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Ultras in Indonesia: conflict, diversification, activism

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ABSTRACT

Ultras play a vital role in the life of Indonesian football. Ultra fandom has emerged as a highly visual, highly spectacular, and frequently violent form of fandom in post-reformasi Indonesia. Ultra fan groups are overwhelmingly made up of young, urban men who dedicate much of the leisure time to supporting their club – whether through being at the stadium, creating on tifos, or through social-media campaigns. Supporter groups such as PSIM's Brajamusti are linked to the cultural and political realities of everyday life in Yogyakarta. While the Surabaya-based Bonek are engaged in an ongoing struggle against FIFA and Indonesia's football federation. The Solo-based Pasoepati are a more recent fan group who have supported several Solo-based teams. This article draws on fieldwork carried out between August and December 2014. The article explores how the different fan groups interact with each other with their city and how they imagine an improved 'soccer-scape' in Indonesia.

Introduction

Indonesia occupies a curious place in global football culture. Football is everywhere in Indonesia: in the streets, in bars, in narrow alleys, in grand and packed stadiums, and in the shabby empty lots of urban decay. The game is a cultural product open to endless varieties of meanings, uses and articulations (Allegri 2010; Wilson 2006, 2014). Football, as the world's game, is sometimes 'the beautiful game', but, it is also a game that produces ugly conflicts, and is thoroughly corrupted by politicians and bureaucrats. Popular non-fiction works have shown how playing the game involves a complicated negotiated with prevailing political orthodoxies as well as placating local mafias through match fixing (Kuper 2011; McGinnis 1999). 'Modern football' is anathema for many football fans; 'modern football', in the eyes of hardcore fans has been corrupted by Sky Sports or Fox Sport while clubs sell out to the highest bidder and disregard the loyal, local fan. At the same time, many kinds of football fans are anathema to the kind of football that is being shaped into an easily consumable product that is produced in a safe, clean, sterile and intricately (and intimately) surveilled space.

Many of the developments in contemporary football culture are strongly protested against by fans, known as ultras. Although, there are fierce rivalries between ultras of different teams, they are united by common styles of clothing, tattoos, values and ways of performing within stadiums. Being ultra is a global culture that takes on local meanings and practices. As such, we continue on from other articles exploring the varieties of ultras in Japan (Doidge and Lieser 2013), The Netherlands (Spaaij 2007) and Spain (Spaaij and Vinas 2006). This article seeks to contribute to the research on football in Indonesia (Colombijn 2000; Dorsey and Sebastian 2013; Flicker 2013; Fuller 2014a, 2014b, 2015b; Junaedi 2012, 2014; Wirawan 2015) and to analyse the rise of ultra fan culture through the examples of three fan groups in Java.

Qualities of performance: going to a football game in Solo

I started reading up on football in Indonesia while living in Leiden, a small town in the area known as the *randstad* region of The Netherlands. The books I read dealt with the administration of the game, its introduction in colonial times, and the participation of Chinese Indonesians in the game. There were also a number of angry and polemical books whose primary goal was to question the authority of the PSSI – Indonesian Football Association (Fuller 2015a). There was one book on the Bonek of Surabaya (Junaedi 2012), and also an unpublished research report on the same supporters, investigating how the notoriously violent supporters could be pacified in order to make the game more appealing to a broader community. There was very little that could provide an insight into the way the game is watched, consumed and participated in at an everyday level. Rather than rely on the library – which although was up-to-date in its collection – which seemed out-of-date, the official and unofficial websites, Twitter accounts, YouTube videos, blogs and Facebook pages provided the most compelling way into ‘football in Indonesia’.

The experiences of reading books on Indonesian football, watching clips on YouTube and that of going to football games in Australia did little to prepare me for the experience of watching games in Solo, Central Java. Regrettably, I have only been to two actual games of Second Division Football (Divisi Utama) – but, I have complemented this by visiting numerous stadiums and meeting with many fans. I have come to the temporary conclusion that it is impossible to distinguish football from the culture of performance and the related urban popular cultures. Football, indeed, makes itself evident on the streets of Indonesian cities, regardless of whether or not an actual game is taking place. Convoys of dozens or hundreds of motorcyclists rev their engines to rent the air with the heavy grunts. Streets are bedecked with flags and murals indicating affiliation to a particular supporter group. Football is urban, highly partisan and easily susceptible to the break out of heavy violence.

