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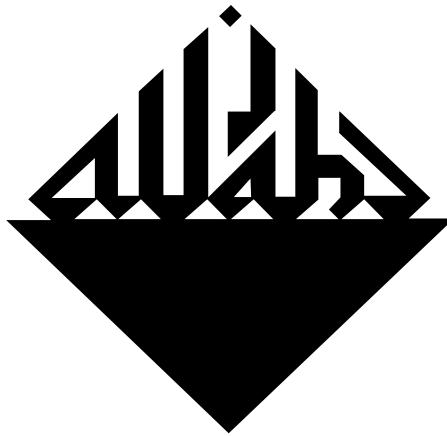
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STUDIA ISLAMIKA

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SI BULE MASUK ISLAM:
WESTERN CONVERTS TO ISLAM IN INDONESIA -
MORE THAN JUST CONVERTS OF CONVENIENCE?

M. A. Kevin Brice

CITIZENSHIP CHALLENGES IN MYANMAR'S
DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION: CASE STUDY OF THE ROHINGYA

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STRENGTHENING THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY
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ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY GAMES IN PALEMBANG

Friederike Trotier

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Friederike Trotier

Strengthening the Muslim Community in Indonesia and Beyond: The 2013 Islamic Solidarity Games in Palembang

Abstract: *The city of Palembang hosted the third Islamic Solidarity Games (ISG) in September/October 2013 and welcomed 39 nations to this sporting event. In particular, I seek to address the question of to what extent the ISG served as a tool to unite Muslims of Indonesia, especially of Palembang, and Muslims from participating countries. The motto of the games, “Unity in Harmony”, conveyed a strong desire to strengthen the Muslim community and identity in Indonesia and worldwide. However, several issues indicate a discrepancy between ideal of the motto and the reality of the games in Indonesia. The perceived exclusion of other religious groups and the discussion about the “appropriate” clothing of female athletes were among some of the sticking points during the ISG. Furthermore, the unbridled nationalism which was exhibited by local spectators whenever Indonesia faced Malaysia hints to tensions between Muslim communities of different nations.*

Keywords: sport, games, unity, community, Palembang.

Abstrak: *Kota Palembang menjadi tuan rumah Pesta Olahraga Negara-Negara Islam (Islamic Solidarity Games/ISG) yang ke-III pada bulan September-Oktober 2013 dan menyambut 39 negara di pesta olahraga ini. Secara khusus, saya ingin membahas soal sejauhmana PONII/ISG ini dapat menjadi alat pemersatu umat Islam Indonesia, lebih khusus Umat Islam Palembang, dan umat Islam dari seluruh Negara peserta. Semboyan pesta olahraga ini “Bersatu dalam Kerukunan” menyampaikan satu keinginan kuat untuk memperkuat komunitas dan identitas umat Islam di Indonesia dan seluruh dunia. Kendati demikian, beberapa masalah menunjukkan adanya ketidaksesuaian antara semboyan yang ideal dan kenyataan pesta olahraga itu di Indonesia. Ada perasaan agama-agama lain terkucilkan dan perdebatan soal pakaian yang “sopan” bagi atlet perempuan adalah sebagian hal yang mencuat selama PONII/ISG. Selain itu, nasionalisme yang berlebihan yang diperlihatkan oleh penonton tempatan kapan saja Indonesia menghadapi Malaysia meningkatkan ketegangan di antara komunitas Muslim dari berbagai Negara.*

Kata kunci: *olahraga, permainan, persatuan, komunitas, Palembang.*

الخلاصة: استضافت مدينة فاليمبانغ ألعاب تضامن الدول الاسلامية الثالثة المنعقدة في الفترة من سبتمبر – اكتوبر ٢٠١٣م ورحبت بتسعة وعشرين دولة مشاركة في هذه الألعاب. أريد أن أبحث بصفة خاصة إلى أي مدى كانت هذه الألعاب وسيلة لتوحيد المسلمين الاندونيسيين، والمسلمين في فاليمبانغ خاصة، والمسلمون الوافدون من الدول المشاركة. كان شعار هذه الألعاب هو «الوحدة في التسامح» يعبر عن رغبة قوية لتقوية الجماعة والهوية الاسلامية في اندونيسيا وفي العالم أجمع. ومع ذلك، هناك عدد من المسائل ما يدل على عدم التوافق بين الشعار المثالي وواقع الألعاب في اندونيسيا. هناك إحساس بالاستبعاد لدى الأديان الأخرى والجدل حول الزي اللائق والمناسب للبنات المشاركات، وهي من الأمور اللاصقة طوال فترة انعقاد الألعاب. إلى جانب ذلك، كان حب الوطن المبالغ فيه الذي أبرزه المشجعون المحليون كلما كان هناك مواجهة بين اندونيسيا وماليزيا قد أدى إلى زيادة التوتر فيما بين الجماعات الاسلامية من مختلف الدول.

الكلمات الاسترشادية: *الاسترشادية: الرياضة، ألعاب، الاتحاد، الجماعة، فاليمبانغ.*

A sporting event under the label of religion seems noticeable considering that modern sport competitions are usually organized along their disciplines (e.g. football at the national level) or as multi-sport events on a global or regional scale (e.g. Olympics, Asian Games, Southeast Asian Games) or a combination of both (e.g. table tennis World Cup). Hence, the Islamic Solidarity Games seem to create a new or at least different dimension for the organization of sporting events by granting an extraordinary importance to religion. The name Islamic Solidarity Games already emphasizes the main aspects of the event: firstly “Islamic” in that Muslim athletes from countries with Muslim populations are the target group, secondly “Solidarity” to underline the objective of a united Muslim community, and thirdly “Games” to indicate that it is a sporting event.

In this paper, I seek to analyse to what extent the Islamic Solidarity Games served as a tool to unite Muslims of Indonesia, especially of the host city Palembang, and Muslims from participating countries and which obstacles came up. Furthermore, this paper examines how well the games reflected Indonesia’s position in the Muslim world. The first sections provide background information on the history and imagination of the ummah as the worldwide Muslim community and on the history of the Islamic Solidarity Games and the initiators. The majority of the paper is dedicated to the case study of the third Islamic Solidarity Games in Indonesia beginning with the preparations and the implementation of the event, which already shed light on Indonesia’s role as a host. The motto of the games, “Harmony in Unity”, conveyed a strong desire to strengthen the Muslim communities in Indonesia and worldwide, and to highlight the publicized goal of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF) – the organizer of the games – as well as of the central and state governments of Indonesia and South Sumatra. However, several issues indicate a discrepancy between the ideal of the motto and the reality of the games. The perceived exclusion of other religious groups and the discussion about the “appropriate” clothing of female athletes were among some of the sticking points during the ISG and shall be examined as challenges to the motto. Furthermore, the unbridled nationalism which was exhibited by local spectators whenever Indonesia faced Malaysia hinted of tensions between Muslim communities of different nations.

