

New Social Movements of Football Fans in Indonesia from a Sustainable Development Goals Perspective

Fajar Junaedi^{1*} and *Helmy Muhammad*²

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

²Malaysian Inclusive Development and Advancement Institute, University Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

Abstract. This research aims to explore a new phenomenon in the dynamics of football fandom in Indonesia. Football fans in Indonesia are making a difference beyond coming for matches in stadiums, through disaster resilience initiatives, food banks, and environmental conservation efforts. But, they still associate the three above with the activities they engage in inside the stadium. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, conducted in the cities of Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and Surabaya. The findings of this research indicate that the new social movements regarding disaster resilience, food banks, and environmental conservation by Indonesian football fans originated from the football fans' concern about the situation in society. Football fans are building a movement based on the Sustainable Development Goals through inter-fan networks. Football fans from the middle class are becoming the driving force behind a new social movement among football fans in Indonesia. Indonesian football fans demonstrate literacy and awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals.

1 Introduction

Football is the predominant sport in Indonesia. The prevalence of football in Indonesia is demonstrated by matches conducted at numerous venues, attracting a multitude of enthusiasts. The attendance of football fans at matches is not confined to home games; it also encompasses away games [1]. The competitiveness among football enthusiasts in Indonesia intensifies identity battle among supporters. Competition among football fan identities include supporters from several clubs, as well as those from the same team. In Solo and Yogyakarta, football enthusiasts engage in rivalry. In the stadium, football enthusiasts orchestrate grand and striking choreographies [2].

Football enthusiasts in Indonesia lack the institutional integration characteristic of professional football clubs. In Germany, an inclusive and sustainable fan community can engage in decision-making and initiatives that impact the club. [4]. In England, certain football fan actors are establishing connections and acknowledging the issues of

*Corresponding author: fajarjun@umy.ac.id

contemporary football while enlisting young followers to participate in official, democratic, and fan-led football organizations [5]. The dominance of elder generation fans signifies the lack of engagement among young individuals in political activity and leadership within the football fan group [6].

Unfortunately, football fans in Indonesia are stigmatized by the mass media. Media coverage tends to portray football fans as perpetrators of violence. In its framing, the mass media portrays football fans as violent actors [7]. In contrast to the negative notions conveyed by the mass media, the Kanjuruhan tragedy emerged as a pivotal moment. The Kanjuruhan tragedy is the most significant football catastrophe in Asia. One hundred thirty-five football supporters and onlookers perished as a result of tear gas deployed by the police [8]. Violence erupted following the Arema FC versus Persebaya Surabaya match at Kanjuruhan Stadium in Malang on October 1, 2022 [9]. Arema FC supporters, dissatisfied with the team's 2-3 loss against Persebaya Surabaya, assaulted both Persebaya Surabaya players and law enforcement officials [10]. The police deployed tear gas in response. Panic erupted, resulting in people being trampled at Gate 13 of Kanjuruhan Stadium [11].

In the context of adverse stigmatization by the mass media, a noteworthy phenomena has arisen concerning football supporters in Indonesia. A notable phenomena has arisen within certain Indonesian football fan communities, which predated the Kanjuruhan disaster. The Kanjuruhan incident illuminated for both the mainstream media and the public that fans of football are not the exclusive perpetrators of football-related violence. Football enthusiasts, once characterized as aggressive, have indeed established a civil society movement inside the football fan community. In Surabaya, Solo, and Yogyakarta, football enthusiasts are establishing disaster mitigation initiatives rooted in their fan communities. A football fan community in Solo is organizing a food bank initiative by gathering food donations from spectators at the stadium. The gathered food is allocated to impoverished communities. A football fan community in Yogyakarta is initiating an environmental action. The actions of fans in Indonesia, as previously noted, can be classified as a new social movement. No research has investigated the mobilization of new social movements by Indonesian football fan communities. This research reveals fresh insights into Indonesian football supporters, contrasting with prevailing perceptions held by the media and the public to date. Media coverage frequently portrays football fans predominantly as creators of violence [10].

This research intends to analyze the emerging new social movement among Indonesian football fans via the framework of sustainable development goals, based on occurrences seen in various football fan communities. The research objective is to comprehend the emergence of new social movement patterns among Indonesian football fans via the lens of sustainable development perspective.