My first game of football in Indonesia was at Stadium Manahan in Solo, Central Java. The game was between Persis Solo and PSCS Ciamis. The game was held at 3 pm on a Thursday afternoon. I had arranged my attendance at the game with Ramdhon – a lecturer at one of the universities in Solo and with a strong interest in the city’s football history. Ramdhon has positioned himself as a researcher-football activist who is guiding several bachelor-level students through their preliminary researches into Solo’s footballing culture and history. Ramdhon and a couple of students were actively forging a new supporter group – known as B7 – which both adopted aspects of ultra-fandom, as well as modifying it to suit their context. One of their primary innovations was the allocation of a reserved section for

female Pasoepati fans. At the game I attended, there were between 5 and 7 female students (wearing veils), dressed modestly in red, who somewhat nervously and cautiously joined in the chanting and choreographies.

Ramdhon introduced me to the four main sections of Manahan Stadium: the west side was for the VIPs, the East Side (where we were) was for B7, the new supporter group with a somewhat ultra style and then the two more established supporter groups were at each end. One pocket was appropriated by the surly casuals, who stood and stared and spoke in English throughout the game; the diagonally opposite pocket was reserved for the dozen or so Ciamis fans, who were most likely, students from Ciamis who were studying in Solo or nearby. Given the difficulty of getting to the game from Yogya, where I was living, at the limited time I had to watch games, I had to make the most of attending the game – both as a researcher and as someone who wanted to be able to experience and to enjoy watching football being played. I wanted to be able to participate as a crowd member, to enjoy footballing moments, rather than to be a disinterested and cool researcher, detached from emotions. I decided I would take photographs and record footage for the first half, and then, for the second, I would adopt the role of a fan, albeit a very new fan of Pasoepati.

Ramdhon and I made it to our standing position in B7, moments before the teams came onto the field. As I was setting up my camera, I was hit by a huge wall of sound as the crowd burst into the singing of their anthem, as the teams lined up, facing the Western (VIP) stand (tribune, in Indonesian). The orchestration of this chanting, its synchronization, and of course, its volume was something I had never experienced before. Moreover, I was burdened with the common prejudices of the behaviour of fans at football games: these were young, reckless men and teenagers who were utter laws-unto-themselves. A thundering rendition of a soulful rock ballad was not expected – complete with cheesy gestures and swaying. This was a moment to question the ‘machoness’, and hyper-masculine nature of ultra fandom; more would become apparent throughout the game and in other interactions with hardcore fans of local football teams. The fans were more than willing to participate in an orderly, conducted manner. Those who didn’t respect the ceremonial aspect of the club’s anthem (hymn) were admonished by their peers. The conclusion of the song was followed by the hurling of white rolls of paper onto the athletics track that ran around the perimeter of the football field.

The singing of the Persis Solo anthem was seemingly the only moment when the crowd was united as one – except for the moments when goals were scored by Persis Solo. Throughout the rest of the game, the different sections of the tribunes were sang and chanted to the directions of their respective conductors, known as *dirigen*. The *dirigen* for the B7 section of the Eastern tribune is Andre Jaran. A charismatic, tattooed and muscular man probably in his early 30s. Andre was initially one of the conductors at the north end of the stadium, but, with the effort to make the whole stadium noisy and participative, he was assigned to the Eastern Tribune to enliven it. Throughout the duration of the game, he has his back to the action, except for brief moments to check whether a goal has been scored (or about to be scored) or to check the behaviour of the referee or opposition players. He is armed with a megaphone, aided by an accomplice, but, what serves him most strongly is his domineering personality, his unrelenting energy. Andre implores, admonishes and encourages the crowd before him – probably some 5000 young men – and the few women. He orders the crowd to move closer together and at times singles out individuals who are

not paying attention. Andre accepts no copping out: if one comes to a Persis Solo game, one must be active.

I spent the first half photographing the crowd around me. No one paid any attention to me, despite me taking photographs directly of people. I was probably one of very few foreigners (perhaps the only) in stadium: it is common for foreigners to be greeted on streets of Indonesian cities with ‘hello Mister’, but, on this afternoon, at the game, I was (very happily) anonymous. The young men in the crowd were firmly focused on two far more important matters than a camera-wielding foreigner: the game itself and the orders and instructions coming from Andre. By the end of the first half the score was 1:2 in favour of Ciamis. This was ominous. Persis Solo clearly needed the win to ensure that they would be in the play-offs to be promoted to the Indonesia Super League. But through a combination of dubiously awarded penalties to the home team, dubiously disallowed penalties to the away team, and a few curious given and not-given off-side decisions, Persis Solo were able to emerge the comfortable victors, 5:2.