In light of these diverse points of view on the games, I will answer the question: To what extent did the games truly achieve the idealistic goal of a strong and united Muslim community in Indonesia and beyond? One further intention of this paper is to draw more attention to the Islamic Solidarity Games because of its unique combination of sport and religion. The main sources were derived from Indonesian online newspaper articles since the Indonesian perspective was of particular interest. The official websites from the organizers provided further information. Furthermore, the researcher's experience in the city of Palembang and at the games' venues was added to the analysis of Islamic Solidarity Games in Palembang.

The Concept of the Ummah and the History of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

A core element of Islam is the concept of the ummah as a worldwide community of Muslim faith. The Qur'an as well as the Hadith contain several references to the Muslim community emphasizing not only the importance of unity and solidarity among all members of this community but even making the value of the ummah unquestionable for Muslims (cf. Akrim 2006, 385f.). Yet, the term ummah poses difficulties to be translated since it differs from the Western concept of community and is perceived rather as a synonym of the terms people, nation and state (cf. Akrim 2006, 387). Furthermore, throughout history there have been disputes on the interpretation and possible implementation of the ummah.

For thirteen centuries, the Islamic Caliphates represented centres of unity and solidarity among Muslims in spite of other powers and internal struggles. Nevertheless, the ummah is pre-eminently a spiritual principle and only secondly a guideline for society, politics and economy. Instead of having a close connection to a certain territory, the ummah is rather intertwined with Muslim adherents and the Islamic way of life (cf. Akrim 2006, 386, 401). Yet, with the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 a salient entity of Muslim unity disappeared, but the desire for a common framework to cope with the challenges of fragmentation and colonialism still prevailed. Hence, the establishment of an organisation to lead the ummah on a common cause has its legacy in the long existing idea of Islamic unity and solidarity. In addition, it also takes a bearing of the creation

of the League of Nations after the First World War. The realisation of a common platform for Muslim countries took shape in the time of decolonisation following World War II (cf. Akrim 2006, 396f; Ihsanoğlu 2010, 13-15). The strive for a pan-Islamic movement contrasted with the establishment of nation-states, but the creation of an Islamic institution followed in many ways modern concepts of organisation and representation as the history of the origins of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation will demonstrate.

The countries Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia functioned – though separately – as pioneers of the emergence of an intergovernmental cooperation between Muslim countries, which appealed to many other countries. The first Islamic Summit was held in September 1969 with 24 participant countries (interestingly without Indonesia, cf. Perwita 2007, 43). However, arising from the complex situation of the Cold War and the Six-Day-War, the preparation of the summit faced obstacles due to controversies expressed among potential participants. Nevertheless, the 24 government representatives not only concentrated on current political issues but also on the foundation established for a permanent organisation of Islamic affairs, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) (cf. Ihsanoğlu 2010, 19-23). Since its founding date in 1969, the OIC has developed into the second largest international organisation after the United Nations. The current 57 member states are for the most part Muslim-majority countries and represent four different continents (cf. Ihsanoğlu 2010, 1). During the 38th Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) meeting in Kazakhstan, the name of the OIC was officially changed to Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in accordance with the perceived functions and objectives of the body (cf. OIC Journal no 18, June-August 2011, 16). The emphasis on the term cooperation stresses the concept of the ummah and the OIC as its representative organisation as this quote from the website of the OIC demonstrates:

The organization has the singular honor to galvanize the Ummah into a unified body and have actively represented the Muslims by espousing all causes close to the hearts of over 1.5 billion Muslims of the world. (...) In safeguarding the true values of Islam and the Muslims, the organization has taken various steps to remove misperceptions and have strongly advocated elimination of discrimination against the Muslims in all forms and manifestations (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 2013).

Although not explicitly mentioned here, the idea of cooperation goes hand in hand with the value of solidarity, and Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu as the former Secretary General of the OIC perceives the organisation's establishment and development as "the concrete manifestations of the concept of 'Islamic solidarity' in the contemporary world" (Ihsanoğlu, 2010, 13).

In contrast to the noble ideas of the institution, the history of the IOC reveals several situations of conflict, usually connected to disputes or even violent confrontations between member states, for instance between Iran and Iraq. The cleavages within the OIC depict a salient factor for the organisation's low effectiveness and efficiency. The main opponents concerning the leading position and the course of the OIC are Saudi Arabia and Iran (cf. Haynes 2001, 153f.). Although a more detailed description of internal conflicts goes beyond the scope of this paper, the general tensions between members of the OIC play an important role when analysing specific events under the umbrella of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

The History of the Islamic Solidarity Games

In spite of all the conflict-prone situations, the value of solidarity was a motivating force in forming the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF) in 1980 during the Eleventh Conference of Foreign Ministers in Islamabad. The main objectives of the ISSF, which was formally established five years later with its headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, followed the idea of solidarity. Thus, the first goal as stated on the website of the OIC is to "strengthen Islamic solidarity among youth in Member States and promote Islamic identity in the fields of sports" (Affiliated Institutions, Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation, OIC 2013). Furthermore, the objectives indicated the attempt to give the Olympic ideals of tolerance and sportsmanship an Islamic frame and to inculcate these combined values to the youth of the member states. Some more general goals highlighted topics of common interest in the sport sector, namely campaigning against doping, promoting sports tourism and encouraging education. In the aspect of respecting environmental issues, the ISSF followed the OIC's commitment to sustainability (IOC Agenda 21, 1992, 22f). Other goals focused on the cooperation among member states on an administrative level. The last objective touched on the topic of women in sports. Although the ISSF

aims to develop women sports, it is explicitly mentioned that it has to be in line with Islamic teachings. In conclusion one can state that the ISSF tried to cover a broad section of issues related to international sport associations adding the label of Islam (cf. *Affiliated Institutions, Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation, OIC 2013; Ihsanoğlu 2010, 48*).

Surprisingly, except for the list of 15 targets, neither the OIC nor the ISSF provide further information on a website (in a Romanized script) about the actual work of the sports federation. Although there are regular assemblies, the sole public relations work seems to be through newspaper articles. For instance, the landmark decision to include the first woman in the executive committee of the ISSF reached the public through newspaper articles about Azerbaijan's successful bidding for the Islamic Solidarity Games in 2017 (cf. *Orujova 2013*). Thus, the ISSF as an organisation seems to operate in the background, putting emphasis on its flagship, the Islamic Solidarity Games, rather than acting frequently in public. In fact, the Islamic Solidarity Games are the only event shedding light on the existence of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation.

The International Women's Islamic Games (formerly Muslim Women's Games) are regarded as a precursor of the Islamic Solidarity Games. This international multi-sports event was initiated for the first time in 1993 under the patronage of the Islamic Federation of Women's Sport (IFWS, which was shut down in 2010, cf. *Koushkie Jahromi 2011, 107*). Nevertheless, the most fundamental differences between the International Women's Islamic Games and the Islamic Solidarity Games are the gender issue and the focus either on the Muslim individual or on the Muslim-majority country. Whereas the Women's Games provided a platform for female Muslim athletes without regard to their citizenship, the Solidarity Games are state-orientated. It means that the participating countries are member states of the OIC but the athletes do not necessarily have to be Muslims. The objective to encourage women's sporting activities is not the highest priority among the officials of the ISSF. The first Islamic Solidarity Games, held in Saudi Arabia, were not even open to female athletes. For the second games in Iran, competitions for female athletes were planned in six disciplines. However, as the games were cancelled over the dispute between Saudi Arabia and Iran concerning the terminology of the Arabian/Persian Gulf, the idea to include women was not realized

until the third ISG in Indonesia. The core element of the International Women's Islamic Games, was to provide a platform for female Muslim athletes to compete in accordance with their faith, was not transferred to the younger Islamic Solidarity Games but rather side-lined if not neglected. One might even note whether or not the solidarity aspect of the games had a predominantly masculine focus.

