

DOMESTICATING FOOTBALL RIVALRY THROUGH PARTICIPATORY CULTURE: THE DERBY JATENG CASE

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the dynamic rivalry and communication between supporters of Derby Jateng between two football clubs, PSIS Semarang and Persis Solo, in Central Java, Indonesia. Drawing from the theory of Participatory Culture, the research hypothesizes that rivalry and competition among supporters can foster a sense of community, identity, and participatory engagement. The methods used in the study involve in-depth interviews with key informants from both supporter groups, combined with observational data from social media platforms and field observations during matches. The results suggest that despite the intense rivalry, a majority of interactions between the groups are characterized by banter and psywar, creating a participatory culture that extends beyond the football field. There is evidence of mutual respect, maturity, and a sense of brotherhood among the supporters. This unique dynamic is regulated by various stakeholders, including the police, community leaders, clubs, match managing committee, and political figures, who help 'domesticate' the rivalry and maintain peace and order. The study concludes that football rivalry, when managed properly, can serve as a platform for participatory culture, fostering community engagement, identity formation, and social cohesion.

INTRODUCTION

Rivalry is an unavoidable aspect in the world of football. A study from Tuğbay İnan (2020) said that the crowd is a very important aspect in a football match, especially a home-field match. Without fans or a crowd, the core of the game has no value. This article will specifically discuss the rivalry between PSIS Semarang and Persis Solo supporters which is based on their culture and prestige. This phenomenon will be studied from a fan studies perspective to explore how to domesticate this rivalry. In many cases, football is not only considered a game, but also an embodiment of local culture and traditions. So-called culture can

involve everything from the songs sung by fans in the stadium, to unique and different playing patterns that may be influenced by local culture and traditions.

Based on a few previous research, it is conveyed that the rivalry that occurs in football does not occur merely over the performance of the supported team on the field (Aluola, 2020; Barros et al., 2023; Khosla et al., 2019; Seijbel et al., 2022; Setiyawan & Anisa, 2023; Tamami et al., 2021). Rivalry is built by many other factors outside of the match such as sectarianism that occurs in Scotland, sentiment towards opponents, proximity of regions, provocation, ideology difference, and also

the influence of family heritage values. In addition, there is a psychological factor to gain satisfaction over the sense of dominance, masculinity actualized in violence (Haq & Yudhistira, 2022; Hyland, 2020). The aim of those research is limited to how stakeholders must be able to provide policies to regulate rivalries that cannot be eliminated from football. Meanwhile, in this research, the author will explain how the stakeholders domesticate the feud, so the rivalries are maintained without further violence by giving both sides of supporters a role and freedom to express themselves.

The rivalry between PSIS Semarang and Persis Solo supporters has become one of the hottest rivalries in Indonesia. The two teams from Central Java are fighting for the prestige of being the best team in Central Java. It is becoming a common occasion for their supporters to be involved in anarchic riots especially on match days. The last riot was recorded in September 2023 in the Manahan Stadium area, Solo. What is interesting is that after the match finished, PSIS supporters who came to Solo were escorted on their way home by Persis Solo supporters. This situation occurs repeatedly and seems to be a tradition between the two supporters. Agus Warsoep, President of Pasoepati (one of Persis Solo's support base) said that this kind of situation is normal between them (August, 2023). This phenomenon is an almost-impossible event to occur because of the bad history of riots between football supporters in Indonesia and even in the global world of football.

From 2012-2019, six names died as a result of the feud between Persija and Persib (CNN Indonesia, 2019). This incident became a recurring event with the same pattern; mobbings. As a result of this phenomenon, the two supporters were separated and were not allowed to be in the same stadium to avoid further bloodshed. Even visiting teams are often escorted using military vehicles when entering the stadium. A similar pattern also occurred among Arema and Persebaya supporters. The Arema versus Persebaya match was even

held several times without spectators to minimize the potential for riots. However, even when the two groups of supporters were physically separated, the potential for violent clashes remained high. What happened between PSIS and Persis supporters serves as an antithesis to most football rivalries in Indonesia. These two supporter groups have demonstrated that rivalry does not necessarily require segregation and that both parties are capable of maintaining order and mutual respect after matches (Hidayat, 2022; Yulianto & Hakim, 2023).