There is no electronic scoreboard available for replays to clarify the correctness or otherwise of decisions from the referees, but to say the least, Persis Solo were getting the rub of the green. With the worsening violence of the Ciamis players being meted out on the referee, who was no doubt complicit in Persis’ victory, the crowd became increasingly angry and disorganized in their yelling and abuse. There were a few tense moments when I thought I might absent myself from the crowd and take the early train back to Yogya. But the game ended soon enough, despite the anger of Ciamis, the Persis fans cheered their team and the anthem was once again played, this time accompanied by flares with their thick smoke. In the short time of 90 min I felt that I had made the transition from neutral researcher–observer to partisan fan on the brink of being unable to contain my anger at the injustices being meted out to *my* team – even though they were clearly being advantaged by refereeing decisions. Ramdhon dropped me back at the train station and warned me several times not to wear the Persis Solo t-shirt he had given me in Yogya, such was the rivalry with the Brajamusti.

Pasoepati: structured fandom and the split between casuals and ultras

The story of the emergence of ultras in the central Javanese city of Solo indicates the instability of Indonesia’s footballing infrastructure, and the degree to which the management of football clubs are linked to party political interests. Ultras invest heavily in their sense of regional identity and sense of difference, while at the same time, adopting practices of fandom clearly derived from Europe – in particular, Italy and the UK. Pasoepati, a supporter group of some 20,000 (overwhelmingly male) youth, are distinct from the Brajamusti of PSIM and the Bonek of Persebaya, in that their allegiance has not always been to Persis Solo football club. Pasoepati refer to their fostering of Persis Solo as a point of pride, while their enemies – such as Brajamusti – refer to the changing of teams to indicate that Pasoepati are ‘glory hunters’ and lack any real and substantial value of loyalty.

The emergence of ultras in Indonesia emerged after the fall of the Suharto-led government in 1998. Football in Solo during the 1990s had strong links to the Suharto family, with the club Arseto Solo being owned by Suharto’s oldest son – Sigit Haryojuanto. In the post-reformation era (i.e. after 1998), Pelita Bakrie, a club owned by the Bakrie family, moved its home base from the soon-to-be demolished Lebak Bulus stadium in southern

Jakarta, to the Manahan Stadium in Solo. Aburizal Bakrie, is the current chairman of the political party, Golkar which was and continues to be aligned with New Order interests. Over 15 years, 'Pelita Bakrie' changed its name eight times and is currently based in Bandung and is known as Pelita Bandung Raya.

Arseto Solo, founded in 1978, was one of the founding clubs of the professional league, known as Galatama, and used the Sriwedari Stadium in Solo as its home base. This stadium was built between 1932 and 1933 and was used for the national sporting meeting in 1948. These days, it primarily functions for lower level football competitions, athletics competitions and football training. The B7 ultras of Pasoepati held their initial rehearsals at this stadium (Fuller 2015a, 2015b). Arseto Solo disbanded, however, at end of the New Order era, during the financial crisis. The city of Solo also was a site of heavy rioting and looting against Chinese–Indonesian properties and businesses as well as those with apparent links to the Suharto family. Nonetheless, many Solo-based football supporters remember Arseto Solo fondly and remember the Galatama era (i.e. the first professional league) as being relatively stable and productive.

Pasoepati was founded by Mayor Haristanto – the owner of an advertising agency in Solo. The founders of Pasoepati agreed that it would be a structured supporters group with a clear budget. The Pasoepati supporters, however, saw their team transferred to the town of Cilegon, however, they quickly adopted the new team, Persija Solo FC, which had moved to Solo from East Jakarta. This club only stayed in Solo for two seasons (2002–2003, 2003–2004), before moving to Palembang, after having been sold to a new investor. The club then adopted the name of Sriwijaya FC, where it remains as a team in the top division of Indonesian football. After being promoted to the second division (Divisi Utama), the Pasoepati fans adopted Persis Solo as their team. Their adoption of this team strengthened their links with the city's identity as Persis Solo is the city's oldest club, having been founded in 1923. The club's heritage and its age, being a vital factor in creating a sense of a glorious past – so central to the formation of club and supporter identity. Although Persis Solo had a small group of supporters prior to the arrival of Pasoepati, known as *Alap-Alap Sambernyawa*, this group was essentially taken over by Pasoepati who were more organized and systematic in their fandom (Laily 2016).