The first Islamic Solidarity Games took place in Mecca in April 2005 as had been agreed upon during the 2003 OIC Summit in Putrajaya, Malaysia (cf. Pakistan Sports Board 2005; Bernama 2013). The choice of Mecca as host had a high symbolic value, not only for Saudi Arabia who led the final medal score, but also for the other participating countries as Mecca embodies the centre of Islam. Together with the co-hosting cities Medina, Jiddah and Taif, Mecca provided a location-specific advantage to legitimize the claim of the Islamic Solidarity Games to unite all Muslim nations. Furthermore, the choice indicates a priority on the religious rather than the sporting dimension of the event. Beyond the competitions, the organizers offered cultural activities and art exhibitions to encourage transnational encounters and to strengthen a feeling of Muslim unity (cf. government Saudi Arabia, *Premiers Jeux de la Solidarité Islamique* 2005). The well-received first ISG followed the failed second games which were initially scheduled for 2009. The cancellation of these games in Teheran reveals the discrepancy between the noble ideal of solidarity among Muslim-majority countries and the harsh reality of foreign policy. After postponing the event, in the hope of settling the conflict on terminology, the warring factions were not able to reach an agreement. The ostentatious use of the term "Persian Gulf" on the logo antagonized Iran and the Arabic countries as the latter insisted on the name "Arabian Gulf" (cf. BBC News 2010). This dispute brought to light the regional tensions in the Middle East, rather than issues of the Islamic Solidarity Games. Nevertheless, it mirrored the embedding of the ISSF in political networks of the OIC member states and the politicization of a sporting event.

Since the third Islamic Solidarity Games are the subject of the following analysis, only a short outlook on the forthcoming event of the fourth ISG shall be provided. During the eighth General Assembly of the Islamic Solidarity Games Federation in July 2013, Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, was chosen to host the next ISG in 2017 (cf.

Orujova 2013). This early decision gives the country plenty of time to prepare for the event and points to the attempt by the ISSF to achieve higher professionalism.

To sum up, one can state that the history of the Islamic Solidarity Games has shown that it is not an easy task to create a sporting event which has not only to fulfil the political expectations of the OIC and its member states but also to meet religious requirements. The noble ideals of unity and solidarity among all member states of the OIC set the bar very high for each host of the games.

The Third Islamic Solidarity Games in Indonesia – The Preparations

Indonesia, with the largest Muslim population in one single country, has a long history of Muslim faith and of interaction with the Middle East. Over centuries the trade routes linked the two regions and pilgrims from the archipelago have travelled to Arabian sacred places. The most important source for religious thought in the archipelago has been the Middle East. For instance, in the 1920s sentiments of Pan-Islamism gained strength among nationalists in the East Indies. Yet, the Pan-Islamism movement did not have a strong long-term effect and lost its appeal to the main figures of the nationalist movement and the founders of the Indonesian state (cf. von der Mehden 1993).

This scepticism of Indonesian governments towards international Islamic organisations is also reflected in Indonesia's position in the OIC. The early years of the OIC coincided with the consolidation period of President Suharto's New Order government. The fear of Islam as a threatening force to the government in power resulted in a foreign policy which side-lined Islam and put a stronger emphasis on regional bonds with the other ASEAN states and religious pluralism (cf. Perwita 2007, 44; Leifer 1983, 139). The refusal to sign the charter of the OIC in the first place was a rejection of the classification as an "Islamic country". Even without signing the document, Indonesia was allowed to participate in the OIC. The character of this participation was clearly political and economic in nature rather than religious stressing the values of the non-aligned movement instead of pan-Islamic ones. Furthermore, it was in the mutual interest of the Indonesian leaders to keep the political turbulences of the Middle East at a distance (cf. Leifer 1983, 140). With the end of the Cold War and Suharto's changing policy towards Islam, Indonesia took a more active part in the OIC,

highlighting the importance to improve the image of the Muslim world. Yet even after the downfall of President Suharto, the religious factor was still of lesser importance in the foreign policy and in the participation in the OIC than political and economic factors (cf. Perwita 2007. 50, 64). The bid for the Islamic Solidarity Games placed Indonesia in an active role but conceivably, the country still followed a foreign policy with a low profile on the religious factor as will be shown in this paper.

The implementation of the third Islamic Solidarity Games in Indonesia faced some major difficulties. The initial bid made by Indonesia that was accepted by the ISSF placed Pekanbaru, the capital of the province of Riau, as host of the games and the sporting event was scheduled for June 6-17 2013. However, before the games were eventually held the schedule as well as the host city had changed. Initially, Pekanbaru's advantages were seen in its close location to Singapore and Malaysia and the region's long history of adherence to Islam. In addition, since Riau had recently hosted the 2012 National Sports Week (PON XIII), the existing venues had to be merely upgraded in order to fulfil international standards (cf. INAISGOC 2013 South Sumatera 2013). Yet, the construction sites constituted major obstacles to the successful implementation of the games. In early April 2013, the ISSF had again to decide whether to postpone the games. This time the trouble arose around the funding for facilities and infrastructure – a domestic problem of the host. The workers of the main stadium even shut down the building in protest since they were not paid. Soon after deciding to postpone the games to the end of September (after Ramadan), Riau again hit the headlines of Indonesian newspapers: the Governor, Rusli Zainal, was suspected to be involved in a corruption case. Adding to the funding failures, this embarrassment for the ambitious host brought consequences. In order “to save the face of Indonesia” (Roy Suryo, Youth and Sport State Minister, cited in Berita Jakarta 2013) the Islamic Solidarity Games were moved to Jakarta. Although the Governor of Jakarta at that time, Joko Widodo, considered the city to be prepared to host this international sporting event, the turmoil over the ISG hosting city was not over yet. Feeling insulted and degraded, the elite of Pekanbaru protested against the decision, and thus undermined the image of the Solidarity Games as being unified (cf. Harahap 2013).

