

GENDER CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN AS MAUNG GEULIS IN INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

Ari Ariyanto

Postgraduate of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran
Jln. Raya Bandung-Sumedang km 21, Jatinangor, Jawa Barat, Indonesia
aariyanto05@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Talking about football, we could not separate it from the supremacy of masculinity that was created and rooted powerfully by men. It seemed that football was a sport that could be done merely by men and for men. That perspective became one of the most fundamental reasons why football was destined for men. However, there were a lot of women interested in football and becoming the supporter of the football team. Practically, these women supporters had their own labeling as supporters. It indicated that there was a role of women in football, either as a player or supporter. This study discussed the gender construction as a woman by means of the labeling itself. The qualitative-descriptive method was employed to investigate the women gender construction as 'Maung Geulis' in Indonesian football teams' territory. The result shows how the manifestation of the women supporters in football can gain the motivation of morality to the football players in the field. Moreover, there is a desire of the women to show the gender equality through the labeling of 'Maung Geulis' as the women supporters. Either 'Maung Geulis' or other women supporters are attempted to locate the role of women in men's domain. The potential of women as 'Maung Geulis' to be equal with men supporters is buried by the different labeling. The issue gives a distance of equality by using the political labeling becomes contra productive in the effort to construct the gender equality.

Keywords: *gender, women supporters, Maung Geulis, Persib, football*

INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the sports which can embrace all society levels and can unite the diversity. We cannot deny that football is able to enhance the feeling of high solidarity, appreciate the diversity, and unite it into a union. Football becomes a newborn soul of life of the whole world. Not only the players but also other elements have a great role in supporting the world of football. Indonesia is one of the countries in the world in which its society has a great enthusiasm for football. Indonesia has passionate supporters which can be compared with European football. The existence of sports supporters is a result of the emergence of a sports club. The existence of supporters in sports competition is capable of giving moral motivation to the players who play in the football tournament. In sports industry, the existence of supporters means a potential market which can earn the income of the football club itself. One of the sports which is eminent with devoted supporters is football. As the most favorite sport in the world, the presence of supporters is the most influential subsidiary factors on the life of football competition. Every professional football clubs have a specific support group that even has a specific name to show the identity (Doewes & Riyadi, 2016).

Nowadays, the football supporters are not only dominated by men but also women. There is an interesting phenomenon in which we can find many women supporters that can frequently find in every football competition. And the number of the women supporters is increasing from time to time.

The extent of this phenomenon happens not only in several countries along with the powerful culture of football but also in our country. The presence of women supporters contributes to enliven football in Indonesia. There are some women supporters in Indonesia. One of the names of women supporters is 'Maung Geulis'. Maung Geulis is the name of supporters of Bandung football association (Persib) for women supporters. Maung Geulis has been chosen as the object of this research. Maung Geulis is the appearance of masculinity in labeling of football supporters, so the role and responsibility of a supporter as a woman results in several important and interesting issues to be discussed. The role of women seems to be prohibited in the world of football. On the other hand, as the development of football era, it can be carried out by women though, in reality, it is still limited. Lennis and Pfister (2015) has stated that women have to comply with specific rules of conduct in the stadium, where masculine behavior for both men and women supporters is regarded as an ideal fan behavior. In addition, Lennis & Pfister (2015) has explained that there is also space for gender negotiations as long as the women supporters display neither "hyper masculinity" nor "emphasized femininity" in their gender performance. According to the burning issue which has been stated above, this research will discuss the gender construction as a woman by means of the labeling itself. This research is aimed to investigate the gender construction of women as Maung Geulis in Indonesian football and the role as well as the responsibility of women constructed from the labeling of supporters toward Indonesian football. The significance of the study is to provide a reference to understand about women gender construction which is appeared in sports issues. Furthermore, this study will be a preliminary input for other researchers to conduct a further study in the similar area of different interest.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative-descriptive research because the study is meant to gain insights into the construction of gender women as Maung Geulis in Indonesian football by investigating and analyzing the data gathered from various sources. The object of this research is Maung Geulis as the women supporters. The data collection technique is used in this research by collecting the data related to Maung Geulis, women football supporters, and the supporters' contribution to the football world, particularly in Indonesia. The data are analyzed by classifying the data which are concerned in gender construction and the labeling of women supporters in football.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Football is identical with the strong of physical strength. It needs the power which is suitable played by men. Power is indistinguishable with men as explained by Chang (2006) that the ruggedness dimension of brand personality may correspond to the masculinity dimension composed by the tough and masculinity personality. While sincerity dimension includes such traits as family-oriented, honest, sentimental, and friendly that belong to femininity (Chang, 2006). Both constructions of masculinity and femininity serve as a prominent feature in one life and act as a substantial influence on how their life is lead (Greco, 2013). Greco (2013) has argued that society has placed narrow binary categories of what a human's sex could possibly be. It does not only reinforce the gendered stereotype, yet it proposes an issue with the ways in which hegemonic views of what masculinity and femininity are supposed to act like. It indicates that society determines how men and women should act based on their gender stereotype.