The rise of Solo-based ultras and their incorporation into Pasoepati

The post-New Order era saw a great opening up of political and cultural freedoms. There were many new developments in the fields of literature and film and the visual arts. Censorship and ideological conformism had been the dominant mood of the 30-year New Order era and its decline saw an often euphoric embracing of youth subcultures, often mashed together in curious ways. The 2000s saw a great rise in punk and hip hop culture and new artistic modes of production. The 2000s also saw an increasing awareness of the importance of 'history' and archives, just as much of Indonesia's recent history was being deliberately forgotten. Pasoepati fans – and particularly those in the B7 group – have been active in researching the football history of Solo: football, for these fans, becomes not only a means for accessing, interacting with and borrowing from global subcultures, but is also a means into the history of one's own city as a part of strengthening the sense of one's local identity.

Although the rise of ultras in Indonesia is specifically a post-New Order phenomena, the live-broadcasting of Italian Serie A in the 1990s laid the foundations for an introduction into ultra fan culture. The main reference point being the supporters of AC Milan and Juventus – incidentally – both clubs continue to have strong support in Indonesia; with Juventus having an official Indonesian language website. The increasingly ease of access to the internet in the 2000s and the popularity of You Tube gave football fans opportunities to learn the rituals, styles and performances of ultras from Italy and elsewhere. Learning the art of ultra support was mediated, rather than from fans witnessing directly the presence of foreign ultras. Nonetheless, through the travelling of fans for domestic games is an opportunity for learning and imitating styles. The Pasoepati ultras were among the first ultras in Indonesia to heavily use the large flags, flares (and smoke bombs) and choreographies so ubiquitous in global football culture.

The first Solo-based ultras, positioned themselves behind the southern goals at Manahan Stadium; this was a replication of ultra practice elsewhere. This group named themselves as the Ultras 1923, referencing the year of Persis Solo's birth, and simultaneously indicating the independence from the Pasoepati supporter group. Their imagery relying heavily on the incorporation of the *totenkopf* (borrowed from Nazi symbolism), an appropriation of the Fred Perry-logo, and the primary use of red, white and black. Their initial use of flares and smoke bombs were protested against by other fans, but, after the increasing coverage of their displays on the Pasoepati.Net website, the Ultras 1923 gained credibility and more members. The difficulty in accessing flares and smoke bombs led to the Ultras 1923 to start making their own flares or smoke bombs; often resulting in rather toxic products. The ability to make such essential equipment for ultra fandom is a means for establishing one's credibility within the group, which relies very much upon the amateur skills of its members who create artefacts in the name of supporting their team. There is a strong-quality of 'home-made', 'collaboration', 'working-together' within the ultras: learning much from YouTube. Although this is a strongly macho culture, the male-youth work conscientiously in the otherwise female-gendered activities of craftsmanship – such as sewing (flags), designing, dancing (choreography) and singing (chanting).

The success of the Ultras 1923 led to tension with the Central Leadership Committee of Pasoepati. The tension was, in part caused by the Ultras 1923's decision to travel to away games by themselves as well as their reluctance to use the name 'Pasoepati' as part of their designation. They relented however and became a sub-section of the Pasoepati Pasar Kliwon Kota Solo. Nonetheless, the Ultras 1923, or, officially the Pasoepati Ultras 1923, were more strident in the promotion of the club, Persis Solo, rather than the supporter group, Pasoepati. The ultras style of the Ultras 1923, was subsequently taken up by the Pasoepati supporters in the northern terrace, as well as those in the B7, eastern tribune.

The Brajamusti of Yogyakarta: Loyalis Mataram

The Brajamusti supporter group emerged in the early 2000s after the disbanding of an earlier incarnation, the PTLM. The Brajamusti was founded as a means to modernising PSIM's supporter base and providing a structured organization in order to more professionally support the football club. Although PSIM is not – and has never been particularly successful – the Club is well-loved within the city of Yogyakarta and its stadium is in (relatively) central Yogyakarta. The Club's identity is inextricably linked with the city of Yogyakarta; the

Club's emblem, that of the Tugu, is borrowed from one of the city's landmarks. The Sultan of Yogyakarta, however, has not always taken a favourable position to the club. During the periods of relative success in the early 1990s, the Sultan was closely linked to the Club's management. Over the last decade, however, the Sultan has increasingly distanced himself from PSIM. Brajamusti members claim that this is because there are three teams from the province of Yogyakarta in the Divisi Utama and that the Sultan doesn't want to offend any particular fans. Others have said that it is because the fans of PSIM (primarily the Brajamusti and The Maident supporter groups) have a reputation for causing trouble.

