

A Risk Situation Threatening Public Law: Example of Fanaticism in Turkey*

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the views of football fans regarding fanaticism, which poses a risk to public law. Data were collected from responses to the Football Fanaticism Scale. The working group consisted of Uşakspor football team fans in the Turkish Football 2nd League. Among the supporters of the team, 1568 people were interviewed on a voluntary basis. It was evaluated as a scale of 1530, which was answered completely. It has been determined that the fans have a high level of team belonging and a low level of violent tendencies. The violent tendency and team belonging of woman fans are higher than many fans. The propensity to violence among the fans in the 18-24 age group is higher than the violence tendency among the fans over the age of 30. The tendency for violence among self-employed fans is higher than among public servants and retired fans. Only literate fans have a higher tendency to violence than university graduates. The violent tendency and team belonging of the fans who are interested in sports are higher than the fans who are not interested in sports. The violent tendency of the fans who never go to the team's matches is higher than the violent tendency of the fans who constantly go to the team's matches. The violent tendencies of fans who watch the matches of the team on television are higher than the fans who do not watch the matches on the television. There was a positive relationship between the tendency to violence and belonging to the team.

Keywords: Public Law; Fanaticism; Violence Tendency; Team Belonging

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A. INTRODUCTION

Fanaticism can be defined as a state of extreme emotions, unconditional love, and extreme devotion. Fanaticism, which can also be defined as an antisocial disease, is common throughout the world. It shows itself more especially in the fields of religion, politics, and sports (İkizler & Tekin, 2008). Fanaticism is an antisocial movement that needs social approval and is closely related to violent people (Kazan, 2009). In young people, excessive passion and desire to prove themselves can turn into fanaticism over time (Hughes & Johnson, 2004). Fanaticism is a concept associated with football. The ambition to win, grudge, hatred, and revenge in sports can gain legitimacy through the identity of the fan (Arslan, 2013). Fanatics reject those who oppose their opinions (Timuçin, 2004). Fans are radically attached to their team; they never want to lose. They are much more emotional and aggressive than ordinary fans. They do not forget the matches played in the past seasons; they count the days to get the rematch (Dikici, 2014). Fanatics are an undeniable force that becomes the shadow player of the team (Küçükbiş & Gül, 2019).

Football is a force that can have a great impact locally and globally. It is the fanatical fans that create this power (Arslanoğlu, 2005). There is an important difference between fans and fanaticism. Excessive interest in the team affects happiness and sadness (Şahin, 2003). For fanatics, it is reassuring to be included in a group with the same characteristics as themselves. They believe that the way to gain status in society is to be included in a group. They feel happy as part of their team (Voigt, 1998). Where there is football, fanaticism occurs spontaneously and affects a very large audience. Football fans don't care about the fun of football; what matters to them is winning (Arıkan, 2007). They want to dominate the stands and be involved. They are disturbed by the presence of visiting team fans (Galeano, 1997). The reason why fans are overly interested in sports may be low self-esteem and low self-confidence (Demirtaş, 2003).

Fanatic fans are focused on boosting their self-esteem. They watch all the matches of the team without missing. They wear the team's jerseys; know the names and positions of the players in the team. By putting themselves in the place of the players, they take a share in the success achieved, thus increasing their self-esteem (İkizler & Tekin, 2008). Fanatic fans identify through the team. They constantly share their feelings in the society and they are accepted by the environment with these qualities (Or, 2009). One of the most negative consequences of fanaticism is that it causes a tendency to violence (Paksoy, 2014).

Literature Review

1. Violence

Violence is a phenomenon that can be seen anytime and anywhere. Violence is a situation in human nature and emerges through social factors (Ünsal, 2001). Tendency to violence may arise from economic, cultural, social, political factors and personality traits (Alkan, 1993). Violence can be seen in every society today. Violence and aggression in sports are increasingly common. Violence in sports is difficult to prevent. Violence in sports is caused by excessive use of force and can be defined as harming property or people (Spaaij, 2014). Violence in sports has entered daily life and is spreading rapidly. This increase continues in many sports branches, especially football (Zivanovic & Randelovic, 2011). Sport is also an important opportunity to prevent violence. Sport has the potential to be a tool to control or reduce harm (Weinberg & Gold, 2011). In football, the victory and financial gain over time have reduced the football game to the background (Veronica et al., 2019). Aggression has long been a part of football. Violence, both on and off the pitch, has become a social problem in recent years. With the rising tension in sports, violence is experienced among the fanatic fans outside the field (İnal, 2013).