2 Method

This research uses a qualitative approach. The method in this research is a case study. A case study was chosen as the research method because the process of collecting information involves investigating and examining real-world phenomena. The research subjects consist of football fan communities in Bonek Disaster Rescue Team from Surabaya; B6, or casual football fans from Solo; and Bawah Skor from Yogyakarta which dominated young male football fans. They are involved in a new social movement related in football fans activities. Data collection techniques are carried out through three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis is performed in three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion [13]. To ensure that the researcher's interpretation reflects the actual interaction, source and method triangulation, including interviews, observation results, and documentation, is used to ensure data validity.

3 Results and discussion

3.1 Results

The Bonek Disaster Rescue Team (BDRT) is a disaster mitigation unit established by Bonek, the fans of the Persebaya Surabaya football club. BDRT was established mostly by Green Nord, the fan group of Persebaya situated in the northern stand of Gelora Bung Tomo Stadium, the home ground of Persebaya. BDRT was established in October 2018, coinciding with the management of the earthquake and tsunami in Palu, Central Sulawesi, that same year. In addition to possessing survey and rescue capabilities essential during natural disasters, BDRT has also developed an ambulance post that is perpetually prepared to offer medical treatment to supporters at every home match. Clearly identifying themselves as a disaster volunteer and paramedic unit to mitigate the bad reputation associated with Bonek through humanitarian and charitable endeavors, including fundraising and prompt response during natural disasters in diverse countries.

In Solo, fans of the Persis Solo football team founded the Sambernyawa Rescue Team (SRT). The SRT was established by Persis Solo fans from medical teams, search and rescue (SAR) units, and social volunteers. The SRT was directly influenced by the BDRT. The SRT concentrates its endeavors on risk reduction in stadium seating areas. The SRT administers first aid to supporters who are injured, suffering from loss of breath, or encountering other problems in crowded conditions. SRT clearly articulates its purpose to ensure that the stands are a secure and comfortable environment for children, the elderly, and anyone with impairments.

Simultaneously, in Yogyakarta, supporters of the PSIM Yogyakarta football club founded Bala Mataram Rescue (BMR) 1929. BMR 1929 is a community of enthusiasts engaged in volunteerism, health initiatives, and disaster relief efforts. Each away and home games for PSIM Yogyakarta is regarded as a scenario requiring management via a risk management lens, including evacuation routes and medical readiness, rather than merely a football event.

BDRT, SRT, and BMR 1929 actively participate in mitigation efforts during the soccer matches of each team. Multiple mitigations are being executed. Initially, they collaborated with the match organizing committee before to the game. Secondly, they constructed hazard mitigation posts surrounding the stadium. Disaster mitigation posts are furnished with medical equipment and ambulances. BDRT possesses an ambulance acquired with the assistance of supporters, benefactors, and the Persebaya Surabaya club. Simultaneously, SRT and BMR 1929 employ a network of disaster volunteers for ambulance services, including Muhammadiyah Ambulance (AmbulansMu).

In Solo, the casual wings of the Persis Solo football club's fans, known as the Surakartans, initiated a campaign termed the Surakartans Food Bank. This Food Bank was initially established during Persis's exhibition match versus Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors FC on June 17, 2023. Subsequently, whenever Persis competes at their home venue, Manahan Stadium, the residents of Surakarta have initiated a food donation initiative. The concept of the Surakartans Food Bank stems from the aspiration of Persis Solo supporters to effectuate a tangible social impact for the residents of Solo, particularly for those experiencing food insecurity or residing in the city's periphery. The procedure for implementing the food bank is as follows: Volunteers from Surakarta are assembling contribution boxes at the entrance gate (Gate D) of the stadium, positioned along the route supporters traverse to reach the B6 stand. Donations are gathered several hours before to kickoff and cease approximately 15 minutes before the action commences. Contributions typically consist of rice, bread, or mineral water, contingent upon the initiative of the benefactors. Upon collection, the crew categorized the rice: viable rice was segregated and subsequently packaged into bags.

Approximately three pounds of packages each bag. Food packages will be delivered to anyone in need.