Rivalries are a key aspect of supporter groups and ultras in particular. Rivalries not only maintain antagonisms which perpetuate the sense of a distinctive group, but are used to shape alliances with other groups of ultras. The Brajamusti supporter group is characterized by two main rivalries; first, the internal rivalry with The Maident, and secondly, the external rivalry with Pasoepati – the supporter group to be discussed in the next section. Although relations between Brajamusti and The Maident have been officially smoothed over, tensions remain between the broad masses of supporters. The split between Brajamusti and The Maident is evident in the occupation of the grandstands at Mandala Krida Stadium as well the cultural geography of the city of Yogyakarta. The streets of Yogyakarta are marked with flags indicating affiliation with one of the supporter groups. The blue and white flags indicate Brajamusti, while the black and blue (and occasionally other colours) indicate affiliation to The Maident. The various *laskars* (smaller sub-groups) of Brajamusti or The Maident adorn the flags or murals. As such, the supporter groups remain active throughout the year, regardless of whether or not there is any football taking place.

The split between the Brajamusti and The Maident emerged in the wake of the 2004 election for the president of Brajamusti. During the tense ballot, which saw many police deployed to prevent any serious violence from breaking out, Eko Satrio Pringgodani emerged victorious after making several emotive speeches and accepting his supporters requests to remain as a candidate. The result was tight, and the losing candidate refused to accept the legitimacy of the outcome. As a result, he and several close confidantes soon formed a new group – The Maident, an abbreviation for Mataram Independent. The Maident and Brajamusti subsequently became engaged in an intense and violent rivalry. Members of both groups would abuse each other and throw rocks at each other while games were taking place inside Mandala Krida. This resulted in games being stopped and security forces being deployed to, apparently, contain the fighting. But, the most intense fighting took place on the streets of Yogyakarta; resulting not only in street battles and sweeping, but, also the death of a member of The Maident, seventeen year old Nurul Huda. It is his unsolved killing, that has remained as one of the main sources of the continual tensions between the two groups.

External rivalries

Brajamusti and soccer supporters are generally considered 'violent', 'troublemakers' and disturbers of civil, public order. Violence, *tawuran* (street battles) (Simone 2014) amongst soccer supporters has become so normalized, that it is rarely covered in the local and national press. This is not simply a crisis affecting semi-professional teams: supporters attending high-school futsal competitions are also required to be chaperoned by a police convoy.¹ Brajamusti reject the condemnation that they are simply a group of supporters who like to fight with other supporters – particularly Pasoepati but also those from Malang

and its team, Arema. Yet, upon being asked 'what were the great games that you remember watching, being a part of' one respondent Adnan D. Kusuma mentioned only games which involved violent street battles and riots at the stadium. He said, 'it is these moments that make me love PSIM even more. I can't stop being involved with PSIM because of these events.' This respondent is required as relatively neutral and on the periphery of Brajamusti, yet, he is well-respected amongst Brajamusti and is close with its affiliates.

Three days after the Brajamusti futsal competition, buses and cars transporting Pasoepati to Ciamis, West Java were attacked in Yogyakarta and at the city's eastern and western periphery. Ari and Unyil recounted the night of stone-throwing with relish. They stated that it was unorganized, spontaneous and done out of their love for PSIM. They knew of Pasoepati's trajectory through following their statements sent out through Twitter. Pasoepati, apparently, sent tweets saying that they were in Yogyakarta. For these two members of Brajamusti, such statements were too provocative and broke the ethics of supporter conduct. Buses and cars with Solo number plates (indicated by the letters AD) were attacked from Sleman in the north and inner east to Kulon Progo in the west. Ari and Unyil recounted gleefully, humorously, that Brajamusti had come out of their houses in the middle of the night to join in the stone throwing without *any co-ordination*. They stated that they were already 'ready to great Pasoepati' as they arrived in Yogyakarta. Pasoepati's tweeting of their journey was a step too far for the Brajamusti to tolerate. Ari and Unyil, instead, gave the counter example of their methods of travelling through Solo on their 'awaydays'. That is, to take a general bus, rather than a hired bus, or to use fake number plates to disguise where the vehicle is travelling from.