2. Problem Status

Fanaticism in football has negative effects on sports in general (Jewell et al., 2014). There is evidence that the fanatical behavior of football fans increases social anxiety in countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and the United Kingdom. Similar problems are experienced at football matches in the Czech Republic, Greece, Denmark, Austria and other countries in Eastern Europe (Scholz, 2016). Fans' violence can occur in a variety of ways on football pitches. The causes of violence in football fields may differ depending on social conditions. Violence in football should be evaluated within the historical, economic, social and cultural framework. Studies in the literature on football fanaticism focus on the following subjects: Fan views on fanaticism differ significantly by gender (Öcalan, 2003; Can, 2017; Kural, 2017; Yıkılmaz, 2017; Şenol, 2018; Agusman & Setiawan, 2018; Öner, 2021; Celep, 2022; Çelik, 2022; Çakıroğlu, 2022). The tendency of fanaticism differs significantly according to the education level of the fans (Öcalan, 2003; Yıkılmaz, 2017; Öner, 2021; Çakıroğlu, 2022). The tendency to fanaticism differs significantly by age (Paksoy, 2014; Şenol, 2018; Urhan, 2020; Budi & Widyaningsih 2021; Çakıroğlu, 2022; Çelik, 2022). The fanaticism tendency of the fans differs significantly according to the

profession (Şenol, 2018; Çelik, 2022). Fanaticism levels of the fans who have a high level of belonging to the team are higher (Dimmock & Grove, 2007). The fanaticism levels of the fans differ according to the frequency of their going to the matches (Dimmock & Grove, 2007; Casper & Meneffee, 2010). In the current study, the relationship between the violence tendency of the fans and their belonging to the team was examined. It was examined whether the tendency to violence differs significantly according to the frequency of going to the matches of the team, the frequency of watching the matches of the team on TV and the status of doing active sports. The present study sought answers to the following sub-problems:

- *Do the opinions of the fans participating in the research on fanaticism differ significantly according to gender, age and education level?*
- *Do the opinions of the fans participating in the research on fanaticism differ significantly according to the frequency of active sports, going to the team's matches and watching the team's matches on TV?*
- *Is there a significant relationship between the tendency of the fans participating in the research to violence and their belonging to the team?*

B. METHOD

This research is a study in quantitative research method and survey model. The purpose of survey model studies is to reveal existing social events and social facts as they are or to report them directly to the public (Aypay, 2020). For this reason, in this study, fanaticism has been tried to be defined in terms of multifaceted variables.

The study group of the research consists of the fans of the Uşakspor Football Team in the Turkish Football 2nd League. According to the purposive sampling method, the scale was applied to a total of 1565 volunteers among the members of the Uşakspor supporters' association. 1530 scales that were answered completely were evaluated.

Football fanaticism scale: Taşmektepligil et al. (2015) Developed by. The scale (tendency to violence and team belonging) is two-dimensional and consists of a total of 13 items. Taşmektepligil et al. determined the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale as (.875). According to the confirmatory factor analysis performed on the fanaticism scale (GFI: 868, CFI: .859 > .850; RMR: .066 > .080; RMSEA: .086 > .80; χ^2 / DF : 3.12 < 5.00), the scale was confirmed in 2 dimensions and the goodness of fit values of the scale were found to be acceptable (Bayram,

2020; Hair, et al., 1998; Hoyle, 1995; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005; Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996). As a result of the normality test, the skewness (-0.43) and kurtosis (-1.83) values of the fanaticism scale were normal, and it was determined that the data showed a normal distribution. For this reason, it was deemed appropriate to perform parametric tests on the data. According to the Cronbach Alpha test on the fanaticism scale; It has been seen that the dimension of violence tendency (.865) and belonging to the team (.757) dimension reliability coefficients are high. The scales were applied to the researcher by interviewing the fans in the Uşakspor fans' association on different days. Before the application, the fans were informed about the purpose of the research. The fans responded to the scales in writing.

C. RESULTS

In this part of the study, the findings determined as a result of the analysis of the data are presented in the form of tables.