A community named Bawah Skor in Yogyakarta is strongly engaged in environmental concerns. Bawah Skor was originally recognized as a football fans community with an interest in the history and documentation of the Yogyakarta-based club, PSIM Yogyakarta. Bawah Skor commenced by gathering archives and disseminating a football zine. Football zine is alternative media for football fans. Bawah Skor engages in socio-environmental activation during its development. Bawah Skor launched an initiative to trade used plastic bottles on game days. This concept arose as a manifestation of supporter accountability over cleanliness and the problem of garbage, especially single-use plastics in and around the stadium vicinity. During PSIM Yogyakarta's home game at the stadium, Bawah Skor offers a point for exchanging plastic garbage for bottles for attending fans or the general public. Fans and spectators who present used plastic bottles may exchange them for Matchgazine, a publication by Bawah Skor. In several matches, Bawah Skor established a network with other settlements to facilitate a bottle swap. Bawah Skor enables the trade of discarded bottles for a glass of milk offered by the Bawah Skor network community.

3.2 Discussion

The emerging social movement among Indonesian football supporters, as demonstrated by this study's findings, signifies a transition from a past reputation for violence to civil society efforts that support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The findings indicate that programs like the Bonek Disaster Rescue Team (BDRT) in Surabaya, the Sambernyawa Rescue Team (SRT) in Solo, and the Bala Mataram Rescue (BMR) 1929 in Yogyakarta prioritize disaster resilience through risk mitigation in stadiums and emergency response. This corresponds with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 13 (Climate Action), wherein supporters establish mitigation posts, ambulances, and volunteer networks to diminish the hazards associated with crowds and natural catastrophes, motivated by the 2018 Palu earthquake. This movement arises from fans' apprehension regarding social conditions following the Kanjuruhan catastrophe, which resulted in 135 fatalities due to police tear gas, hence spurring the mobilization of resources for safety and comfort, particularly for children and individuals with disabilities [15]. Football fan activism shows the evolving dynamics of the interaction between clubs and fans. Football fans are increasingly engaging in social movements, transcending their role as just spectators.

The Surakartans Food Bank in Solo contributes to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) by gathering food contributions, including rice and mineral water, at Manahan Stadium, which are subsequently distributed to impoverished villages on the city's periphery. This effort commenced in June 2023 and engaged casual fan volunteers, illustrating how stadium activities may serve as a platform for philanthropy, converting identity-based rivalry among supporters into expressions of unity. Simultaneously, Bawah Skor in Yogyakarta emphasizes environmental conservation by facilitating the exchange of discarded plastic bottles for magazines or milk, so endorsing SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). This initiative originated from the recognition of plastic waste surrounding the stadium and has since broadened its network with other towns to decrease single-use waste. These movements might be classified as new social movements, which, according to Alain Touraine's concept, prioritize cultural identity and post-material concerns over conventional class struggle [15]. Similar to fans from Green Nord or Surakartans who have access to resources and education, Indonesian fans are using SDG literacy to create intercity networks, with the young middle class serving as the primary motivator. This young football activities are beyond sports. This aligns with the findings of Bauers et al. (2024), who conceptualized the sustainable engagement of German football supporters through

participation in club decision-making, hence fostering inclusivity and social sustainability. [4]. Turner and Ludvigsen (2024) emphasized the legacy of the English fan social movement from 1980 to 2023, wherein younger generations participated in democratic organizations to tackle contemporary issues, mirroring the adaptation of Indonesian fans following the pandemic and tragedy in [6] [14].

In Indonesia, fan movements during the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent period illustrate the adaptation of techniques via social media for collective action, which can be used for SDG objectives like disaster resilience. This scenario illustrates that Indonesian football supporters exhibit understanding of the SDGs and act as agents of change, converting media stigma into concrete societal contributions, but are still dependent on informal networks and club support.

4 Conclusion

This study concludes that emerging social movements among Indonesian football fans, including disaster resilience initiatives via BDRT, SRT, and BMR 1929, food banks established by Surakartans in Solo, and environmental conservation efforts by Bawah Skor in Yogyakarta, exemplify fans' engagement with social issues that correspond with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 2, 11, 12, 13, and 15. This movement, propelled by the middle class and inter-fan networks, arose in reaction to the stigma surrounding media violence and the Kanjuruhan disaster, transforming the perception of fans from instigators of violence to catalysts for civil society reform. Indonesian fans, while still dependent on informal networks and club support, exhibit a significant level of SDG literacy, demonstrating that football can serve as a platform for sustainable action that positively influences the broader community.

