

# Spirit of place of Merdeka corridor in Selatpanjang City

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**Abstract.** Historical city area was developing by an accumulation of developmental stages which influenced by various factors. The factors are political, economic, social, cultural, and modernization. The research will discuss the spirit of place of Merdeka corridor in Selatpanjang city, Meranti Islands. The purpose is to identify the spirit of place of Merdeka corridor and to find out the tourism concept by characters that support urban tourism in Selatpanjang city. The research method used is qualitative research method with the rationalistic paradigm. Based on cultural history, physical building, and spatial pattern, Merdeka corridor has unique characteristic, and it persists if compared by another in Selatpanjang city. However, damage of corridor, physical changes, and functions can slowly happen due to modernization and cannot avoid.

## 1. Introduction

Selatpanjang city is the Meranti regency administrative center. This famous city was growing of its trading during the Siak Sultanate. The city uniqueness had forming since the first form in the heterogeneous society, especially Melayu and Chinese. The combination of social, cultural, and living activities has built up spaces that create a physical environment and life activities. The area in a city is an environment that formed of developmental stages accumulation that influenced by various factors. The factors are political, economic, social, cultural, and modernization. Based on the cultural history, the building physicals and the spatial patterns of Merdeka corridor have unique characteristic and it persists if compared by other in Selatpanjang city. Besides buildings, activities, and function also influenced the spirit [1]. Some buildings have existed since the Dutch colonial period. The research problem is how the spirit of place of Merdeka corridor and how it compatibility to city tourism aspects. The purpose is to identify the spirit of place of Merdeka corridor and to formulate the concept that can support urban tourism in Selatpanjang city. There is currently a growing consciousness of the importance in seeking to conserve the heritage and/or find adaptive reuses for existing buildings [2].

The spirit of a place is a non-physical force capable of forming an impression of a city that to maintain identify and sense of place of an area about image, character, and meaning [1]. Spirit of place it refers not to a sense of belonging to or within a place. The sense or awareness of the atmosphere or character is external to the observer [3]. The artificial natural environment aspects can lead to spirit of a place such as landform and topography, vegetation, climate and water, and cultural expressions (bridges, corridors, and buildings). The others are the form of social history and cultural artifacts due to experiences or visualization interactions between cultures and environmental conditions. The characteristics components defined in three characters as the spirit of place, namely:

- (1) Physical features, environmental characteristics, and view area such as structure or buildings and beauty environment,
- (2) Unique local activities and functions, interaction between human and place, buildings and environment, and society culture systems; and
- (3) Signage or symbolism, it depending on many aspects such as building forms or appearance of environment that it caused by society culture or functional aspects.



The corridor is a space that linearly extends to form a kind of alley when there is an extend space and bordered by both sides of the land [4]. A corridor contains buildings along the sides the road [5].

The physical space of the corridor have been formed by the element comparison, that is the width and length of the road, pedestrian form, mass form and building facades, the height of the vertical element, and the function of the activity.

Urban tourism is a common form that used urban elements and everything that has related city life aspects as a tourist attraction. Important factors in urban tourism are urban character and quality that include visual quality of character and architectural style, outer space condition (landscape), view and vista, traffic conditions and pedestrian ways, environmental hygiene and solid waste, environmental conditions (water, air, and noise pollution), climatic conditions, and public security levels [6].

## 2. Method

The study used qualitative research with the rationalistic paradigm. Qualitative researchers typically engage in interaction with the reality in which examined [7]. Crewell [8] says that research characterizes information in the form of contextual and leads to patterns or theories that will explain social phenomena. The research variables based on the spirit of place theory, urban tourism aspects theory, and urban tourism concept theory. Data collection techniques consisted of field observation, interviews and documentation. Analysis method used descriptive qualitative analysis. It describes and explains the conditions or phenomena status or the relationship between systematic, factual, and accurate.

### 2.1. Research variables

The first variables of the research are the spirit of place theory. It consists of physical features, activities and local functions features, and the meaning and symbolism features. The physical features can be in form of environmental characteristics that consist of land used, shape and building mass, circulation and parking, pedestrian, and signage. The second variables are urban tourism aspects theory. It consist of visual quality and architecture style, landscape, view and vista, traffic conditions and pedestrian ways, cleanliness environment and garbage, environmental condition (water, air, and noise pollution), and climate. The third variables are tourism concept.

## 3. Results and Discussions

The results will be discussed in 3 subsection, they are the spirit of a place, urban tourism aspects, and urban tourism concept.

### 3.1. The spirit of a place

These variables are analysis in 3 features that consist of physical, activities and local function, and meaning and symbolism.

*3.1.1. Physical features* It can be in forming of environmental characteristics and view area which is consist of:

*3.1.1.1. Land used* Land used in Merdeka corridor consists of 38 trading and service buildings, 7 office buildings, 5 residential buildings, and 1 educational building. Besides the building, there is Taman Cik Puan and Kolam Telaga Bening as open spaces. From the existing conditions, Merdeka corridor dominated by trading land and services.