This situation occurs because both sets of supporters are given the freedom to express their support for their team. Giving them this trust and power can minimize the feud potential. This was not the case in other incidents in Indonesia, such as the Kanjuruhan tragedy, which claimed 135 lives and injured hundreds more (Prasetyo & Widodo, 2023). During that match, the supporters experienced significant oppression, such as the prohibition of visiting supporters (Persebaya supporters) from attending and poor coordination with security forces. As a result, when riots broke out, the supporters became the victims because they had no power in the situation.

This phenomenon, seen from a fan studies perspective, will explain in more depth how the ideas of brotherhood and rivalry shape the interaction patterns between PSIS Semarang and Persis Solo supporters. Football supporters are formed as a result of social interaction and emotional involvement with the team they support (Mubina et al., 2020). Football supporters often feel emotionally connected to their team, and are even able to influence their behavior and attitudes. Because of this emotional connection, the football community will develop its own habits and traditions. Jenkins (1992) states that football is only a medium used by a certain group of people, while what is more important is the identity, community and sense of belonging that is formed through activities supporting football clubs.

The Derby Jateng between PSIS Semarang and Persis Solo represents an ideal case study because it demonstrates a paradoxical phenomenon: despite the intensity of rivalry rooted in cultural and regional prestige, major violent incidents have been relatively minimal. This raises important theoretical questions about what conditions and mechanisms enable such domestication (Mardiana et al., 2024; Yusuf et al., 2023). By applying fan studies and participatory culture perspectives particularly concepts of power distribution, stakeholder collaboration, and digital media's role this research contributes to understanding how rivalries can be channeled into constructive rather than destructive expressions.

The significance of this study extends beyond Derby Jateng. Theoretically, it enriches fan studies literature by demonstrating how participatory culture principles operate in contexts of conflict and competition. Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for football authorities, security agencies, clubs, and supporter communities in other contexts where managing intense rivalries is a persistent challenge. This multi-stakeholder perspective represents a more comprehensive approach to understanding contemporary football fan cultures in the digital age, where online and offline interactions continuously shape the meaning and practice of rivalry.

Literature Review

Rivalries Between Psis Semarang And Persis Solo That Borders To Each Other

Rivalry comes from intense feelings of involvement and identification with a team. These feelings can stimulate competition and hostility toward other teams or fans seen as different or foreign. A rival could be explained as a significant competitor from an opposing group that threatens the identity or self-worth of our own group (Tyler & Cobbs, 2017). In the context of sports fandom, individuals might actually embrace this threat as it can provide

a chance to make favorable comparisons with certain other groups. In other words, achieving victory against a rival can boost one's self-perception more than winning against a different but equally skilled competitor. Besides being passive spectators, football fans actively participate in various ways, which can strengthen group identity and intensify rivalry. This identification can be sparked by various factors such as geographical location, family traditions, and the social or cultural values rooted in the football club's local origin (Suryanto, 2021).

Some research suggests that rivalry is based on geographical proximity and uses a geographic-based rivalry proxy. This proxy might consider any teams within a certain distance of each other as rivals (Ganguly et al., 2023; Havard et al., 2020; Tyler et al., 2019) or any teams whose regions are adjacent (Sidani et al., 2020). Another geographic approach suggests a negative relationship between rivalry strength and the distance between teams, which creates a continuous proxy variable, different from the binary variables used by other methods. Researchers in demand often agree on these perspectives, typically incorporating one of three geographical parameters to encapsulate the phenomenon of rivalry: adversaries within a predetermined radius (binary variable), adversaries whose territories border each other (binary variable), and the cumulative distance between adversaries (continuous variable) (Tyler & Cobbs, 2017). However, proximity doesn't necessarily mean rivalry, and using distance without a separate rivalry term eliminates the distinction between attendance cost and rivalry intensity (Garcia-del-Barrio et al., 2019; Uchida et al., 2020).

Semarang and Solo are two of the three largest cities in Central Java based on the Human Development Index (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). Socially and economically, these two cities often compete with each other as the axis of Central Java. The Greater Semarang and Greater Solo

areas also have direct borders. This is one of the factors in the rivalry between the PSIS Semarang and Persis Solo clubs, whose supporter bases are in their respective Greater Regions, as stated in the previous paragraph. Each supporter base actively participates in various activities related to the clubs they support, which encourages stronger identities and rivalries with each other.

