah, Siola Building, Heroes Monument);
2. Defense heritage in defense area II, especially defense heritage objects according to this study, is clearly visible in Manado (Monumen Struggle of the Minahasa People / Monpera) and Makassar (Rotterdam);
3. Defense heritage in defense area III, especially objects of defense heritage according to this study, can be seen clearly in Ambon (Fort Victoria and Fort Amsterdam) and Ternate (Fort Oranje).



Figure 1: Francoise Framework of Defense Heritage Protection (8).

2.1.2. Defense Diplomacy

Just like defense heritage, each country has its own defense diplomacy priorities. In the Indonesian context, Indonesia’s defense diplomacy involves the role of military defense and civil defense. Based on the Defense Heritage Dissertation by Dr. Jeanne Francoise (9), objects of defense heritage in Indonesia tend to show resistance together with civil-military integration, both in times of peace and in times of war. Therefore, the objects of defense heritage are evidence of the unity of the TNI with the people in fighting colonialism.

Martin Griffiths and Terry O’Callaghan (10) reveal that diplomacy is the overall process carried out by a country in carrying out international relations. Based on Drab’s research, in its development, Defense Diplomacy emerged as a concept that was introduced after the end of the Cold War. Meanwhile, according to Cottey and Forster, Defense Diplomacy is a cooperation that involves armed forces in peacetime as a foreign policy tool. For example: Joint-military training, defense staff exchanges, defense attache formal meetings, defense courses, and all activities related to defense preparation.

The definition of Defense is different from Security. Defense tends to ‘defend’ in terms of facing threats that come from outside and in the context of National Defense, meaning that it always involves the role and affairs of the military. Therefore, in times of

NO.	LEVEL	PRASYARAT KONDISI	CONTOH DEFENSE HERITAGE
1.	Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terdapat bukti sejarah adanya perjuangan bangsa Indonesia 2. Ada tokoh setempat atau masyarakat lokal yang ikut berjuang 3. Terawat dengan baik 	TUGU PAHLAWAN JEMBATAN MERAH HOTEL YAMATO
2	Level 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terdapat bukti sejarah adanya perjuangan bangsa Indonesia 2. Belum ada pendataan apabila ada tokoh setempat atau masyarakat lokal yang ikut berjuang 3. Terawat dengan baik 	BENTENG ORANJE TERNATE MUSEUM PERANG DUNIA II DI PULAU MOROTAI
3	Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terdapat bukti sejarah adanya perjuangan bangsa Indonesia 2. Ada tokoh setempat atau masyarakat lokal yang ikut berjuang 3. Tidak terawat dengan baik 	BENTENG VICTORIA AMBON BENTENG KUTOBESAK PALEMBANG MONUMEN PERJUANGAN RAKYAT MINAHASA (MONPERA)
4.	Level 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terdapat bukti sejarah adanya perjuangan bangsa Indonesia 2. Belum ada pendataan apabila ada tokoh setempat atau masyarakat lokal yang ikut berjuang 3. Tidak terawat dengan baik 	BENTENG JAYAKARTA VELDBAK MANADO BENTENG AMSTERDAM AMBON

Figure 2: Level of defense heritage (9).

war, it tends to be called 'war', not defense diplomacy. There is also no official term for Security Diplomacy.

In peacetime, defense diplomacy is needed because every country will always modernize its defense sector, both in terms of weapons and the quality of defense human resources and because of the experience of past wars, no country wants to lose in military affairs. Defense Diplomacy that prioritizes meetings, research, and communication in peacetime, to better understand and get to know other countries more intensely. In this case, Defense Diplomacy is indirect intelligence for the Ministry of Defense, especially in terms of accurate data collection on defense affairs.

The defense heritage narrative will help civil and military defense staff to understand the national history as a whole and create pride in the chest when carrying out diplomatic

tasks in dealing with other countries. Because in defense heritage it is proven that the Indonesian people have a fighting spirit and never give up.