References

1. A. Fuller and F. Junaedi, “*Ultras in Indonesia: conflict, diversification, activism*,” Sport Soc., vol. 21, no. 6, pp. 919–931, 2018, doi: 10.1080/17430437.2017.1300392.
2. A. Fuller, “*Soccer and the city: the game and its fans in Solo and Yogyakarta*,” Sport Soc., vol. 20, no. 5–6, pp. 675–688, 2017, doi: 10.1080/17430437.2016.1158470.
3. S. B. Bauers, S. Adam, M. Fuchs, L. Piotrowski, and G. Hovemann, “*Conceptualizing sustainable participation in the context of German football supporters*,” Ger. J. Exerc. Sport Res., vol. 54, no. 1, pp. 86–96, 2024, doi: 10.1007/s12662-023-00919-1.
4. K. Herd, “‘*It is coming home to Rome*’ – social engagement and creativity in reactions to England national football team losing Euro 2020,” Accounting, Audit. Account. J., vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 690–694, 2024, doi: 10.1108/AAAJ-04-2022-5764.
5. M. Turner and J. A. L. Ludvigsen, “*Generations, events, and social movement legacies: Unpacking social change in English football (1980–2023)*,” Br. J. Sociol., vol. 75, no. 1, pp. 93–107, 2024, doi: 10.1111/1468-4446.13065.
6. P. Scraton, Hillsborough : *The Truth*. Mainstream Publishing Company (Edinburgh) Ltd, 1999.
7. Waluyo and D. B. Kharisma, “*Protection rights for football supporters: learning from the tragedy at the Kanjuruhan Stadium in Indonesia*,” Safer Communities, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 296–311, Nov. 2023, doi: 10.1108/SC-10-2022-0044.

8. A. A. Qowim and A. Degaf, “*Kanjuruhan tragedy in the New York Times: A critical discourse analysis*,” *Indones. J. Appl. Linguist.*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 468–476, 2024, doi: 10.17509/IJAL.V13I3.66957.
9. A. Indah Pramesti, M. Muttaqien, and F. G. Sukmono, “*#MataramIsLove on Twitter: Indonesian Football Fan Activism Towards the Kanjuruhan Tragedy BT - HCI International 2023 Posters*,” 2023, pp. 54–60.
10. K. de Vries, “*Case study methodology*,” in *Critical Qualitative Health Research: Exploring Philosophies, Politics and Practices*, De Montfort University, United Kingdom: Taylor and Francis, 2020, pp. 41–52. doi: 10.4324/9780429432774-2.
11. B. M. Mahardika and P. Retnaningdyah, “*Zine as alternative media: A case study of football-themed zines*,” *Innov. Educ. Soc. Sci.*, pp. 218–223, 2022, doi: 10.1201/9781003265061-28.
12. A. H. Siregar et al., “*Supporters of football and social movements: An examination of resource mobilization among fans of the PSM club in South Sulawesi*,” vol. 2041, pp. 232–239, 2024.
13. J. Cleland, “*From passive to active: The changing relationship between supporters and football clubs*,” *Soccer Soc.*, vol. 11, pp. 537–552, Sep. 2010, doi: 10.1080/14660970.2010.497348.
14. J. Zegarra, B. Carreras, C. Morillo, V. Israel, M. Infante Naranjo, and E. Ordeix-Rigo, “*The Role of the Sustainable Development Goals in Shaping Institutional Identity and Disseminating Messages for the Corporate Ecosystem, the Case of the Football Club Barcelona*,” in *Studies on Entrepreneurship, Structural Change and Industrial Dynamics*, vol. Part F1148, EAE Business School, Barcelona, Spain: Springer Nature, 2025, pp. 267–280. doi: 10.1007/978-3-032-05730-3_16.
15. A. Touraine, “*Post-Industrial Classes*,” in *Rethinking the Subject: an Anthology of Contemporary European Social Thought*, Taylor and Francis, 2018, pp. 181–192. doi: 10.4324/9780429497643-13.