Ramdhon of *Universitas Sebelas Maret* (11th March University, Solo) argued that Pasoepati's brazen movement through Yogyakarta was not a sign of the supporter group's arrogance, but, instead a sign of their unity. He stated that Brajamusti and PSIM fans more generally are not brave enough to travel through Solo as they are a fragmented supporter group. This sense of fragmentation is also emphasized by Fajar Junaedi who argues that PSIM fans' loyalty is split between political faction, laskar and affiliation (Brajamusti or The Maident). Ari and Unyil, however, argue that they are able to travel through Solo undetected because of their superior methods at remaining incognito. Brajamusti have a severe trauma of being attacked in Solo in 2003. This incident became known as *Kandang Menjangan*. after the Brajamusti were locked up in one of Solo's army barracks as a means to protect them and to prevent further rioting. Brajamusti condemn the degree of organization of the violence, rather than the violence itself. They claim that the Solo branch of *Radio Republik Indonesia* was announcing their arrival into Solo and thus residents were ready to pelt them with stones as they made their way into town. This indicates that although soccer violence can be articulated and directed at specific supporter groups, it can also easily spread to residents who may have little direct involvement with soccer itself.

Tensions within football fandom in Yogyakarta (the city and the province) have intensified over the past decade with the emergence of the northern-Yogyakarta team, PSS Sleman. The emergence of the team as a powerful club within the Divisi Utama (second division) occurred in the wake of the reformasi movement and the implementation of decentralization policies. Suddenly, the resource-rich kabupaten of Sleman was able to use its income for itself, without the money being syphoned off to the central government of the province of Yogyakarta. Moreover, PSS Sleman had a new stadium built for it, by the bupati (regional head) of Sleman,. Despite the bupati being eventually coming under suspicion for corruption

(hardly uncommon), the PSS Sleman supporter groups of Slemania and BCS (Brigade Curva Sud) have been able to enjoy a stadium designed as a mini-San Siro. The BCS and Slemania fans quickly established themselves as some of the most co-ordinated, active and fashionable ultras in Indonesian football. Their choreographies and chanting achieving huge numbers of views on You Tube and most games being as good-as-sold out. Their rise, however, was less appreciated by PSIM supporters, both Brajamusti and The Maident, who not only saw their own fans switch alliances, but, also faced the overwhelming support for PSS Sleman in their own stadium.

The supporter base of PSIM has also come under threat from the south with the relative success of Persiba Bantul. Despite being unsuccessful during the amateur era, Persiba became champions of the Divisi Utama (Second Division) in 2009, leading to their participation in the ISL. They would be relegated back to the Divisi Utama at the end of the 2014 season, after finishing last. The presence of these two younger and more recently successful teams intensified fan-rivalry at local derbies and clearly threatened PSIM's status as the primary football club in Yogyakarta. The Sultan of Yogyakarta, Hamengkubuwono X, also gave the reason for the presence of rival clubs in the same league as the reason for his withdrawal of support (financial and symbolic) for PSIM.

A journey through the streets of Yogyakarta quickly reveals the scope and range of the three teams supporter groups. The main streets of the city, and many of the smaller backstreets, are decorated with football murals or simple graffitied statements of supporter-group affiliation. Yogyakarta's inner south, for example, is home to numerous laskars (sub-groups within a larger supporter group) from Brajamusti. The different laskars, generally consisting of a minimum of 50 male youth, set up a base at a street-side road-stall or relatively open public green space, such as Lapangan Minggiran football field. The murals are a means not only to claim space and thus territory for the larger supporter group (it seems that Brajamusti are far more active than The Maident in the production of murals), but, also for establishing their own reputation amongst the different laskars. The murals are often complemented by the placement of massive flags which hangover the roads. These flags, usually a combination of blue and white (for Brajamusti) and blue, black and white (for The Maident) also feature writing indicating their affiliation. The flags indicate which supporter group controls the informal economy, covering costs such as motor-cycle and car-parking fees, as well as rent that is paid for use of footpath or road-side space. Members of laskars patrol these streets, collecting funds which are then given to the leaders of the relevant supporter group.