The uncovering of the corruption scandal in Pekanbaru evoked memories of a recent high-scale corruption case at the interface of politics and sport. In the context of the 2011 SEA Games, the construction of the Hambalang sports complex in West Java led to the interruption of the construction process as well as to investigations by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). One of the prominent politicians involved was Anas Urbaningrum, who was accused and found guilty of corruption and money laundering (cf. Desca 2014). Not only was he an important member of President Yudhoyono's Democratic Party, but he had also held the position as the chairman of Islamic Students Association (HMI) between 1997 and 1999.¹ The mere possibility of having a new scandal linking sports, politics and Islam endangered not only a successful implementation of the Islamic Solidarity Games but also Indonesia's role and image among the member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

The consideration to have both cities, Jakarta and Pekanbaru, as hosts was dismissed – as was the idea to move the games to the capital. The organizing committee introduced a third solution in July, stating that Jakarta was not considered “ready” anymore (cf. Jaringan Berita Terluas di Indonesia July 2013). Instead, the former co-host of the 2011 SEA (Southeast Asian) Games, Palembang, the capital of South Sumatra, won the race. As a compromise, Palembang embodied the advantages of neither being the state capital inducing animosity nor the scandal city of Pekanbaru but rather representing the island of Sumatra in a neutral way. In addition and most importantly, Palembang had the venues meeting international standards ready for use. In Pekanbaru as well as Jakarta, the time to renew some facilities was running short (cf. Budiman, July 2, 2013). Hence, within less than three months, the government of Palembang had to prepare the venues and the city for the Islamic Solidarity Games as the event was now scheduled from September 22nd to October 2nd. In official statements, South Sumatra Governor Alex Noerdin demonstrated great enthusiasm especially with regards to a possible economic boom accompanying the games (cf. Idrus July 2013).

Although Palembang could draw on experience gained during the SEA Games, the preparations for the ISG held some new challenges in store, for instance the diversity of guests: the SEA Games had eleven participating countries, whereas now athletes and officials from almost

40 countries were expected. Furthermore, the Indonesian organisers wanted to live up to the high standard of living of the Middle Eastern countries. (cf. Pradipto 2013) In addition, the financial situation created some difficulties. The allocated sum of 200 billion Rupiah (about 12.7 Million Euro) was never fully released by the Ministry of Finance but reduced to 128 billion Rupiah (about 8.1 Million Euro) and distributed among the national committee (1.8 billion Rupiah), the central organizers (47 billion Rupiah) and the local organizers (79 billion Rupiah) (cf. Musthofid 2013). Hence, the organizers had to face funding shortages which could only partly be amended by the South Sumatra chapter of the National Sports Council (KONI) and regional sponsors. The long delay of the actual distribution of the money – the funds were disbursed less than a week before the opening ceremony – demanded a great deal of compromise and improvisation. Nevertheless, according to Indonesian news reports, the organizers did not voice any criticism. There was even a certain degree of pride about overcoming the obstacles to implement the games in Palembang as “[a]ny other administration would probably have been unable to prepare in such a short time” (Rita Subowo, head of the central organizing committee, cited in Musthofid 2013).

The struggle over the place and time of the Islamic Solidarity Games in Indonesia revealed the discrepancy between the ambitious goal to convey a positive image of the host country/region to a large international audience and the reality of corruption and disorganisation on the level of implementation.² Pekanbaru’s eagerness to use publicity was embodied in a book with the title “Riau Indonesia. Ready for an international sport event” which was published in 2011. The illustrated book tried to promote the province of Riau, emphasizing the so-called prime commodities, namely the natural resources of oil, gas and coal and the wealth of Malay culture. A large section of the book is reserved to the description of the sports venues, yet issues such as transportation, accommodation and shopping malls are of major importance drawing the attention to issues of touristic concern (cf. Zainal 2011). Hence, the book gives the impression at being part of a national competition for tourists and economical investments. Nonetheless, the project collapsed due to mismanagement and corruption. The whole process preceding the Islamic Solidarity Games revealed a great number of bureaucratic and political issues supporting the impression that

Indonesia would not be able to host a successful sporting event. This is in line with the image of Indonesia as disorganized and inefficient giant with a history of mismanagement and embarrassments in its efforts to host major sporting events. The Daily Times (Pakistan) for example called the stampede of the 2011 football final of the SEA Games to mind where two spectators died (cf. Daily Times 2013). For Indonesia, it was therefore also a question of image to accomplish the task of implementing the Islamic Solidarity Games successfully.

The Third Islamic Solidarity Games in Indonesia – The Implementation

The city of Palembang welcomed athletes and officials from about 40 nations (the sources vary between 39 and 43) to the third Islamic Solidarity Games. Some countries sent their deputies only for observation. The Indonesian newspapers announced the participation of 3,257 athletes, which is quite a small number compared with the first ISG in Saudi Arabia with about 6000 athletes (cf. INAISGOC 2013 South Sumatera 2013) or the 2013 SEA Games in Myanmar with 4730 athletes (cf. Mazwin 2014). This might be due to the planning uncertainty since the communication of the exact dates was given short noticed. In addition, the history of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation has shown that a cancellation of the games is altogether possible.

As already mentioned, these games were the first ones with female athletes. Although not all countries sent female athletes and there were far less women competing than men, nevertheless, these third ISG present a marked change to the first games. Another major shift in the official guideline was the incorporation of non-Muslim athletes. Although the official statistics do not permit a conclusion on the exact number, it is certain that there were non-Muslim participants. Already several weeks before the opening of the games, the shift of paradigm made the headline in the Indonesian news. The games were to follow the international rules – including the issues of “proper” clothing and the admission of spectators. (cf. *Pikiran Rakyat* 2013) The reception and controversies concerning this decision will be discussed later. While visiting some competitions, the researcher could distinguish athletes – especially among the Malaysian and Indonesian teams – with Chinese or Indian names. Although the name does not

necessarily indicate the faith of a person it can support an assumption. Djoko Pramono, the chairman of the central organizers of the games, confirmed that the “ISG is not a sports event exclusively for Muslim athletes. This is an event for countries, not bogged down by religious faiths. Several participating countries have included in their contingent a number of non-Muslim athletes.”(Djoko Pramono, cited in Idrus/ Musthofid 2013) Nevertheless, the games were clearly perceived as being a “Muslim” event.

In sporting terms, the ISG were a success for the hosting country as Indonesia led the medal ranking with 36 gold, 35 silver and 34 bronze medals, followed by Iran and Egypt (cf. Afriatni 2013). Yet, Indonesian officials, as well as athletes, perceived the value of the games mainly as preparation for the following SEA Games in Myanmar (cf. Jaringan Berita Terluas di Indonesia March 2013). This multi-sports event with competitions among the Southeast Asian neighbouring countries has not only a longer history than the ISG but also a higher level of prestige drawing from the regional character of the games. Nevertheless, the Indonesian spokespersons from the Olympic Committee and the Ministry of Youth and Sports displayed pride in the 233 Indonesian athletes and their achievements, which even surpassed the government’s initial target to finish in the top ten (cf. Afriatni 2013). The relative low degree of importance attached to the competitions’ results could be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand it seems to emphasize the “soft goals” of the games such as solidarity and unity among the participants from Muslim majority countries, on the other hand, it questions the general value of the games, especially in the context of reducing them to a warming up event for the SEA Games (cf. Jaringan Berita Terluas di Indonesia March 2013).

The latter issue finds further consideration when now analysing the attention paid to the ISG. Although national Indonesian newspapers and TV channels reported on the event, another competition produced greater press coverage and probably reached a greater audience, namely the Miss World beauty contest that took place in Bali at the same time (final on November 28th). Hence, mainly the press of (South) Sumatra (e.g. Sriwijaya Post, Kabar Sumatera, Palembang Pos, Sumsel Post, Tribun Sumsel) provided daily reports, adding detailed information on the competitions of the respective day. Furthermore, it seems that the bulk of reporting in the national press was already reached when describing

the precedent difficulties to organise the games. In comparison, the cover of the actual competitions appeared to be thinner.