Table 1: Distribution of Fans by Variables

Variables	Number
Female	790
Male	740
Age	
18-24	990
25-29	178
30-34	116
35+	146
Unspecified	100
Employment	
Self-employment	248
Worker	227
Officer	112
Farmer	4
Retired	13
Unspecified	926
Education	

Literate	110
Primary Education	48
High School	588
Associate Degree	185
License	534
Graduate	65

Of the fans participating in the research, 740 are men and 790 are women. It was observed that male fans were more in number. Of the fans participating in the research, 990 are in the age group of 18-24, 178 are in the age group of 25-29, 116 are in the age group of 30-35, and 146 are in the age group over 35. In general, the fans are young and adults. Of the fans participating in the research, 248 are self-employed, 227 are workers, 112 people are civil servants, 4 people are farmers, 13 are retired, and 926 people have not specified their profession. Of the fans participating in the research, 110 are literate, 47 are in basic education, 588 people are high school, 185 are associate degree, 534 are undergraduate. 65 fans have a graduate education diploma.

Table 2: Average Opinions of Fanatics Participating in the Survey on Fanaticism

Fanaticism Scale Dimensions	$\bar{X}$	SS
Violence Tendency	2.08	.764
Team Belonging	3.24	.621

It was determined that the arithmetic average of the views of the fans regarding the tendency towards violence was at the level of 2.08 (low). Team belonging was determined to be 4.24 (very high) level. It is seen that the level of belonging of the fans to the team is high and the level of violence tendency is low.

Table 3: Comparison of Fans' Views on Fanaticism in Terms of Gender (t test)

Variables	Gender	$\bar{X}$	SS	T	P
Violence Tendency	Man	1.58	.627	11.65	.000*
	Woman	2.18	.750		
Team Belonging	Man	2.85	.640	11.25	.000*
	Woman	3.32	.587		

* $P < .001$

It was determined that there was a significant gender difference ($p < .001$) between the views of the fans regarding the tendency to violence. The violent tendency of woman fans is higher than many fans. The belonging of woman

fans to the team is higher than that of men.

Table 4: Comparison of Fans' Views on Fanaticism by Age (ANOVA Test)

Variables	Age	$\bar{X}$	SS	F	P	Difference
Violence Tendency	1. 18-24	2.15	.762	14.01	.000	1 > 4
	2. 25-29	2.04	.797			
	3. 30-34	1.95	.678			
	4. 35+	1.75	.698			
Team Belonging	1. 18-24	3.30	.584	18.32	.000	1 > 4
	2. 25-29	3.04	.714			
	3. 30-34	3.23	.545			
	4. 35+	3.00	.694			

$P < .001$

There is a significant difference ($P < .001$) between the views of the fans regarding the tendency to violence in terms of the age variable. It has been determined that the tendency to violence is higher among the fans aged between 18 and 24, and the propensity to violence is lower among the fans over the age of 35. Fans aged 18-24 have a higher level of team belonging, and fans over 35 have a lower level of belonging to the team. It was determined that the violent tendencies of the fans in the upper age group were lower.

Table 5: Comparison of Fans' Opinions on Fanaticism by Profession (ANOVA Test)

Variables	Occupation	$\bar{X}$	SS	F	P	Difference
Violence Tendency	1. Self-Employment	2.28	.777	9.80	.000*	1 > 3 - 5
	2. Employee	2.17	.782			
	3. Officer	1.73	.665			
	4. Farmer	3.03	.642			
	5. Retired	1.69	.600			
	6. Other	2.07	.754			
Team Belonging	1. Self-Employment	3.28	.590	6.86	.000*	1 > 3-5
	2. Employee	3.34	.608			
	3. Officer	3.03	.655			
	4. Farmer	3.25	1.11			
	5. Retired	2.62	.483			

	6. Other	3.25	.616			
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*P<.001

There is a significant professional difference ($p<.001$) between the opinions of the fans on fanaticism. Among the self-employed supporters, the tendency to violence is higher, and the tendency toward violence is lower among the civil servants and retirees. It was determined that belonging to the team is higher among the self-employed and lower among the civil servants and retirees.