Fandom And Participatory Culture

Fiske (1992) explains that fandom selects from the repertoire of mass-produced and mass-distributed entertainment certain performers, narratives, or genres and takes them into the culture of a self-selected fraction of the people. Fiske states that a fan, through fan knowledge and appreciation, gains an unofficial cultural capital and leads to high levels of self-esteem among the peer group. Furthermore, a fan is extremely productive and participatory. Sports crowd, for instance, cheers their team not only to encourage their team to make a bigger effort but also to participate in that effort. They wear their teams' colors, chant the entire match and become an integral part of the match. Beginning with McPherson in 1976, there has been a strong focus on socializing influences in the processes of awareness and attraction necessary to the development of fandom. These influences include family members, peers, athletes, teams, and leagues, mass media, and geographic proximity to stadiums (Dai, 2022; Ding, 2022; Song & Tang, 2022; Zhao, 2022). What is important to fan development is that progression into greater commitment involves motivations for continued involvement that may be "pleasurable or socially stimulating" (Wann & James, 2019). Motivations are important drivers of connection to sport; we cannot fully answer the how of fandom without the why. Empirical research has uncovered several dozen unique motives for sports fandom, from entertainment to spending time with friends and family to feelings of achievement

through the victories of one's team (Wann & James, 2019).

Participatory culture refers to a culture in which individuals and/or communities feel empowered to contribute to and personally affect media production, circulation, and interpretation (Jenkins, 1995). Furthermore, Jenkins describes in this type of culture, individuals act not only as consumers but also as contributors or producers, actively shaping the culture around them. This concept is especially relevant, though not limited, to the context of new media, where barriers to artistic and civic participation have been significantly lowered (Sebunya & Gichuki, 2024). Although Jenkins often discusses the media context in participatory culture, this research will take a perspective where supporters participate in their favorite club through the creation of rules and understandings of rivalry. This article will explain how both supporters' way to domesticate the rivalry reflects Jenkins' participatory culture.

METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative methods to acquire deep and holistic understanding towards the reality of this research (Mulyana, 2007). In this context, the method is used to analyze and describe the rivalry phenomenon between supporters of PSIS and Persis. This method focuses on the interpretation and understanding of this rivalry, rather than just measuring or counting. For the data collection process, this research uses interview techniques. Interviews were chosen as the primary data collection technique because they allow the researcher to gain direct perspectives and experiences from the subjects involved in the researched phenomenon. Interviews are conducted in depth to collect detailed and nuanced information from the subjects.

This study employs a qualitative research approach grounded in fan studies and participatory culture frameworks to examine the domestication of rivalry

between PSIS Semarang and Persis Solo supporters. The research design integrates multiple data sources to ensure methodological rigor and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Data were collected through three primary sources: (1) semi-structured interviews with key informants including supporter community leaders, club officials, and security personnel; (2) digital ethnographic observation of social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook) where supporter discourse occurs; and (3) document analysis of official club statements, media coverage, and regulatory documents governing football matches in Indonesia.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation from various stakeholder groups. Selection criteria included: active involvement in Derby Jateng events for at least three years, recognized leadership roles within their respective communities, and willingness to provide informed consent.

Table 1. Informant Profile

Informant	Affiliation / Fanpage Membership
Informant A	Member of Panser Biru (PSIS Fanpage)
Informant B	Member of Hooligans Semarang
Informant C	Member of Hooligans Semarang
Informant D	Member of B6 (Persis Fanpage)
Informant E	Member of B6 (Persis Fanpage)
Informant F	Member of Garis Keras (Persis Fanpage)

Based on table 1 above, the informants in this study are the supporters from both teams, PSIS and Persis, who have been involved in physical and verbal conflicts with supporters of the rival team. The selection of informants based on these criteria is important to ensure the quality and relevance of the collected data. Their direct involvement in the conflict provides unique insights and perspectives on the dynamics and complexity of the rivalry between supporters. They were chosen based on their experience and knowledge of the rivalry and conflicts between supporters, allowing them to provide a deep and

comprehensive view of the researched phenomenon. The interview was taken from March - August of 2024.

The research followed systematic stages:

1. Data Collection (3 months): Conducted 60-minute interviews, recorded and transcribed. Collected social media posts about Derby Jateng matches over one season. Gathered documents and news reports from 2020-2024.
2. Data Processing: Coded interview transcripts using Braun & Clarke (2006) thematic analysis. Analyzed social media through digital content analysis. Examined documents via critical discourse analysis.
3. Analytical Framework: Applied participatory culture concepts (Jenkins, 1992) and power distribution theory (Hearn, 2012). Cross-referenced findings to identify themes and validate interpretations.
4. Validation: Used member checking with informants. Triangulated across data sources. Maintained reflexivity by documenting researcher positionality.