With regard to the international attention paid to the event, online research led to the conclusion that the international press of Western countries (Great Britain, USA, Germany, and France) was not aware or did not pay any attention to the third Islamic Solidarity Games. Interestingly, the existing online articles with reference to the games in general only focussed on the cancellation of the second ISG (cf. BBC news 2010, Le Monde 2010, Karsh 2010). Thus, the lack of coverage from Western newspapers suggests that the press agencies would rather inform the public about disputes in the Muslim World than provide coverage about a sporting event under an Islamic umbrella, which in sporting terms is only of average quality. The Star, as an example of a Malaysian newspaper, provided only selective information on the ISG commenting mainly on the Malaysian participation, the objectives and results. The selective research indicated that the third Islamic Solidarity Games in Indonesia did not draw the attention of a wider public.

Provided that very few Indonesians from other parts of the archipelago came to Palembang to watch the games, it is salient to examine the attitude of the local residents towards this sporting event. Research of press and other sources as well as the researcher's own observation suggested that the lack of interest on the international and national level was also reflected on local grounds mirrored in the number of visitors at the competitions as well as opening and closing ceremonies in Palembang. The main audience of the competitions were pupils (SMP und SMA) as profiteers of ticket contingents given to the schools of Palembang. Another part of the spectators were (probably) local families and sport enthusiasts and sometimes a few athletes who were cheering for their teammates. Nevertheless, many of the competitions had only a few spectators. Even football, arguably the most popular sport in Indonesia, did not attract a great number of spectators. So, the matches with Indonesian participation were half empty and could not be compared to matches of the local team Sriwijaya Palembang, which usually filled the entire Gelora Sriwijaya Stadium. The ticket policy differentiated between disciplines, only charging money for presumably more attractive sports competitions such as football, badminton, and volleyball, whilst most of the competitions were free of charge in order to attract more visitors. Yet, most of the competitions did not fill the

stands. The opening ceremony, for instance, posed some difficulties for potential visitors. Firstly, the exact timeframe of the ceremony was not well publicized. Secondly, the tickets were expensive judged by Indonesian standards as they ranged from 250,000 Rupiah (circa 15€) to 1 million Rupiah (circa 61€) for VIP. One of the consequences was that many local residences came to the venue but did not join the spectators inside the stadium but rather spent their time at the night market outside. Inside the stadium, due to security reasons, no food vendors were allowed, which contributed to the attractiveness of the market stalls outside.

The empty seats in the sport complexes indicated that many residents of Palembang had other priorities than watching sporting games. As one citizen stated in an interview: “For the people of Palembang it is more important to earn money than to watch the ISG. They have to eat.”³ Nevertheless, those who attended the diverse competitions seemed to enjoy themselves, spending time together with their families or friends. Another aspect underpins the argument that the attention paid to the ISG was limited: In spite of the diverse guest countries, the games conveyed a rather local character since they most probably did not draw sports tourists from other parts of the archipelago to South Sumatra. In addition, people in other parts of Indonesia seemed hardly aware of this event.

This chapter intended to provide an insight into the different aspects of the implementation of the third Islamic Solidarity Games in Palembang, discussing in particular the attention or the lack of attention paid to this sporting event. In conclusion, based on research, one can state that the Islamic Solidarity Games took place successfully in spite of the difficulties in the preparation. Yet, the limited attention contributed to the impression that the Indonesian population has a low interest in the policies and activities of the OIC and its affiliated organisation, the ISSF. In the next step, the concrete messages of the games shall be examined to shed light on the official positions of the (Indonesian) organizers.

“Harmony in Unity” – Messages of the Games

As a side-effect of the moving of the Islamic Solidarity Games from Pekanbaru to Palembang the logo, as well as the mascot, underwent changes in which they were adjusted to the new host (the Ampera bridge of Palembang surrounded by crescents as the new logo and the Sumatra tiger as the new mascot). However, the motto of the games remained the same.

The ideal of “Harmony in Unity” survived the turmoil of the organisation of the games. This might be due to the universality of the motto without any specific link to a place or time as well as to the hope of the organisers that it will materialize in spite of all the adversities. (cf. Budiman, July 11, 2013) The terms harmony and unity also refer to the objectives presented by the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation where unity and brotherhood are explicitly mentioned. Nevertheless, the motto seems rather unspecific, lacking any kind of clear statement about the character of the games. It can be argued that this motto was meant to be conformist in all directions and sought not to offend anyone in order to avoid a conflict like the one between Iran and the Arabic countries over the use of the name Persian and Arabian Gulf which led to the cancellation of the second ISG. The emphasis on “Harmony in Unity” can therefore be even seen as a strong desire to avoid another dispute between participating countries and to please everyone with this new attempt to implement the games. Thus, it can be stated that the motto conveys the wish for the realisation of the ideals of harmony and unity not only among participants and officials but also on a larger scale between the member states of the OIC (cf. Herawati 2013). The politicians involved in the implementation of the games were eager to stay in line with the idealistic message of “Harmony and Unity”. During the opening ceremony Indonesia’s President Yudhoyono stated for example “With the games, let us remove the burdens of political interests and differences between countries. Instead let’s continue to support sportsmanship and solidarity” (Yudhoyono, cited in Herawati 2013). South Sumatra’s Governor Alex Noerdin added during the closing ceremony “The medals are not the main goal, but rather unity in diversity and solidarity among Islamic nations” (Noerdin, cited in Idrus, October 2013). The overt stressing of the need for harmony and solidarity leads to the assumption that there are tensions and latent conflicts between members of the OIC endangering the ideal unity of the ummah and that the politicians are in fact well aware of these issues. The task to analyse these tensions goes yet beyond the scope of this paper which aims at analysing the more concrete challenges to “Harmony in Unity” during the implementation of the ISG in Palembang.

The messages of the games tended to concentrate on the participating countries in general. Besides an expression of thanks during the opening ceremony the local residents were not well addressed during the games. Although the target to strengthen the Muslim community was overtly

stressed, there were no concrete community events taking place during the games, neither on an entertainment level, such as music shows, nor on religious grounds, for instance specially designed common prayers. Hence, the chance was missed to use the ISG as a platform for events and activities that would bring people together and foster the feeling of solidarity beyond the sport competitions and also beyond official statements. The organizers of the games were not able to accomplish the task to apply the idea of unity and solidarity of Muslims to the concrete situation in Palembang with addressing the local Muslims directly.

One major obstacle to using a sporting event as a unifier is the fact that it does not appeal to everyone in a community. To compensate, event organizers often create additional activities addressing an even broader audience. In Palembang this did not happen, rather the local Muslim community was left to itself to make something out of the games. The reason for this lack of community events is probably the chaotic run-up with very little time for the organizers in Palembang to prepare the games. One might wonder what Pekanbaru would have offered with smooth preparations, maybe some similar cultural events as Saudi Arabia had organised during the first ISG.