Table 6: Comparison of Fans' Views on Fanaticism by Education Level (ANOVA Test)

Variables	Education Level	$\bar{X}$	SS	F	P	Difference
Violence Tendency	Primary School	2	0.675	9.02	.000*	2 > 3 - 4
	High School	2.22	0.744			
	Associate Degree	2.03	0.689			
	University	1.94	0.784			
	Graduate	2.05	0.786			
	Literate	2.66	0.917			
Team Belonging	Primary School	3.08	0.575	13.77	.000*	5 > 6
	High School	3.38	0.572			
	Associate Degree	3.27	0.619			
	University	3.1	0.638			
	Graduate	3.16	0.618			
	Literate	2.98	0.841			

*P<.001

There is a significant difference ($P<.001$) between the views of the fans regarding fanaticism in terms of education level. The tendency to violence is higher among the literate, and the tendency toward violence is lower among university graduates. It is seen that as the education level increases, the violent tendencies of the fans decrease. It was determined that as the education level increased, the level of belonging of the fans to their teams increased.

Table 7: Comparison of Fanaticism Opinions of Fans in Terms of Active Doing Sports (t test)

Variables	Doing active sports	$\bar{X}$	SS	T	P
Violence Tendency	Yes	2.12	.759	5.01	.000*
	No	1.80	.751		

Team Belonging	Yes	3.27	.605	5.51	.000*
	No	2.99	.685		

*P<.001

There is a significant difference ($P<.001$) between the opinions of the fans about fanaticism in terms of active sports. The tendency to violence among those who do active sports is at a higher level than among those who do not do active sports. Team belonging is at a higher level in those who do sports than those who do not. It can be said that the interest in sports is more related to the tendency of fanaticism.

Table 8: Comparison of Fans' Fanaticism Opinions in Terms of Going to Teams' Matches (ANOVA Test)

Variables	Frequency of Attending Team's Matches	$\bar{X}$	SS	F	P	Difference
Violence Tendency	1. I never go	1.82	.741	34.77	.000*	1 < 3 - 4
	2. Once a month	2.01	.659			
	3. Twice a month	1.95	.724			
	4. Three times a month	2.34	.755			
	5. Four times a month	2.37	.753			
Team Belonging	1. I never go	2.73	.709	135.22	.000*	1 < 3 - 4
	2. Once a month	3.11	.502			
	3. Twice a month	3.33	.485			
	4. Three times a month	3.50	.412			
	5. Four times a month	3.58	.424			

*P<.001

There is a significant difference ($P<.001$) among the fans' views on fanaticism in terms of the frequency of going to the team's matches. While the violent tendency of those who never go to the team's matches is at the lowest level, the violent tendency of the fans who go to the team's matches four times a month is at a higher level. While those who do not go to the team's matches have the lowest team belonging, the fans who go to the team's matches four times a month have a higher level of belonging to the team.

Table 9: Comparison of Fans' Fanaticism Opinions in Terms of the frequency of Watching the Matches of the Team on TV (t test)

Variables	Frequency of Watching the Matches of the Team on TV	$\bar{X}$	SS	T	P
Violence	Yes	2.11	.736	2.78	.005*

Tendency	No	1.98	.841		
Team Belonging	Yes	3.28	.583	4.67	.000*
	No	3.10	.715		

*P<.001

It has been determined that there is a difference ($P<.001$) between the views of fans who watch their team's matches on TV and those who do not watch their team's matches on TV. Those who watch their team's matches on TV constantly have a higher level of violence and team belonging than those who do not watch the matches on TV.

Table 10: Correlation Matrix

Variables		Violence Tendency	Team Belonging
Violence Tendency	r	1	.476**
	p		.000
Team Belonging	r	.476**	
	p	.000	1

*P<.001

According to the opinions of the fans, it was determined that there was a significant and positive relationship ($r= .476$; $p<.001$) between the tendency to violence and belonging to the team. It can be said that as belonging to the team increases, the tendency to violence increases, and as tendency to violence increases, belonging to the team increases.

D. DISCUSSION

According to the opinions of the fans who participated in the research, it was determined that the level of team belonging was high and the tendency to violence was low. In another study, which was different from this finding, it was determined that the level of belonging and the propensity to violence were high among the fans (Yıldız & Ataç, 2018). The reasons for the different levels of violence tendencies of the fans in the studies can be attributed to the personality traits of the fans, their self-esteem, self-control level, education level, and the different social environments. It was determined that the violence tendencies of the woman fans participating in the research were higher than the man fans. The level of belonging of woman fans is higher than that of man fans. Parallel to this finding in different studies, it has been determined that woman fans have a higher tendency to fanaticism and belonging to the team than man fans (Öner, 2021; Casper & Menefee, 2010). Unlike this finding in other studies, it has been

determined that man fans have a higher tendency to violence and team belonging than woman fans (Celep, 2022; Kaygusuz, 2022; Urhan, 2020; Yıkılmaz, 2017; Paksoy, 2014; Öcalan, 2003). The fact that male fans tend to be violent and belong to the team can be attributed to different personality traits, different education levels, and different socio-cultural environments.