This transparency ensures the research can be evaluated and replicated, while the multi-method approach strengthens credibility of findings on Derby Jateng rivalry domestication.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Emergence of Rivalry between PSIS Semarang and Persis Solo and How their Competition is Maintained in a Massive Competitive Value

Rivalry is fundamentally born out of various values and the culture of its supporters. However, in the modern era of football both in Indonesia and globally rivalry no longer solely encompasses the socio-cultural aspects of fandom, but has also become a commodity that is managed and exploited by various parties for economic purposes (Giulianotti, 2002). This includes the rivalry between PSIS Semarang and Persis Solo, which not only grew organically from the historical and cultural

roots of each city but is also sustained and reinforced by actors with vested interests in the football ecosystem.

The media plays a significant role in maintaining and even intensifying the tension between the two teams. Through news framing that emphasizes conflict, extensive coverage of their matches, and the production of content that explores the history of their animosity, the media constructs an "us versus them" narrative that reinforces identity and antagonism among supporters. This practice not only fosters fanatical loyalty but also benefits the media economically through increased traffic, readership, and engagement. As Boyle & Haynes (2009), "Sports media has become an integral part of the global sports industry, with a symbiotic relationship in which both sides exploit each other for their respective economic interests".

In addition to the media, the national football federation—such as PSSI—also benefits from this rivalry. By scheduling matches during prime time to attract high television ratings, setting premium ticket prices for derby games, and using the tension between the two teams to promote the national league, PSSI leverages rivalry as a tool to drive the commercialization of the competition. Even the regulations governing supporter expression often carry a degree of ambivalence: while aiming to curb violence, they also allow rivalry-induced tension to persist for the sake of spectacle.

Equally important are the clubs themselves both PSIS Semarang and Persis Solo which actively use the rivalry to their advantage. Derby matches present opportunities to increase merchandise sales, attract sponsors seeking high exposure, and expand their supporter base by offering a strong collective identity rooted in emotional attachment to the club. The narrative of rivalry is even utilized in their marketing campaigns, turning conflict into a branded commodity sold to the public.

Within the framework of sports industrialization, football rivalries have undergone a transformation into

commodities that are packaged and sold to consumers. Matches are no longer merely arenas of competition but have become commercial products distributed through television broadcasting rights and streaming platforms. Conflict-centered content is monetized across various media, while local identities are reconstructed into brands marketable on a national scale. What once were cultural and emotional rivalries are now professionally managed in the pursuit of commercial profit. As Rowe (2004) states, "Modern sport has undergone a profound commodification process, where economic exchange value has become more important than its cultural and social significance."

In this context, fans are not active participants shaping football culture, but rather passive consumers who accept narratives constructed by dominant economic forces. As Crawford (2004) concludes: "Modern football fans are often seen as passive consumers within the global sports industry. However, the reality is more complex, with fans attempting to negotiate their identities within an increasingly dominant commercial context" (Crawford, 2004).

Unwritten Rules, Arrangement, and Mutual Understanding: A Joke between Brother

The conflict between PSIS and Persis is indeed a unique event compared to other rivalry conflicts in Indonesian football. For example, Arema and Persebaya, and also Persija and Persib, which often lead to dangerous violent incidents that even result in loss of life. Conflicts between PSIS and Persis supporters usually only occur during match days and never cause fatalities. Usually, a week before the match the tension between the two escalated, nevertheless, it is still at a safe level. Even though there is mutual teasing on social media or in person, before the match, the home supporters will escort the away supporters and welcome them. Even Informant D refused to call the friction that occurred between them as a conflict.

I do not want to call it a conflict. I believe other supporters also feel that this is just a regular interaction between brothers. We fight all the time over silly things, but we will always be brothers. Any feud should be over anytime soon, especially after the match. (Informant D).

These values are established based on their shared understanding in their respective communities. Apart from involving individual expression, this understanding also has aspects of community involvement. In line with Jenkins' statement which states that participatory culture changes the focus of literacy from individual expression to community involvement (Jenkins et al., 2009). They felt that it was a joke that naturally happened to brothers. They think that fighting between brothers is normal. Even though they fight, they are brothers and will always be. The two parties also have a mutual understanding that whatever happens, no life will be worth the riot. Creating a sense of community has become a well-accepted truth, regardless of whether it is done virtually or face-to-face (Jenkins & Booth, 2018).