Yet, the ISG still provided the possibility to create a certain feeling of community. Although on a very small scale people came together, usually as a group with their family or friends as mentioned above, creating a positive atmosphere at the competitions. There was also the possibility for interaction between local Indonesians and foreign athletes without official platforms. Naturally, many volunteers had close contacts with the visitors, but also local residents had the chance to meet the guests. The main place of interaction had in fact neither a link to sport nor to religion but rather to modern urban lifestyle as it was Palembang's shopping centres (e.g. Palembang Indah Mall). In the mall especially young Indonesians were keen to meet the guests and take pictures together. Another possibility to see the guests was during the Friday Prayer at certain mosques in the city. These informal contacts appeared to have fostered a feeling of pride among residents of Palembang to function as a host. The hosting of the ISG entailed some more advantages for the city and its citizens, namely financial and marketing opportunities. That means on a smaller scale the possibility to sell merchandizes, food, beverages and the like, whilst on a larger scale Palembang received attention and became known beyond Indonesian borders. Furthermore, Palembang could proclaim the games

as a unique leisure activity diverting from the fact that the city does not offer many touristic sights. Yet, the Jakarta Post interviews suggest that residents showed ambivalent reactions to the ISG. Critics focused on the negative side effects such as traffic jams and detours, and some people favoured the SEA Games over the ISG because they considered the SEA Games to be more interesting (cf. Idrus September 2013).

The zooming on the local perspective on the games demonstrated a discrepancy between official messages put forward by the organizers and the actual perceptions and attitudes of the local (Muslim) community, who was part of the target group of the Islamic Solidarity Games.

The next paragraphs will elaborate on the concrete challenges to the ambitious goal to create an atmosphere of complete “Harmony in Unity”. First of all, one needs to examine the ways of implementing the messages during the actual sporting event. Secondly, the question arises in how far the games themselves already created a feeling of exclusivity in regard to the fact that it addressed a very specific group. Furthermore, as a sporting event with a natural focus on the body the games evoked controversies among Muslim adherents with special attention to the clothing of female athletes. A third aspect is the unbridled nationalism which was exhibited by local spectators whenever Indonesia faced Malaysia.

Challenge to the “Harmony in Unity”: Exclusivity – Muslims only?!

At first sight the label of the games as being “Islamic” appears to be quite unambiguous. Since the focus on Islam is already incorporated in the name of the games, it seems obvious that Muslims constitute the sole participating group of the event. Yet, it can be argued that the official position concerning the role of religion differs from the associations and expectations of people who are not directly involved in the games. A look at a number of mainly Indonesian newspaper reports suggested that it was a major concern of the organizers to stress the openness of the games regarding non-Muslims. For instance, the Jakarta Post quoted a chairman of the central organizers stating that “the organizers did not query about the athletes’ religions and they said it did not concern them how many non-Muslims were in the Games” (cited in Idrus/Musthofid 2013). Another example described the situation of a Palestinian non-Muslim athlete who, according to his own account, never experienced any difficulties in his national team concerning his faith (cf. Idrus/Musthofid 2013). The *Pikiran Rakyat* even proclaimed a

new paradigm setting apart the 2013 ISG from its predecessor because of the openness towards non-Muslims participating and also towards spectators having various backgrounds (cf. *Pikiran Rakyat* 2013). The organizers seemed to be especially keen to promote a very tolerant standpoint when facing demands from individual groups such as those concerning the dress code. This aspect will be further analysed in the paragraph on “appropriate” clothing.

It is noteworthy that this official guideline of tolerance was accompanied by the attempt to implement the games with a rather low profile concerning the religious faith. That means the sporting event was actually ruled by sporting dimensions. Religion seemed to be a mere “umbrella” to the event and as consequence, the competitions stood in the spotlight. The opening ceremony for example was much like other international multi-sport events including a parade of the participant nations under their respective flags, music shows and fireworks concluded the festivity. The role of Islam was mentioned in the speeches but not ostentatiously put forward. Thus, the oath in the name of the athletes as well as the referees was in the name of Allah but there was no religious figure like an imam present and the ceremony did not include a common prayer or the like. The competitions had even fewer hints to the “Islamic label” of the games as they followed international rules avoiding for the most part any kind of visible religious rituals or symbols. This observation was in line with Indonesia’s long lasting position in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the country’s foreign policy, both marked by the absence of Islamic rhetoric. For Indonesia, it seemed more attractive and more feasible to host a sporting event rather than, for example, the OIC Summit following its strategy to strengthen liberal values within the OIC (cf. Pitsuwan 2012, 334). The result of this low profile policy might be called a reversed exclusion because it seems to side-line those people with the wish for a stronger emphasis on Islam as the driving force behind the games.

These observations contrast with the expectations especially of non-Muslims who were not personally involved in the games. Although the comments and opinions of a small group of Christians (including Protestants and Catholics) in Jakarta and Palembang cannot be generalized, they can lead to some assumptions with regard to the perception of the Islamic Solidarity Games from a non-Muslim perspective. It seems likely that non-Muslims paid less attention to this

sporting event in general because they did not feel addressed. They perceived it as exclusively for Muslims in spite of the repeated message in the newspapers about the openness of the games. Furthermore, a Catholic resident of Palembang even expressed a serious concern about the Islamic Solidarity Games as strengthening an image of Indonesia as a solely Muslim country neglecting the existence of other religious minorities. Hence, the ISG with the messages of solidarity and harmony invoked in fact opposite feelings among people who felt excluded from the event because of their differing faith. Hence, it seems that at least some adherents of other religions than Islam perceived the Islamic Solidarity games and their motto “Harmony in Unity” as a means of marginalizing other communities. In conclusion, one can state that the attempt of the games’ organizers to demonstrate openness with regard to faith was met with concerns of exclusion by members of other religious groups in Indonesia. Thus, two kinds of exclusion came into being, on the one hand the one of people of another faith than Islam but on the other hand the official low profile concerning the faith also entailed a state of a reversed exclusion side-lining those people with the wish for a stronger Islamic profile.

Challenge to the “Harmony in Unity”: Debate on “Appropriate” Clothing of Female Athletes

Competitive sports with their rules and regulations have been argued to be a phenomenon of “modernity”, understood as political and intellectual changes starting in 17th century Western Europe. The introduction of modern sports to Muslim societies is therefore assumed to be part of the process of modernization usually intertwined with the colonial rule of one of the Western powers (cf. Radzi 2006, 1; 4f.). Among many Muslim societies, the clash of Western ideas concerning the body and physical exercise with their own values influenced by Islamic teaching has led to a controversial debate about the suitability of modern competitive sports especially for women. This latter aspect of Muslimah and sport is a very sensitive topic since it touches several contested areas such as gender and empowerment, politics and religious values, secular viewpoints and cultural traditions, as well as power relations (cf. Radzi 2006, 28; Benn et al. 2011, 1f.). In the context of this paper, the complex issue of Islamic concern for modesty can only be touched on but needs to be borne in mind when elaborating on the debates accompanying

the Islamic Solidarity Games. As already mentioned, the ISG hardly drew any international attention outside of the OIC member states. Yet, interestingly, the English Wikipedia article on the 2013 Islamic Solidarity Games has a paragraph on what is called the “Sports bikini controversy” (Wikipedia, 2013 Islamic Solidarity Games, 2014), attaching great importance to the debate on the “appropriate” clothing of female athletes whereas the respective Indonesian and Malay entries do not even mention the issue. Of course, Wikipedia is far from being a reliable source, nevertheless, there are seemingly different opinions on how to handle the controversy. The main article in English treating this subject appeared in the *Jakarta Globe* with the headline “Bikini Tensions Mar Islamic Games in Indonesia” (Agence France-Press 2013) describing the controversy between officials from countries with Islamic governments, who complained collectively, and the organizers of the games. According to the Agence France-Press (*Jakarta Globe*), the demand concentrated on the disciplines of beach volleyball, track and field, and swimming where all female participants were asked to cover up. The demand was refused by pointing out the decision to follow international rules also in regard to the dress code. Another controversial issue was about the separation of men and women – concerning competitions of female and male athletes as well as the spectators. Again, the paradigm was set that according to international rules, neither the competitions of female and male athletes were scheduled on different days nor male spectators barred from watching swimming or other events with female competitors (cf. Agence France-Press 2013; *Pikiran Rakyat* 2013).