It was determined that the tendency to violence is higher among fans between 18-24, and the tendency to violence is lower among fans over 30. Among the fans between the ages of 18-24, team belonging is higher, and among the fans over 35, the level of belonging to the team is lower. In parallel with this finding, other studies that it has been determined that the tendency of violence and team belonging of young fans are higher than those of older age (Urhan, 2020; Şenol, 2018; Agusman & Setiawan, 2018; Paksoy, 2014). In another study conducted against this finding, it was determined that violence tendency and team belonging were higher in fans over 30 years old (Kural, 2017). This difference between the findings can be attributed to the differences in the personality traits, levels of belonging, self-esteem and self-perceptions of the fans and their social environment.

Among the self-employed fans, the tendency to violence was found to be higher, and among the civil servants and retired, the propensity to violence was found to be lower. Those who are self-employed have a higher level of belonging to the team, and those who are civil servants and retired have a lower level of belonging to the team. In parallel with this finding in other studies; It was determined that the level of violent tendency and fanaticism among the supporters who were public officials was lower than those who were self-employed (Öner, 2021; Şenol, 2018). It can be said that the supporters working in the public are more able to control their fanatical tendencies. This may be related to the social responsibility the public profession imposes on individuals.

Among the fans, literate ones have a high tendency to violence, and university graduates have a lower tendency to violence. Fans who are high school graduates have a high level of belonging to the team, while those who are literate have a lower belonging. In other studies, conducted in parallel with this finding, it was determined that the tendency of violence among the fans was higher among primary school graduates and lower among university graduates (Çakıroğlu, 2022; Öner, 2021; Yıkılmaz, 2017; Öcalan, 2003). Among the fans, the tendency to violence among those who do active sports is at a higher level than those who do not do active sports. Membership in the team was determined at a higher level in those who do active sports than those who do not. While the violent tendency of the fans who do not go to the matches of their team is at the

lowest level, the violent tendency of the fans who go to the matches four times a month is at a higher level. In other studies, conducted in parallel with this finding; it has been determined that the fanaticism tendency of the fans who constantly go to the matches of their team is higher than that of fans who never go (Casper & Menefee, 2010; Kazan, 2009; Dimmock & Grove, 2007).

The violent tendencies of the fans who constantly watch the matches of their team on television and their belonging to the team are at a higher level than the fans who do not watch the matches on the television. In a different study conducted in parallel with this finding; it has been determined that the level of fanaticism and the level of belonging to the team of the fans who constantly watch the matches of their team on television are higher than the fans who do not watch (Dimmock & Grove, 2007). According to the opinions of the fans, it was determined that there is a positive relationship between the tendency to violence and belonging to the team (Urhan, 2020; Yıldız & Açak, 2018; Kazan, 2009).

E. CONCLUSION

Overall, the phenomenon of fanaticism in sports—specifically within Turkish football—is no longer merely a matter of social dynamics or supporter behavior; rather, it has evolved into a tangible risk threatening public law, social order, and public safety. To effectively mitigate and predict the destructive behaviors exhibited by fanatical groups, a comprehensive understanding of their personal characteristics serves as a crucial foundation. Demographic and psychographic variables, such as gender, age, educational attainment, occupation, level of belonging, and individual attitudes, form the primary basis accounting for variations in behavioral patterns and degrees of aggression among fanatics.

Therefore, in formulating effective public law policies and preventative strategies, further empirical research focusing on fanatical supporter groups—particularly those who consistently attend every match—is paramount. Such studies must comprehensively evaluate fundamental social-psychological dimensions, including levels of tolerance, empathetic capacity, self-esteem, and self-control among fans. By clearly mapping these personality traits and behavioral profiles, law enforcement authorities and policymakers can identify the root causes of violence with greater precision.

Ultimately, a well-defined and measurable profile of supporter personality will provide a solid scientific foundation for crafting public law regulations that

are proportionate, prospective, and preventive. Rather than relying solely on punitive enforcement within stadiums, these legal frameworks should address systemic risk mitigation through social interventions, legal education, and humane crowd management. This integrative approach is vital to safeguarding public rights, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring public security against anarchy driven by fanaticism.

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