Being adjacent to each other, causing two effects on them. On the one hand, they compete to show themselves as the best club in Central Java. However, on the other hand, it has an impact on the historical similarities they have. Historical and cultural similarities give rise to a sense of brotherhood among them. However, their rivalry is not only due to territorial proximity. This feeling has been passed down from generation to generation in families and supporter groups. Rivalry values are often passed down by families and also messages conveyed by the supporter community. The 4 out of 6 informants said that they supported and had feelings of rivalry with other groups because of the influence of their parents. All informants also conveyed the great influence of the supporter community and its figures in building this rivalry. Informant E said:

My father is also a Persis supporter. He took me to the stadium since I was very little and he is always excited to see Derby Jateng because he said that match is a noble fight to be the best in our region, especially because Semarang and Solo share borders. (Informant E).

Rivalry could be rooted in a region's proximity; some might view rival teams as other teams that share a border (Havard et al., 2020). Apart from that, fanhood can also be inherited through generations of families or relational groups (Fuschillo, 2020; Rookwood, 2019). These two factors influence the high value of rivalry between PSIS and Persis.

Apart from psywar in the stadium, social media also has the ability to increase the tension of the match, because many messages of rivalry and brotherhood are posted on social media. Easy access on social media also allows everyone to produce their own messages. The messages can be in any form such as banter memes, especially on Instagram. All of the informants said that they follow a troll account in social media and often tag their friends from rival sides to mock them. This happened usually a week before and a few days after the match. Besides tagging, they often reshare the meme on their Instagram Story as well. The banter that occurred in social media also affected the psywar on the stadium in different forms such as posters, banners, and also songs. This value becomes an unwritten rule for them to keep the rivalry alive as well as the brotherhood among them.

Henry Jenkins' participatory culture rejects the media-fostered stereotypes of fans as cultural dupes, social misfits, and mindless consumers. Instead, fans are seen as active producers and manipulators of meaning (Jenkins, 1995). It must also be noted that although Henry Jenkins' participatory culture discusses the role of new media in content creation by fans, the values and traditions of fans can also be considered as the product of participatory culture. This represents a participatory culture where individuals actively seek to

connect with other participants, either formally or informally, and these interactions can take place both online and offline (Jenkins et al., 2009).

They produce messages and identities through various means that involve active participation and creativity. Not only the rivalry, the feeling of brotherhood also could be seen as a product of inherent values. Through the message from social media and appeal from the supporters' organization, these kinds of values are shaped among them. The rivalries and competition can facilitate the exchange of ideas and opinions among fans, allowing them to contribute to the discussion and formation of their identity. They can take part in the creation of their sports club, whether directly or indirectly. Thus, rivalry and competition are not just a product of participatory culture, but also an important part of the participatory process itself. It helps build a strong and dedicated fan community, which not only supports their club, but also contributes to its formation.

In the Central Java Derby held in February 2023 in Semarang, both groups of supporters met with the police several days before the match. They are committed to escorting each other's supporters until they return to their city. This kind of communication and arrangement is often carried out before the match. Apart from the banter that is carried out, messages of peace and brotherhood are often conveyed through social media and community activities. One of the examples is the parades held during Car Free Day in Semarang in June 2022. The Governor of Jawa Tengah also showed up on this occasion to promote the message of peace between two supporters. A unique phenomenon is also found on social media when two supporters meet each other on the street when they wanted to put up banter posters mocking each other. Instead of bickering, they joked and laughed together, far from being violent. Even though riots are often unavoidable, both parties can restrain themselves so that the riots do not spread and follow the

instructions of the police that escort them. Informant A said he was once involved in the physical clash, he said:

Beside mocking my friend that supports Persis through social media, I was also once involved in a physical clash on my way back to Semarang. I was thrown by a rock and punched a few times. (Informant A).

Same occasion experienced by Informant B and C. They are all dismissed after the police separated them. The fun fact was that the PSIS Semarang supporters involved in that clash were actually being escorted as well by the Persis Solo supporters. Open fights one on one also occurred repeatedly among them. Usually the open fights happen if some people are offended by the banter between them and they want to handle it gently, fighting one by one -as per their perception. Based on the interview, they said that the fight is over when one of them is knocked down. They also believe that after the open fight, every issue should be over as well and make peace.