The controversy revealed a discrepancy of expectations and ideas on how the Islamic Solidarity Games should work. The ideal situation of “Harmony in Unity” was so difficult to reach because already the common ground of Islam was disputed. The various member states of the OIC had and continue to have different concepts of how to follow Islam in the context of sport competitions. Although the organization committee presumably agreed on applying international rules (cf. Agence France-Press 2013) the balance between these rules on the one hand and personal wishes of athletes and demands of officials on the other hand appeared to be fairly challenging. Conceivably, government officials from Islamic countries were keen to implement strict rules like those in their own countries. Officials from other countries with a more heterogeneous population and a different

concept of the relationship of Islam and the state, such as Indonesia, evidently did not agree with those demands. The conclusion to leave the decision of clothing open to the athletes and to the officials of the country resulted in competitions with female athletes competing with or without a headscarf. Consequently, the actual competitions of the ISG mirrored the different ideas of “proper” clothing for female athletes. Thus, situations occurred where veiled spectators were watching veiled female athletes in their competitions or where male spectators were following track and field competitions with female athletes dressed accordingly to international standards. Among spectators, this did not seem to be an issue. It is most likely that those condemning this practice stayed away in the first place.

As a side note, it is interesting to mention that also some male athletes seem to have submitted to a certain dress code, such as swimming trunks covering the thigh up to the knees. Nevertheless, male athletes were left out from the debate on “appropriate” clothing. This aspect adds up to the impression that the news coverage on the debate about “appropriate” clothing was far from being in-depth, and any details on the debates among the officials remained vague. Conceivably, it lacks a closer and honest look at the issue, and the opinions of the affected athletes need to be taken into account. The concept of *aurah* (Arabic: عورة), which arguably contains the idea of covering the body and veiling, has not triggered any public discussion although it seems to be the most obvious bone of contention.

The controversy over the “appropriate” clothing provides an example how Indonesian politicians and other representatives navigate within the complex area of Islam, politics and event management. On the one hand, one major target of the event is to strengthen solidarity and to forge bonds between people from the different OIC countries. Yet, on the other hand, it is questionable whether a sporting event under a common religion is sufficient to put aside different opinions. In addition, the main source of contestation in regard to sport and Islam is the female body and the covering of this body. The fact that the third Islamic Solidarity Games in Indonesia did not determine the dress code of athletes leads to the conclusion that Indonesia as the host had enough influence within the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation to side-line the Islamic countries with their demand for stricter rules.

Challenge to the “Harmony in Unity”: Exhibition of Nationalism – Indonesia vs. Malaysia

The relationship of sport and nationalism has been the core of many debates in sport studies for the last several decades with the focus on nation-building (see for example Allison 2002 or Fan Hong’s edited volume on the Asian Games 2004). Not only international competitions on a big scale such as the Olympics or the football World Cup but also smaller ones in a more regional context can foster a concept of a nation as something visible and real and thus more than just an “imagined community”. Yet the relationship of sport and nationalism is more complex since different nations cherish different sports and the people of a nation are not homogeneous (cf. Smith/Porter 2004, 1f; Polley 2004, 14). These games that are assumed to trigger national pride have often also the task to create an atmosphere of international understanding. The Olympic Spirit for instance implies “friendship, solidarity and fair play” (mission of the Olympic spirit, Olympic Spirit website 2014) to contribute to a more peaceful world. Consequently, there seems to be a contradictory of such games to have the idealistic goal to create solidarity among participant nations on the one hand and to foster national pride on the other. On a smaller scale, the Islamic Solidarity Games on a small scale provide an example of the balancing act between the exhibitions of nationalism and the target of solidarity among all belonging to the Muslim community.

As has been mentioned previously the ISG aimed at strengthening a feeling of unity beyond nationalities and at creating an “imagined community” on religious grounds. Islam as the unifying factor should cross boundaries between countries and nations. Naturally, this is highly ambitious. Yet, the fans’ behaviour during some competitions demonstrated a different attitude. A good example is the sparring competition of Taekwondo. Athletes of different countries met in a one-on-one combat with several selection rounds. The competition was well attended by Indonesian spectators who cheered on their compatriots when they won. Besides this expected behaviour, even stronger emotions were displayed against Malaysian athletes at whom the Indonesian fans intensely booed. To a neutral spectator, the antipathy against Malaysia is more dominant than merely the support of the Indonesian athletes and furthermore, the atmosphere appeared most intense when an Indonesian and a Malaysian athlete

met in combat. On the one hand, this seems to be an expression of arch-rivalry, quite common between neighbouring countries, municipalities or cities but on the other hand, the question arises if there are conflict issues underlying this rivalry countering the goals of the ISG. Hence, this unbridled nationalism displayed whenever Indonesia faced Malaysia can be considered as a challenge to the objective of strengthening solidarity and unity. Yet, it seems harsh to judge the emotions of the fans in the way as to undermine the “Olympic spirit” of the Islamic Solidarity Games because this form of nationalism can be witnessed in numerous sporting competitions.

On a broader level, the expressed anti-Malaysia sentiments stand in line not only with other sporting events taking place in Indonesia but also with controversies about notions of culture and authenticity. An example for an even greater aggression towards Malaysia in the context of international games is the final of the football competition during the 2011 SEA Games in the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta. Given the heritage of this stadium as the platform of President Sukarno’s infamous anti-Malaysia speeches with the slogan “*gayang Malaysia*” (crush Malaysia), the tense situation in and around the stadium was almost inevitable. Not only were Malaysian fans warned not to enter the stadium but the Indonesian fans even drowned out the Malaysian anthem with their shouting of the word “*maling*” (thief) to discredit the Malaysian team and the entire nation (cf. Clark 2013, 6f.). This theme is linked to the popular approach of Indonesians implying that Malaysia has “stolen” Indonesia’s cultural heritage such as batik or wayang (cf. Clark 2013, 18) Hence, the sport arenas are only one place of the cultural battlefield of the two countries, another being the list of UNESCO (intangible) cultural heritage.