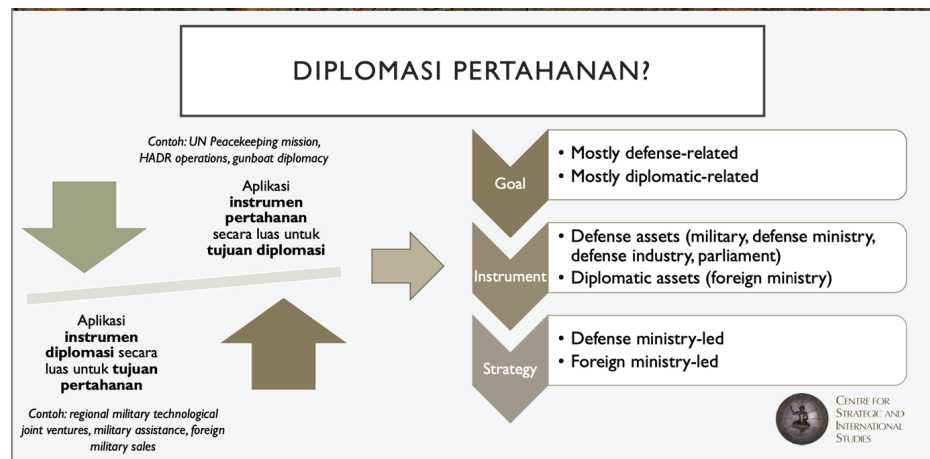


Figure 3: Defense diplomacy explanation (11).

2.1.3. Revitalization theory

Based on research of Penica et al. (12), Revitalization of buildings of cultural and historical importance has always presented a challenge at all levels of architectural design. With the intensive development of modern techniques in architecture, how to preserve a building that represents cultural heritage in an authentic state and inspire it with a life of modern building adapted to a new purpose is becoming an increasing problem.

The proposed approach to revitalization, applied in the presented concept, complies with contemporary and proven principles of active protection, respecting architectural heritage by giving it spatial primate. The most important principles applied in this design are: principle of discreet intervention, principle of evaluation and preservation of existing ambient and context and principle of clear differentiation between old and new as a means of avoiding historical forgery. Introducing innovative materials and inventive techniques, this approach to revitalization is the proposal of contemporary method of preservation of architectural heritage, but it is also recognized and perceived as the most direct and the sincerest act of glorification of important cultural heritage building (12).

In that process of Revitalization becomes public space, method of intervention can be typologically classified into several categories: the construction of the new facility as an annex to the existing old building or complex of monuments of architectural heritage, where direct physical contact between the "old" and "new" is made, the construction

of the new building in the immediate surroundings of monuments of architectural heritage, intervention on the internal parts of the monuments of the architectural heritage, combining two or more categories (12).

3. Results

Based on the dissertation of defense heritage from Dr. Jeanne Francoise (9), Kuto Besak Fort in Palembang, South Sumatera, Indonesia, is on the Level 3, it means that there is evidence of South Sumatera people to fight against colonialism, but now occupied by Indonesian army as military office. It means that Kuto Besak Fort has no function of cultural heritage, nor defense heritage.

Based on the defense diplomacy framework from CSIS (11), defense asset is part of instrument for defense diplomacy. It means that Kuto Besak Fort, if it will be revitalized in such good way, is part of Indonesian defense heritage asset, for both functions of cultural heritage and defense heritage symbol for Indonesian people. Kuto Besak Fort is historical enough to have more attention, then to have more cultural activities to revive the values of nationalism and patriotism.

4. Discussion

In this paper, authors strongly agree that Kuto Besak Fort is one of Palembang defense heritage, because as stated by author research observation, Kuto Besak Fort has several defense values for Indonesian national interest, such as:

1. It proves Sriwijaya history, especially when Sriwijaya had gained independence from Mataram kingdom.
2. It has potential market for international scholars and tourism.
3. It contains Palembang people struggles in fighting during colonization.
4. We never knew whose national heroes died near the Kuto Besak Fort, because no scholar could find the accurate information, but we assume all Palembang people died in Kuto Besak Fort are Indonesian heroes.
5. Thanks to Asean Games 2018, international tourists at least visited Kuto Besak Fort and have documented several photos of it on their social media, so the world knows there is defense heritage in Palembang.



Figure 4: Kuto Besak fort in Palembang South Sumatera (13).

As this paper stated about Revitalization success story in Serbia, Serbian government first of all has political will to do the Research before the Revitalization, so that the Revitalization projects follow the result of Research. It seems Serbian government does not want to do Revitalization carelessly. Besides, based on research of Penica, et al. (12), Revitalization of Villa Zivkovic, as an innovative method of revitalization of the building that has cultural and historical significance. The method applied in this design is based on emphasizing the original aesthetic value of the existing building, and therefore the cultural importance that building carries as one of the representative examples of the development of early Modern in Nis and the surrounding area.