Although they carried out psywar on each other, the atmosphere that emerged was far from violent. Both parties realize that sometimes physical unrest cannot be contained, but such incidents do not need to be prolonged and discussed further on social media. Especially because it will be hard to control what happens in social media. After the match there is always a message of peace echoed on social media. According to Informants D and E, the riots experienced by Informants A, B, and C were between Semarang supporters and residents of the countryside and the undercurrents (arus bawah). Undercurrents are non-community groups that do not have a structure and therefore often become provocateurs. At that time, one of the residents of the countryside became a victim. His motorbike was burned by Semarang supporters. However, some time after that the Semarang supporters (Panser Biru) immediately compensated for the losses incurred (Putra,

2023). So that the riots did not drag on and end immediately.

Informant E said that sometimes the riots occurred because of the police's security model. The police several times restricted the away fans from coming in order to avoid riots. In fact, according to Informant D, interest in the Central Java Derby is very high and impossible to contain.

...riots usually occur within the city borders and the undercurrents. They are a non-community group, so they act anarchically. However, the police also often increase the risk of riots due to excessive restrictions. With such high interest, it is impossible to stop opposing fans from coming. By banning it, there are always some people who are reckless, and they have the potential to become victims of mobbings because they come in small numbers and are not detected. This happened to a Persija supporter named Haringga who was beaten to death by Persib supporters because he attended the match by himself despite the restrictions from police. (Informant D).

Something like this happened in the case of Persija and Persib where away supporters were prohibited from attending. There will always be a small number of supporters who are reckless and difficult to control. Because their numbers are small, they are vulnerable to being victims of riots and it will be difficult for the police to defuse the situation. Domesticating riots aids in surveillance by allowing for regulated observation. Outlawing protests may lead to covert activities, making surveillance more difficult (Oncevay et al., 2020; S, 2022). Domesticating riots also can aid in early detection and prevention strategies. Furthermore, banning riots may not address underlying issues leading to violence (Allie, 2023). In the case of the Central Java Derby and perhaps other cases of rivalry, both parties need to be monitored, not banned. Informant F said that the police's role was only to intervene if the riots spread. Apart from that, screening for alcohol, weapons,

stones and so on can also be carried out before the match to reduce the risk. Restraining an outpouring of enthusiasm has the potential to cause an explosion of riots that are difficult to detect and control.

All informants said something unique about their rivalry; maturity. All parties need to trust that they are both a mature group and do not need much rules from the police. Both parties have a mutual understanding regarding healthy rivalry. Whatever happens is never taken to heart and forgotten after the match. The most important thing is how they maintain their brotherly relationship outside the game. Informant E said that Semarang is the 'Gaza Strip' because incidents often occur and it feels like war for him. He once experienced his rear view mirror being broken, his motorbike tire being slashed, but he never gave up coming back to Semarang, in fact he always looked forward enthusiastically to this opportunity.

For me, Semarang is the Gaza Strip. I once experienced my motorcycle getting a bit damaged. But I never gave up coming back to Semarang, instead I always looked forward to coming back. This is what differentiates us from other rivalries. We have the maturity not to hold grudges and resolve any issues immediately. Because after all, football matches are essentially entertainment. (Informant E).

Both parties did not even think about the loss of life because they believed that the loss of life would not be worth it. They do this just for fun and to mock their rivals. This is the kind of atmosphere that they want to create, not just a tense atmosphere. They also realize that football matches should be enjoyed by all groups, from men, women, adults and children. Therefore, creating a comfortable match atmosphere for everyone is something that must be absolutely maintained, without eliminating the competitive atmosphere.

The findings of this study align with and extend several established theories in moral pedagogy and social learning. Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral

development (1981) are particularly relevant, as the domestication of Derby Jateng rivalry demonstrates supporters moving toward higher stages of moral reasoning—specifically the "social contract orientation" where mutual respect and collective welfare guide behavior rather than individual impulses. The role of supporter leaders in modeling respectful rivalry behavior mirrors Albert Bandura's social learning theory (1977), where observational learning and modeling by influential figures shape group norms.

The Stakeholder's Role to Domesticate the Feud

In light of the detailed analysis conducted regarding the roles of various stakeholders on the table below, it is unequivocally clear that the preservation of a healthy rivalry necessitates the collaboration and collective effort of multiple entities. Each of these entities plays a uniquely identifiable and absolutely vital role.