When women have to be being a woman, this stereotype is all together remaining to women. It means that they have to bend down to masculinity domain. It is obvious that there is a desire of women to show the gender equality by labeling *Maung Geulis* as the women supporters. According to

Butler (2006), gender is culturally constructed, hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor seemingly fixed as sex. Butler (2006) has explained that if gender is the cultural meaning that the sexed body assumes, then the gender cannot be said to follow from sex in any one way. Butler (2006) has elaborated that it does not follow that the construction of men will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that women will interpret only female bodies. It indicates that gender is not nature and is not given by God, but rather it is created by human throughout the social and cultural process. *Bonita*, *Maung Geulis*, or other women supporters are attempted to place the role of women in men domain. The women supporters declare that they have their own name related to the women supporters. However, it has gained new issue and phenomena concerning to that problem.

Currently, football supporters are not only dominated by men but also women. There is an interesting phenomenon in which we can find many women supporters frequently in almost every football competition, and it is increasing from time to time. The extent of the phenomenon of the women supporters happens not only in several countries along with the powerful culture of football but also in our country. The presence of women supporters contributes to enliven football in Indonesia. *Maung Geulis* and *Bonita* have been samples of the emergence labeling of football women supporters. Surabaya Football Association's (Persebaya) supporters are commonly known as *Bonek*. It has been popular from the end of the 1980s until the beginning of 1900s. In progress, symbolic interactionism is constantly growing among the supporters of Persebaya gives a name and particular space for Green Force women supporters named *Bonita*. The word of *Bonita* itself in term of language originated from the acronym of *Bonek Wanita*. As political gender naming based among Persebaya supporters, almost all communities of local football supporters in Indonesia are acquainted with the dichotomy of naming football supporters gender-based like this.

Bonita (Bonek Wanita), in the context of national football, recently is known as women supporters for Persebaya. The word of *Bonita* itself, in terms of language, in Spanish means pretty. Formerly *Bonita* has existed, actually, there is initially acknowledged a queen of *Bonek*. But as time passed, the name of *Bonita* is more commonly used. While *Maung Geulis* is the name of women supporters of Persib Bandung club. *Maung Geulis* was officially established in January 2013. It is aimed to accommodate the womankind in providing support for their favorite team, Persib. Mrs. Fitri admits the choice of *Maung Geulis* as its own name is inspired of epithet Persib, *Maung Bandung*. While *Geulis* is referring to the identity of the beautiful woman in Sundanese language. Inevitably, all members of the supporters are women who love football and support Persib. Mrs. Fitri as the chairman of *Maung Geulis* hopes the women supporters can get an exclusive stand so that women possibly can watch the football competition in stadium safely. They also want to unify in another tribune although they frequently watch the match in VIP. It starts with the passion of Persib Bandung, *Bobotoh* (supporters of Persib) community named *Maung Geulis* that is established and ready to support *Maung Bandung* in the gridiron. According to its name, all members of *Maung Geulis* are women consisting of various professions. They are housewives, women careers, college students, and students in either primary or secondary school. *Maung Geulis* would be more active in campaigning to watch Persib match in its home, Bandung. They also want to join the other group supporters, as well the men supporters.