**Figure1.** Land used of Merdeka Corridor Selatpanjang

**3.1.1.2. Shape and building mass** Buildings on Merdeka corridor have 2 architectural styles. In the east part of Merdeka corridor has a European architectural style and some of that has rebuilt and re-function. While, in the west part of the corridor has a Chinese architecture in the form of shop-houses. The philosophy of Chinese shop-houses with shapes that extends backward and there is no living room [9]. Thus, building density tends to be higher in the west of corridor. In addition, there is a function of building as a cinema but now it is no longer used. As a result, the surrounding buildings become slums and fruit markets.

**3.1.1.3. Circulation and parking** Merdeka corridor condition has dominated by motor cycles and motor rickshaw. The width of the road in the east corridor is wider than the west. The width is about 10 metres with roadside about 1.5-2 metres. The width of west side is about 6 metres without roadside. It caused by shop-houses building. Parking area in the east is on the roadside while in the west is on the pedestrian ways in front of shop-houses.



**Figure2.** Parking lot on the west of corridor



**Figure3.** Parking lot on the east of corridor (shop-houses)

**3.1.1.4. Pedestrian** There is no pedestrian ways on Merdeka corridor. The roadside has grass and plants pot. People of Selatpanjang is willing to ride motorcycles rather than walking. It is an easy mode transportation to the other place.

**3.1.1.5. Signage** The most dominant signage is in trading area on the west side of corridor. Generally, it has been good placement. One shop-house has its signage cover up all the façade building. The others put signage on the upper side of balcony. However, majority of the place signage is good and orderly.



**Figure4.** Signage in front of shop-houses



**Figure5.** Orderly signage of shop-houses

### 3.1.2. Activities and local function features

Building function on Merdeka corridor are trading, service, office, settlement, and education. Besides it, there are open spaces around Taman Cik Puan and Kolam Telaga Bening. Society activity in the west of corridor is trading and service. Taman Cik Puan is a community gatherings place to do the activities. It performed as Meranti Regency anniversary activity, night entertainment folk, religious day activity, and the other activities as leisure and recreation. Activities in Kolam Telaga Bening are community gathering, especially in the afternoon.

### 3.1.3. Meaning and symbolism features

Merdeka corridor has a history meaning during colonial times. Some buildings on the east of corridor has used by colonialists [10]. The function of Dutch controls house located in the centre of the city is the Adyaksa kindergarten. The Dutch Ompanger (Head of Customs and Excise) Office of Netherlands, a tax collector for the benefit of NICA-The Netherlands is now the house of the Danramil. In addition to the building, Kolam Telaga Bening area is a history area where the first flag flown in the town of Selatpanjang.

## 3.2. Urban tourism aspects

The analysis of the spirit of place is suitability with tourism aspects. It consists of 7 aspects.

### 3.2.1. Visual quality and architecture style

The building authenticity is very potentials as an attractive vista. Some shop-houses architectural style changes as well as increasing the number of floors.

### 3.2.2. Landscape

There are two open spaces along this corridor. Taman Cik Puan has a point of interest in this corridor. People are visiting to have recreation but still needed redesign on it. So does Kolam Telaga Bening.

### 3.2.3. View and vista

View and vista from east to west and otherwise have interesting sequences. From the east to the west was ending with a crossroads by old shop-houses. While from the west to the east was ending with a crossroads by old buildings.



**Figure6.** View and vista in the east corridor



**Figure7.** View and vista in the west corridor

#### 3.2.4. *Traffic conditions and pedestrian ways*

The road on Merdeka corridor is a very good condition. There is no pedestrian ways along the corridor. There is no difference between pedestrian paths and vehicles. In the row of shop-houses, pedestrian ways used as a parking lot for motorcycles and put merchandise around.

#### 3.2.5. *Cleanliness environment and garbage*

There is no scattered or stacked garbage along corridor.

#### 3.2.6. *Environmental condition (water, air, and noise pollution)*

The water condition is good enough where the source of clean water comes from the boreholes or the rainwater reservoir. Air is clean enough. It is because the majority of public transportation modes in the form of motorcycles and motorbike rickshaws and bicycles. Cars are very rarely using in the city of Selatpanjang. The effect of this mode is related to the amount of air and the noise pollution. It is relatively small.

#### 3.2.7. *Climate*

The climate in Selatpanjang is almost the same as the climate in other cities in Indonesia, which is a tropical climate. The annual average temperature is 26.8°C with significant rainfall throughout the year.

#### 3.3. *Urban tourism concept*

The components of tourist-historic city in Merdeka corridor are consists of historical architecture environment can be finding, according to urban morphology the development of trade is in the past to present, and historical relics.

### 4. **Conclusions**

From the analysis can concluded that Merdeka corridor has the spirit of a place that worth to persist. Activities among the society have to arrange and schedule especially for the culture. Design the pedestrian ways to facilitate visitors to enjoy the view and vista along corridor. It equipped by lights, seating, and bins. Reorganize Taman Cik Puan, Kolam Telaga Bening, and the old cinema so that the corridor functions is much better in the future as urban historic tourist.

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