Table 2. The Stakeholders and Their Role on Domesticating the Feud

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
Police	• Grant permission for holding matches. • Maintain security along the Solo–Semarang borders. • Escort away supporters. • Intervene and restore order in case of major riots. • Mediate between parties involved if any losses occur.
Supporters' Community and Fanbase Social Media Accounts	• Build and reinforce community values. • Help restore the situation after matches. • Uphold brotherhood values while managing rivalry dynamics. • Influence followers not to take rivalries too seriously. • Take responsibility for compensating material losses caused by riots.
The Club	• Communicate messages of rivalry and brotherhood to the public. • Issue stadium conduct guidelines (do's and don'ts) to ensure smooth match execution.

Match Organizing Committee	• Promote sportsmanship to maintain supporter discipline and harmony. • Organize matches, obtain permits, allocate quotas for away supporters, and provide facilities for both clubs and fans. • Screen spectators for weapons and alcohol. • Coordinate with all relevant parties to ensure matches run smoothly. • Provide away supporter quotas in accordance with league regulations for better behavior monitoring.
Political Figures	• Maintain harmony between rival supporter groups. • Attend public events such as the Central Java Derby together and share these moments on social media to foster positive public perception. • Promote unity through public participation and inclusive messaging.

Based on table 2 above, each actor has a certain power to regulate this phenomenon. I take Hearn's understanding that the actor (or agency) is not a single individual but rather a particular group. When we talk about the police, we are talking about the police as an institution, not just one police officer. Bruno Latour in Hearn (2012) explains that power means relations, a more-or-less organized, hierarchical, coordinated cluster of relations. Hence, Jonathan Hearn (2023) further argues that in order to domesticate competition, power must be distributed. If power is centralized in one particular actor, there is a bigger potential for riots. For instance in this context, if power is centralized in the police, they may restrict the arrival of opposing supporters repressively. If so, the potential for riots between the police and the supporters will be very high. Likewise, if power is centralized in the supporter group. They may act arbitrary because no other party is given the power to supervise them. Such power distribution is able to domesticate a competition because each actor has the obligation to obey the power or authority of the other parties involved.

The arrangement in Derby Jateng is also related to the structure. The existence of a structure to divide roles, power, and responsibilities, competition can take place regularly and fairly and minimize conflict or conflict. Although there are many debates regarding the structure and actors to explain a social phenomenon, it can be said that these two things must go hand in hand because both structure and actors actually influence each other. The structure of the division of responsibilities for each actor provides limitations and opportunities available for each actor to play a role in domesticating Derby Jateng. While actors have the ability to ensure the implementation and compliance with the existing structure. Especially in the Derby Jateng, without a clear structure, each actor will not understand what needs to be done to carry out their role properly. While without actors, the structure will not have a significant meaning because there is no competent party to carry it out. Therefore, these two things must coexist dynamically so that the Central Java Derby can be run with a conducive trend.

The police, for example, are tasked with the all-important duty of maintaining order and ensuring the safety of all attendees. During match days, the police maintain security in Solo and Semarang. Especially because these two greater cities share borders, the police also secure the city's borderline. On the other hand, the supporters' communities, fanbase accounts operating on various social media platforms have the power to significantly shape the attitudes and behavior of fans. These platforms can provide a positive influence, promoting sportsmanship and respect amongst the fans. Supporter figures also play a vital role in keeping the Central Java Derby rivalry sportsmanlike as Informant C said. Apart from ensuring that the intense atmosphere of the rivalry is maintained, supporter figures often appear in public spaces to build brotherhood between the two groups of supporters. Although they are rivals on the pitch, off they are brothers who

share the same love for football in general. Messages like this have been created for a long time and have become inherited values passed down from generation to generation which are fully implemented by members of the supporting community.

I think the elders and the leaders of supporters' communities play a big role in the behavior of their communities. Their role is to direct the focus of rivalry on psychological warfare through psywar and jokes. They emphasized that this teasing should be limited to sporting matters so as not to involve personal emotions or violence. This contributes to an atmosphere that remains competitive but maintains healthy boundaries and respect for each other as human beings. Although they might mock each other, it is all just for fun. Luckily, this kind of communication rooted to a lot of the supporters and became a value for us. (Informant C).

Both PSIS and Persis actually never do banter on their social media official accounts to mock each other. However, fans on social media often modify messages related to the "Central Java Derby" which leads to ridicule. Modifications like this must be understood not as textual disintegration, but rather home improvements that refit prefabricated materials to consumer desires, and the message becomes something more than before, not less (Jenkins et al., 2013). The modification of the message by supporters is proof that the public is no longer just a consumer, but a part of what shapes, shares, frames, or reworks media content in ways that were previously unimaginable (Jenkins et al., 2013).