The phenomenon and important issue of *Bonita* and *Maung Geulis* on gender construction of women in Indonesian football world have become a new chapter and partly a small example of supporters of football. The emergence of some women supporters in diverse parts of the world including Indonesia is increasing every year from time to time. It indicates that the existence of women in football has become a phenomenon that offers a new color in the football world. On the contrary, behind the phenomenon of women supporters, the facts show that there is some discrimination, harassment, and sloping views to women supporters in football. It proves the presence of the woman in football still obtains controversy. In addition, the gap of gender in football happens when the expulsion has done by some police officials to women supporters of Sriwijaya FC in the raid disguised security control. It confirms that football has been defined as part of class struggle and forms

of discrimination between women and men. The phenomenon of women supporters in football world can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Phenomenon of Women Supporters in Football World
(Source: Kusuma, 2012)

Another phenomenon as represented in Figure 1 is how women become the center of men attention in football. Women supporters are victims of gender discriminations that end up in creating an injustice. The form of a manifestation of injustice due to gender discrimination covers marginalization, stereotype-view, violence, and sometimes the men and women supporters mock to each other that lead to sexual harassment.

Women are merely regarded as the sweetener and appendages in the football world. It becomes the strength of an indication that the interest and the participation of women in football are unnatural and still taboo. It is because the rules of masculinity in football have been indoctrinated in people's mind for hundreds of years. It is claimed that football belongs to men. The hard activity, domination of physical strength, fanaticism, and the nature of competition are the numbers of the attribute of masculinity that attached for years in football so that creating a constructed mind that football is a sport for and by men. The presence of women football as a sports branch proves that women are capable of playing football which is known as a hard sport and it needs an ideal physical condition. There is femininity in a football field that masculine men are dressed up.

In the field, the women football players run and fight in an intractable manner, but they still perform fascinating. It is done to captivating a number of women attending the match on the side of the field as supporters. Masculinity is one of the layers that cover football. The layer is permanent, and it cannot be separated. As it is color-coded with femininity, the layer will seem more interesting either its appearance or its feel. It is nothing wrong if we all fond of football, included the following all sweetness and bitterness of football. Once women directly get involved in football, there emerges a stereotype that football could change a woman into a man, the sport could endanger the health of women, and women do not have the ability or a willingness to compete. Hence, according to the patriarchal stereotype, man is born to dominate, compete, and fight. In contrast to women, women are required to understand, be obedient, be calm, and have high solidarity.

Men persist in thinking that women are not genuinely falling in love with football and they assume that women never become the real football lover. They just watch how gorgeous and sexy the playmaker is, but it is not how the playmaker passed the ball to the striker. One is loved by women barely the players and their masculinity neither the quality of the game nor the technical playing of the players. The construction of maleness that has been formed as macho, strong, adventurous, and aggressive presence in football. If it is seen from the essence of sports, it is aimed to keep stamina and healthy body. Sports can be conducted by anyone without any limitations in terms of age, class, race

even gender. This is also firm by some regulations which give the guarantee of support for the participation of women in football including the regulation no. 7 in article 13 mentioned the responsibility of every country to create appropriate rules to eliminate discrimination of women and guarantee women's right to participate in various fields include sports. Moreover, according to BPKP (2015) in regulations of Republic of Indonesia no. 3 in the year 2005, article 6, chapter IV regarding the National Sports System which is affirmed on equal rights for each citizen to participate in the field of sports and to acquire the services according to his/ her competence in sports. The status of regulation of PSSI agreed by FIFA in Article 5 verse 2 that discussed the concerning of elimination in any forms of discrimination based on ethnic origin, language, religion, and gender.

However, in fact, the general portrayal of women participations in Indonesia particularly in football explicitly depicts controversy. There is a number of forms of discrimination, provocation, and negative perceptions of women in football. It reflects that the women experiences in public space yet encounter some obstacles. In another side, there is an interesting thing that motivated *Bonita* and *Maung Geulis* when they directly attend the football match in the stadium to support their favorite team. There are some important factors that related to the motivation of *Bonita* and *Maung Geulis* come to the stadium. They want to show their affection of football that is first as a way of social interaction. It is their way of social interaction to the environment. They attend the football match that accompanied by their husbands, boyfriends, brothers, sisters, school friends, or college friends. Besides, they come to the stadium because they want to meet the other supporters and sense the social interaction and enthusiasm of the supporters in the stadium. There is a different affection when the supporters directly come to the stadium to watch the game and the greater euphoria rather than watched the game on the television. Then, it is as the media of entertainment. The women supporters watch directly the football match in the stadium because they are looking for entertainment. They consider that the football match is not only leisure for men but also women. They want to see their idols played in the football match. And then, it is fanaticism. *Maung Geulis* attend the football game in the stadium because of their fanaticism of their football team and the players as well. There is an ideology concealed very deep if we talked about fanaticism in the field. They come to the field because of their adoration of their native country. The local nationalism of the supporters is embedded strongly and is boosted the supporters' motivation when they watch it live. Later, it is the security factor. There is a standpoint that women supporters assume the coordination of football match has been categorized safe and they believed in the security officers on duty. Nevertheless, the facts in the field are not in conformity with the expectation of *Maung Geulis*. One of which is they want the exclusive stand for the supporters of women to feel safer and comfort in the stadium. But their hope seems not yet infested by the football committee.