Bonek and the rise of Green Nord 27

GreenNord27 belongs to all of us. It doesn't belong to a particular community. No one [group] dominates and no one has a monopoly on it. No one feels the most heroic; no one takes credit for having given the most service or having the rights to it. Everyone, One Heart, One Attitude and One Action. Green Nord 27 is a collective, owned by us all, together. Conviction makes us stronger. One Heart, One Attitude, One Action. Against Politics in Football!!

It is a damp Thursday night and I am driven on the back of a motorbike along slippery and busy roads to Airlangga University, where I meet up with Arif, a researcher and football activist. He makes some phone calls, speaking in Javanese (with an East Javanese dialect and strong accent) and soon five of his mates have arrived. He orders a tarpaulin from one of the nearby street-stall operators and we sit down and order our drinks of coffees (with

condensed milk) or varieties of herb drinks. Arif and his mates withdraw their packs of thick clove cigarettes – the classic macho brands of *Dji Sam Soe*, *Gudang Garam* and *Djarum* – one of the former main sponsors of the Indonesian domestic football league. These are simple and egalitarian circumstances: all are welcome here – with only one condition, that one is a supporter or sympathiser with the cause of the *Bonek 1927*. This gathering, however, is one of the meeting places for the sub-group of *Bonek*, known as the *Green Nord 27*. And out of deference to one of its most fervent activists, the meeting place is near his university, where he is finishing his Bachelor's thesis on women's football in Indonesia. His fellow-*Green Nord 27* mates tease him about the length of time that it is taking him. Arif, it emerges, devotes most of his time to the cause of *Persebaya 1927*, *Bonek 1927* and his own *Green Nord 27*.

Back in the town of Yogyakarta, I meet with another *Bonek 1927/Persebaya 1927* activist, *Cak Tulus*. After introducing himself he says, 'I am a ronin. Do you know what a ronin is? It is a samurai without a master. I am a ronin, because I am a supporter [ultra, football activist] without a team.' His full-name is never given and he is only ever addressed as 'Cak Tulus'. 'Tulus' could be his name or his nick-name (meaning 'sincere'), either way, the *Cak* (an honorific appellation meaning 'brother') is never separated from his name. *Cak Tulus* carries with him a backpack seemingly always filled with *Bonek 1927* t-shirts, while also seemingly always wearing one variety of *Bonek 1927* t-shirt or another under a heavy jacket. His hat, pulled down low over his forehead is also adorned with *Bonek* and *Persebaya* pins. *Cak Tulus*, a long-time *Persebaya* fan and *Bonek* activist, spends his time going back and forth between Yogyakarta and Surabaya as well as visiting other cities where the 'Bonek diaspora' are active. *Cak Tulus* has made a name for himself within the *Bonek* fraternity not only as having astute entrepreneurial acumen, but also as a negotiator and mediator between conflicting groups of ultras. His role is particularly important with the absence of a *Persebaya 1927* team in either the *ISL* (first division) or *Divisi Utama*. *Cak Tulus*, and other *Bonek*, particularly those based outside of the city of Surabaya are charged with galvanising support for a broad movement against the *PSSI* – Football Federation of Indonesia. This means attempts to forge alliances with previously bitter rivals such as the ultras from *Malang* (*Arema*), *Solo* (*Pasepati*) and *Jakarta* (*Jakmania*).

The *Bonek* of Surabaya, i.e. supporters of *Persebaya*, are considered to be the oldest and largest supporter group in Indonesia, having emerged in the 1980s with the support of *Dahlan Iskan*, owner of the *Jawa Pos* newspaper group (Junaedi 2012). The *Bonek* earned a reputation as lawless (male) youth who would travel by train from Surabaya to wherever their team played, without taking any money with them. They would ride on the roofs of trains, or jump on the backs of trucks, hitching from one town to the next. For food, they would ransack the stalls at train stations or bus stops. The term 'Bonek' was coined to describe their brazen, lawless, courage and their undying support for their team. After a conflict between *Persebaya* and *PSSI*, *Persebaya* formed a break-away league, *Liga Primer Indonesia* in 2011. After the unification of the two leagues in 2013, the original *Persebaya* was replaced with *Persebaya Surabaya*, which was a team that had been moved from *East Kalimantan*. The majority of *Bonek* fans rejected this team, even though it had been filled with stars and would prove successful. In order to differentiate themselves from the *Bonek* who followed this team, they added the affix *1927* to their designation of *Bonek*.