ISG: Strengthening the Muslim Community

The Islamic Solidarity Games demonstrate the complexity of an international event that aims at combining foreign and domestic policy with the imagination of the ummah and sports competitions. One aspect of this complexity is the existence of many different interest groups and addressees in the regard to the games. First, one has to differentiate between participants, mainly the athletes, who were direct addressees of the targets of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation, and non-participants, who were nevertheless considered to belong to

the Muslim community. The latter group comprises the Muslims of Palembang, of Indonesia and of other home countries of the participant athletes. Yet, this Muslim community is extremely heterogeneous. Even the small group of athletes, which can be narrowed down to names and numbers, cannot be considered as a “pure” Muslim community since – as has been described before – non-Muslims were part of the games as well. Thus, even if one considers the ISG as successful in bringing young athletes together it is difficult to speak about a strengthening of a Muslim sports community as it would side-line some of the participants. The inhabitants of Palembang on a small scale and of Indonesia on a big scale can be considered in similar ways. Although the majority of the population in the city as well as the country adheres to Islam there are considerable minority religions which might feel neglected. But maybe more important, the separation of people who feel attracted by sporting events and those who are less interested usually does not go along religious lines and therefore it is unlikely that the Muslim community of Palembang or even Indonesia as a whole could inculcate a feeling of pride to belong to the Muslim community. Furthermore, the Muslim community in Indonesia is far from being one uniform group. Most of the Indonesian Muslims belong or feel associated to one of the long established main organizations, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), but there are further branches and divisions within and beyond these two organizations. Moreover, the divisions of the Indonesian Muslims go along various loyalties such as ethnicity, region, political affiliation and religious groups with this last aspect referring to the different orientations of Islam that add to the complexity (cf. Mutalib 2008, 15). In essence, Indonesia as a democratic country allows various forms of identity and public opinion supporting the country’s diversity and its soft skills on an international level, but as a consequence to establish and uphold a coherent policy is a great challenge (cf. Laksmana 2011, 178.).

Not any less complex is the international component of the games. The example of the dispute over the dress code underlines the great variety in opinions and standpoints. The position of the Indonesian representatives to enforce a rather liberal approach is in line with the country’s role in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. A continued higher Indonesian engagement within the OIC may lead to a stronger emphasis on these democratic and liberal ideas.

The analysis of the Islamic Solidarity Games has shown that a sporting event is not an entirely successful tool to strengthen the Muslim community. The history of these games as well as the preparations of the third ISG lead to the conclusion that disputes among governments and local conflicts can hinder a successful implementation. Furthermore, the targets of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF) and the messages of the games voiced by organizers and politicians set the bar very high – not in regard to sporting accomplishments but rather to the moral ideals of unity and solidarity. The motto of “Harmony in Unity” underlined this aspect. Yet, several obstacles challenged the realization of this motto and the goal to create unity and solidarity among the participating member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). One difficulty was to convert the ideals to concrete actions such as community events that could have accompanied the sports competitions. Moreover, the lack of attention paid to the games at the international, national and local level questions the overall success of such an event. Nevertheless, the competitions themselves were successful and took place without any disturbances, even the Islamic character of the games was kept at a low profile. The obstacles during the implementation of the games were the dispute over the dress code for female athletes, the feeling of exclusion and to a certain degree the exhibition of nationalism. In conclusion, at a local level the third Islamic Solidarity Games in Palembang succeeded in bringing people together and thus creating a feeling of community – as an event for families and friends. Yet, this cannot be stated for the Muslim community of Palembang or Indonesia as a whole, mainly due to the lack of interest in the sporting event. At the international level, there prevail animosities which a sporting event is hardly able to amend. Bilateral or regional conflicts especially in the Middle East have a greater impact on the ummah than a sporting event. Nevertheless, Indonesia has the opportunity to build upon its predominantly successful implementation of the third Islamic Solidarity Games to enhance its role in the OIC and to contribute to a new imagination of the ummah.

Endnotes

1. For a more detailed portrayal of the Hambalang corruption scandal and the following trials see the homepage of the KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission) which provides a collection of relevant newspaper articles (<http://www.kpk.go.id/id>).
2. This is not a unique problem of the Islamic Solidarity Games as many examples of mismanagement of international sporting events can be named. The 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi and the 2014 World Cup in Brazil are the latest events with controversies and discrepancies between goals and reality.
3. Own translation.

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S*tudia Islamika*, published three times a year since 1994, is a bilingual (English and Arabic), peer-reviewed journal, and specializes in Indonesian Islamic studies in particular and Southeast Asian Islamic studies in general. The aim is to provide readers with a better understanding of Indonesia and Southeast Asia's Muslim history and present developments through the publication of articles, research reports, and book reviews.

The journal invites scholars and experts working in all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences pertaining to Islam or Muslim societies. Articles should be original, research-based, unpublished and not under review for possible publication in other journals. All submitted papers are subject to review of the editors, editorial board, and blind reviewers. Submissions that violate our guidelines on formatting or length will be rejected without review.

Articles should be written in American English between approximately 10.000-15.000 words including text, all tables and figures, notes, references, and appendices intended for publication. All submission must include 150 words abstract and 5 keywords. Quotations, passages, and words in local or foreign languages should

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All notes must appear in the text as citations. A citation usually requires only the last name of the author(s), year of publication, and (sometimes) page numbers. For example: (Hefner, 2009a: 45; Geertz, 1966: 114). Explanatory footnotes may be included but should not be used for simple citations. All works cited must appear in the reference list at the end of the article. In matter of bibliographical style, *Studia Islamika* follows the American political science association (APSA) manual style, such as below:

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2. Booth, Anne. 1988. "Living Standards and the Distribution of Income in Colonial Indonesia: A Review of the Evidence." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 19(2): 310–34.
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4. Wahid, Din, 2014. *Nurturing Salafi Manhaj: A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia*. PhD dissertation. Utrecht University.
5. Utriza, Ayang, 2008. "Mencari Model Kerukunan Antaragama." *Kompas*. March 19: 59.
6. Ms. *Undhang-Undhang Banten*, L.Or.5598, Leiden University.
7. Interview with K.H. Sahal Mahfudz, Kajen, Pati, June 11th, 2007.

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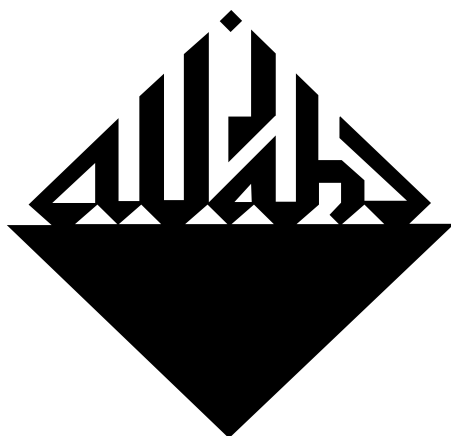
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مجة إنءونيسية للءراساء الإسلامية

السنة الثانية والعشرون، العءء ١، ٢٠١٥



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والطريق إلى نقطة التقاء الاسلام والءولة
علي منحنف

الاسلام والملايو والسياءة في المحيط:
سلطنة بروناي والاستعمار الاوربي في بورنيو
ءاءي ءارمائي