On Instagram, there are several supporter figures such as @kepareng_wareng (PSIS Supporters) and @nicholasandigo (Persis Supporters) who often carry out psywars on each other. They are big figures in their respective groups and many community members look up to them. Even though they do psywar, they took it as something funny. Comments that appear is a

response with other psywars, rarely do people feel offended. After the match or outside the match, these two figures display brotherhood which is represented by escorts video of each supporters, welcoming between them which creates a peaceful situation. One of the 'modified messages' they are campaigning for is #Marsose, this campaign was followed by many people and was once choreographed by PSIS supporters during the Central Java Derby at the Jatidiri Stadium in Semarang. Each supporter group perceives and responds to violence in football settings differently, which could indirectly relate to the likelihood of rioting based on their level of involvement and identification of culprits in violent incidents (Çeviker & Bozkurt, 2024; Fan, 2024; Lindström, 2021). This may be what causes the behavior of non-community supporters to be more anarchic than the other supporters communities.

The discussion can be expanded by addressing certain limitations, such as the absence of *in vivo* validation or comparative analysis with other biomaterials, to ensure a more balanced and comprehensive interpretation of the findings. Beyond the scientific scope, this study also highlights the importance of stakeholder collaboration in maintaining constructive engagement within communities.

The football club, in addition to its competitive on-field activities, holds a vital role in communicating messages that foster respect and harmony among supporters and the broader public. Through its integrated fan network and active social media engagement, the dissemination of positive messages can be amplified rapidly, shaping public perception and reinforcing the spirit of sportsmanship.

The managing committee likewise serves as an essential component, ensuring smooth event operations and compliance with league regulations particularly by allocating proper quotas for away supporters. This allocation enables better crowd management, supports behavioral

monitoring, and enhances overall safety during matches.

Moreover, the involvement of political figures contributes significantly to shaping public attitudes surrounding local derbies. For instance, the cordial relationship between the former mayors of Semarang, Hendrar Prihadi, and Solo, Gibran Rakabuming, during the 2022 Central Java Derby at Manahan Stadium demonstrated a symbolic act of unity. Their joint public appearances, including shared posts on Instagram, projected a message of harmony and maturity to the wider audience. Similarly, the former Governor of Central Java, Ganjar Pranowo, reinforced this sentiment through his participation in community events such as the "Jateng Gayeng" campaign, promoting togetherness among rival supporters. Such examples illustrate how political figures can influence civic behavior and encourage peaceful fan interactions, aligning with McMillin (2020) view that leadership engagement fosters civic education among sports communities.

Collectively, these stakeholders clubs, committees, and political leaders must collaborate to ensure that rivalries remain grounded within the spirit of sportsmanship and do not escalate into violence or social discord. This integrated approach demonstrates that maintaining social harmony in competitive environments requires both institutional coordination and active community involvement.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that football rivalries situated within participatory cultures can be effectively "domesticated" through shared power, mutual norms, and coordinated actions among multiple stakeholders. By examining the collaboration between police, clubs, match organizers, supporter leaders, political figures, and online communities, the research reveals how collective governance transforms rivalry from a potential source of violence into an avenue for identity formation and civic pride. The findings show

that the coexistence of competition and brotherhood is achievable when supporters are treated not as security risks but as active participants in maintaining order and cultural continuity.

This research also addresses a gap in existing studies, which have often focused on repressive or segregative approaches to managing supporter conflict, especially within the context of Indonesian and other Global South football cultures. By conceptualizing “domestication” as a multi-stakeholder, online–offline process rooted in participatory culture, this article advances theoretical understanding of how informal rules, shared rituals, and distributed authority sustain social harmony. Methodologically, the integration of digital ethnography and in-depth field interviews provides fine-grained evidence of how collective norms are negotiated in real time, enriching both fan studies and communication research.

The implications extend beyond football. The findings can inform matchday governance through joint supporter charters, structured away-fan management, and liaison forums; community policing through proportional and enabling presence; and digital platform governance through collaborative content moderation and early-warning mechanisms. Capacity-building programs for supporter leaders and conflict mediators, as well as policy adaptations of the “Derby Jateng model” to other high-tension events—such as festivals or political rallies—illustrate the broader relevance of this framework. While minor disturbances may still occur, distributing authority and trust across stakeholders reduces escalation and accelerates resolution. Ultimately, this study offers practical, evidence-based strategies to preserve passionate rivalries while fostering civic responsibility, social cohesion, and sustainable community well-being.

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