The *Bonek 1927*, of which *Green Nord* forms a significant sub-group, has transformed into a football-protest movement which seeks to confront the various political and footballing

hierarchies which continue to corrupt and compromise the domestic league (and thus the national team, too) and their club in particular. Their protests carried out in the streets of Surabaya do not engender much public sympathy; for the protests only entrench their image as troublemakers. The Bonek 1927 have a multitude of grievances: against the PSSI, against the Minister of Sport (Imam Nahrawi), against the Persebaya Surabaya (regarded as the Persebaya palsu or Persebaya gadungan), against the Bonek Persikubar (derogatory name given to those supporters who support Persebaya Surabaya) and against the managers of any league or competition that permits the participation of Persebaya Surabaya. The imagery and slogans adopted by the Bonek 1927 and Green Noord clearly invoke some of the mainstays of ultra fandom. The fashion artefacts such as hooded jumpers, scarves pulled up over faces (leaving nothing visible except for the eyes), an appropriation of the Fred Perry logo, the use of a pair of hammers and the ubiquitous imagery of silhouettes of capos and megaphones. The slogans include 'Love Persebaya Hate Management' and All Cops Are Bastards (often abbreviated to ACAB). Green Nord and Bonek 1927 use the hashtags of 'Surabaya Melawan' (Surabaya resists), 'wani' and 'respect' in their twitter campaigns.

The Bonek 1927 persist as a barometer of football fandom in Indonesia. Being a bonek has shifted from being loosely affiliated with the team of Persebaya and the city of Surabaya to being an indication of one's attitude of contempt for the status quo of Indonesian football. Bonek 1927 and their activists condemn the PSSI and the corruption of football management by politicians who seek to use football as a means for gaining (illegitimate) wealth and access to a mass of potential supporters. The last fifteen years has seen the Bonek (and subsequently the Bonek 1927) supporter group increasingly identify with practices of global ultra fandom. Bonek 1927 remains the heart and soul of Indonesian football; it is not possible for Indonesian football to progress without the reconciliation of Bonek 1927 with a completely reformed PSSI. Until that happens, the protests will only grow and spread further amongst ultra groups throughout Indonesia.

Conclusion

Ultra-fandom exhibits similarities and differences across cultures. Indonesia's football culture, is not separate from the processes of globalized fandom. Yet, the interests and practices of ultras in Indonesian cities are closely related to local political interests. The cases of Pasoepati, Brajamusti and the Bonek follow on from Doidge's statement that 'the ultras style of support is translated in various ways depending on the specific pre-existing local and national cultures' (Doidge and Lieser 2013). This article has aimed to provide a starting point for research on a particular kind of fan of football in Indonesia. While ultras attract much attention through their well-rehearsed and choreographed performances, are not the only types of fan: many fans, too, resist the highly exclusive process of becoming and being accepted as a true and real fan. In the Indonesian context, being an 'ultra' could arguably be extended to those fans who are diehard, loyal and serious fans of EPL or other European league teams. One might not need to be present at the game to be an ultra. This kind of globalized fandom also has much scope for exploration within this context.

The three groups of ultras studied in this article share similarities while also being indicative of different trends in football culture in Indonesia. Pasoepati is a relatively united supporter group that has supported different Solo-based teams in the post-1998 era. Their flexibility in supporting different teams is something that rankles with other fans, while

they take claim for fostering the rise of Persib Solo. The potential divisions within Pasoeptati, have until now, been reconciled by such means as the Ultras 1923 adopting 'Pasoeptati' as a prefix for their title. The highly organized style of Pasoeptati, however, imposes a rigidity that many of their fans – particularly the 'casuals' and the 'hooligans' seek to oppose. PSIM's supporter groups of the Brajamusti and The Maident split along party-political lines. Brajamusti is aligned with the conservative Islamic party, PPP (United Development Party), while The Maident is aligned with the nationalist and secular, PDI-P (Democratic Party of Struggle). The Bonek of Surabaya are the most legendary supporter group, yet they too find themselves afflicted by ongoing division. The divisions within the Bonek supporter mass were brought about by the instability of Indonesia's football infrastructure and the deep involvement of corrupt politicians in the administration of the domestic football leagues. The Bonek 1927, ultras without a team, epitomize global ultra football fandom and its credo of being 'against modern football'.

Note

1. Yogyakarta, long known as being a student city, is also known for its tawuran (street battles) between high school students. The two main groups being Joxzin in the south and Q-zruh a.k.a QZR in the north. Divisions are also based along religious lines.

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