Palembang's local government must do the same step before the Revitalization of Kuto Besak Fort. Palembang's local government must create expert team of defense heritage to do deep research analysis about how much is important the Kuto Besak Fort to be revitalized. This academic answer can delete all doubts from Kodam II/Sriwijaya in the term of take-over of the Kuto Besak Fort from Indonesian military to the Palembang's local government.

In Francoise Framework of Defense Heritage Protection (8) that is stated on the Method section of this paper, Kuto Besak Fort is in the level of Definition, because Palembang local government does not state yet that Kuto Besak Fort is Palembang's defense heritage. This is the vital point to make revitalization of Kuto Besak Fort.

Besides, Palembang local government shall do historiography method of the historical data, it means all details of the Kuto Besak Fort, from the façade, windows, pillars, etc

must be written in details. Based on research of Ravico in Daliman (14), Historiography is a means of communicating revealed, tested (verification) and interpreted research results. Historical reconstruction will exist if the results of the establishment are written.

Historiography method is important because related to revitalization theory, there is public sphere concept that must be respected. The detail information of the Kuto Besak Fort must be publicly written, in both academic and government's local regulation. This efforts are to legitimize that Kuto Besak Fort are part of Indonesian national history, especially related to Sriwijaya kingdom.

After deep analysis, research, and historiography method will be finished, Revitalization can be taken on the right degree as stated on defense heritage concept on the Method section of this paper, for example Level 2 of Preservation, it means Palembang local government only provides small funds to do several parts of Kuto Besak Fort to be revitalized.

If the government funds are limited, then local government can do political lobbying to the Indonesian National Parliament (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat / DPR*) to give central government funds (in this case could be Ministry of Public Works Service). Stakeholders must be clearly presented about the importance the revitalization of Kuto Besak Fort.

Besides Serbia, Palembang local government can learn from China. Based on research of Li et al. (15), China has had a history of producing alcoholic beverages for over 4000 years. Every heritage enterprise that specializes in Chinese liquor production (e.g., Maotai) contributes to the preservation of the Chinese liquor culture; therefore, specific cultural associations are embodied in the production, sales, and consumption of Chinese liquor products.

This could be the second step after Palembang local government has clear permit to do revitalization project for Kuto Besak Fort. It means the government can do more concerns on other things, such as economic factors, entertainment for tourists, and culinary heritages by empowering local small and medium enterprises. Government must think also the effects of Pandemic Covid-19, while all tourists can't go out to see the historical buildings. They are choosing virtual tour, instead.

Based on preliminary research on Kuto Besak news, the heritage communities are important part to do Palembang preservation. Instagram and social media are critical point to share this idea to be accepted by the history communities, because they are the first responder to do public opinion to support government idea about revitalization of Kuto Besak Fort.

At the end of this analysis, author wants to warns about the Indonesian position in international level. As member of United Nations, Indonesia will always adjust each

government policies into the 17 points of UN Sustainable Development Goals. Then Indonesia is also President of G20 2021-2022 and the Host country of Defence Expo and Forum 2022. The opportunities of Indonesia to do more cultural activities, will also support the idea of defense heritage assets to be more viral into international level. The city of Palembang could have the first step revitalization process of Kuto Besak Fort by creating the Festival of Palembang Heritage 2022, for academic, economic, and tourism purposes, so that the international tourists will also see the Kuto Besak Fort, as part of Indonesian defense heritage valuable asset.



Figure 5: UN SDG, G20, and Defence Expo & Forum.

5. Conclusion

Kuto Besak Fort is not just a Fort. It had several functions, for palace, fortress, hospital, and now military office of Kesdam II Sriwijaya, because the ruling government in each moment has manifested their power to this historical building. Not just in colonization period, but also after independence of Indonesia.

The revitalization project for Kuto Besak Fort is not easy as to be thought out, because there are several classical problems, including the funds and the political will to see Kuto Besak Fort as part of national history, not just belongs to one stakeholder.

This paper has proposed several strategy based on revitalization success story in Serbia and China, especially authors tried to relate the issue with defense heritage concept to fit the needs of Palembang local government to do revitalization of Kuto Besak Fort.

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Conflict of Interest

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

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