The exposure of some issues and phenomena are associated with the construction of gender women as *Maung Geulis*; the writer takes some of the important points into the outcome of the research. Actually, it is no need a special terminology for women supporters. Naming specifically on the supporters is essentially put women at the position who are expelled from the men domain because they are feminine, not masculine. When the labeling in *Maung Geulis*, the women supporters of Persib club should be in the world of feminine. At their own position in the feminine world, they have to be subjected by men domain so the relation to Viking which in this case means the masculine world is not in equivalent position. Thus, by giving a label, *Maung Geulis* for the women supporters to support Persib is not contributing anything to construct the gender equality. The capacity of women to be in the mainstream of the football supporters is buried by naming to be different from the name restrained to men supporters. They have to be in discourse that is devoted to them. Initially, it aims to make an equal space for women. The different political naming for football women supporters of gender-based is counterproductive in an effort to build gender equality.

Both men and women have the same rights to support the football club which they like from the part of the stadium. Women have the equal rights to use the identical name as men have. The Persebaya, Persib, and other women supporters have the rights to apply *Bonek*, *Viking*, or *Bobotoh*

without adding the word of women as their identity since in that labeling there is no difference between role and responsibility of a *Bonek* or *Bonita*. The social construction developed in the society does not widen in that detail. In confronting Persib in the stadium and personal interaction, they are all the same. It could be said that there are no rules how *Bobotoh* and *Maung Geulis* should behave. *Bonek* is not higher than *Bonita*, and otherwise, they are equal. All of them satisfy and contribute to each other according to their own capability. One thing prevailed in the stadium is anyone who got the ticket has the same right in supporting his or her favorite team in any way, which is certainly bounded by other norms. By mentioning *Bonita*, *Maung Geulis*, and others, the atmosphere and culture of Indonesian football are more colorful. For real example that there are found more women who come to the stadium to support their favorite teams either home or away. *Maung Geulis* is not merely appendage because today in every single activity the supporters always contribute significantly in various supports. More than that, the existence of women in football is not only limited to the match on the football field but also in other areas that related to football.

Various aspects related to the most famous sports in the world have performed and undertaken by women. It is starting from the higher profession as the manager of the club till the lowest profession as the supporter of the club because, in fact, the gender relation is not the natural relation. However, it is the result of the construction of human relation in constructing women's symbolized social interaction. If the different naming for women gender-based supporters is regarded as the appreciation and respect for women, this opinion in Karl Marx's perspective is considered as false consciousness.

CONCLUSIONS

The presence of women supporters as *Maung Geulis* is not entirely getting the positive view by the public. The community is basically not able to accept completely the presence of women supporters in football considering there is still a vague role and responsibility among them. Naming and labeling specifically to the women supporters in football, it essentially put the women at the position who are expelled from the men domain since they are feminine, not masculine. The potential of women as *Bonita*, *Maung Geulis*, and the other women supporters to be equal with other football supporters is buried by the different naming and labeling which is attached to the men supporters. The issue gives an opportunity to make the women equal through the different political naming for women supporters, but it becomes a contra productive in the effort to construct gender equality. In fact, both men and women still have the same rights to support their favorite football teams.

Women have the same rights to apply the same name used by men. The women supporters of Persebaya, Persib, and others profoundly have the rights using *Bonek* and *Viking/Bobotoh* without inserting women which are acronymically as part of their identity. Because of the labeling, the fact does not show the difference of role and responsibility between *Bonek* and *Bonita*, *Viking/Bobotoh* and *Maung Geulis*. In reality, the social construction developed is not that far. But in the end, allowing *Bonita*, *Maung Geulis*, and other women supporters, they get bigger and determine the label of themselves because either *Bonek* and *Viking/Bobotoh* are the forms of masculinity spirit. Meanwhile, women are the new spirit and become the most important part in football as the feminine part of the field which cannot be separated. Certainly, the answer is in the field, by the efforts to prove that the form of gender equality has been there and kept growing in the culture of Indonesian football.

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