

The Roots of Violence in the Rivalry between Football Club Fans and Supporters Using the ABC Triangle Theory of Johan Galtung

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Abstract

Sport is universal, loved by many people in almost all countries worldwide. As a sport that can be played by many people from all walks of life, football has the potential to be a sport capable of bringing about a spirit of unity and solidarity in a society. However, football can sometimes spark conflict and violence. Excessive football enthusiasm can lead football fans and supporters to become anarchistic and assault individuals who support other teams. This can result in material damages, injuries, and even the loss of life. This essay will examine football fanaticism and football fan violence. Using the ABC conflict triangle theory introduced by Johan Galtung, researchers will analyze how attitudes, behaviors, and contradictions that fans and supporters of football clubs own can trigger football fanaticism and violence. The researchers concluded that these three factors played a role in the outbreak of violence, coupled with other factors such as educational level and socio-economic conditions. The researcher believes that the government, through football organizations, can play a role in suppressing football fanaticism and preventing violence from occurring before, during and after football matches are held. As the core and main part of football, fans and supporters of football clubs must be self-aware and try to be more rational, calm, and not easily provoked to make football a sport that truly unites and is full of solidarity.

Keywords: self-awareness; types of violence; social mob; social order; solidarity

INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the most popular sports in the world, football fans and supporters are spread across various levels of society in many countries, so that football can be categorized as universal. As a competitive sport, intense rivalry between football clubs often occurs. Sometimes, this rivalry ends in violence that results in victims, this violence is perpetrated by fans and supporters of football clubs against their opponents outside the field, this violence is part of *football hooliganism*. Football fanaticism that leads to violence can occur before, during and after a soccer match, and can cause loss of life and property damage. Generally, the authorities where football matches are held deploy the police to maintain security and ensure a conducive situation, when violence occurs, security forces are often targeted and attacked by perpetrators of violence from football club supporters (Moorhouse, 2006). Football fanaticism such as chants performed by a person/group of football club

supporters, can be considered insulting and ridiculed by opposing groups, so supporters of competing football clubs can be provoked and attack the football group. However, violence between football club supporters can occur spontaneously without provocation, this can occur when the rivalry between football clubs has been longstanding and ingrained (King, 1995).

In this research journal, researchers take several examples of football fanaticism that lead to violence from England and Indonesia. The researcher chose these two countries because each country has the highest number of football club fan violence in its region. Researchers also chose England for historical reasons, the country is the origin of football fanaticism. Researchers use news and journal articles from reliable sources in writing about football fanaticism in these countries.

England is the country with the most cases of football fanaticism that leads to violence in Europe. Football fanaticism in England began in the Middle Ages, so England is called the birthplace of football fanaticism. The first recorded case of violence between fans and supporters of football clubs in history occurred in England in 1885. When the host Preston North End FC beat opponents Aston Villa with a 5-0 result, Aston Villa fans did not accept the team's defeat and began to attack players from the two competing clubs. As a result of this violence, many players and supporters of football clubs Preston North End FC and Aston Villa were injured. The attack by Aston Villa supporters lasted quite a long time because there was little understanding of football fanaticism and violence by supporters of football clubs. Entering the decade of the 1950s, violence supporters of football clubs in England began to increase. In the 1955 to 1956 season, Liverpool and Everton supporters rioted at the train station after the match and damaged a number of train chains. British police have begun to arrest and detain perpetrators of football fanaticism that lead to violence, the majority of which are young people. During the 1960s, an average of 25 cases of football violence were reported annually (Ingle & Hodgkinson, 2001; Ziaulhaq, 2021).

Generally, the rivalry between supporters of football clubs in England occurs between first division clubs (FA Cup, Premier League). An example of football fanaticism in England is the rivalry between Liverpool (Kopites), Arsenal (The Gunners), Manchester United (Manchunian), Manchester City (Citizens), and Chelsea (The Blues). British society is a multiethnic and multicultural society, football clubs in England often contract black football players. In the 1970s, black football players were the target of racist acts committed by supporters of the football clubs where black players played. The existence of racist acts committed by hardline fans and supporters has resulted in several English football clubs being banned from playing in Europe (Champions League) and subject to sanctions in the form of fines (Lewis, 2021). An example of football fanaticism and violence by football club supporters, which led to the death of many people is the Hillsborough tragedy on April 15, 1989. Shortly before the Liverpool and Nottingham Forest match started, many spectators outside the Hillsborough stadium forced field officials to open the exit door. The large number of spectators who pushed in made the situation crowded, many people started falling and being trampled, in the end 97 people died and 766 were injured, the majority of the dead were Liverpool (Kopites) supporters (Day, 2019). Liverpool supporters are known for their bad behavior (Collett, 2007), they often provoke opposing club supporters with yells and actions such as using provocative banners. The results of the investigation concluded that many Nottingham supporters who were worried that Liverpool supporters would act anarchically panicked and started pushing and trying to get onto the pitch as soon as possible, this resulted in many people being trampled and running out of oxygen. The Hillsborough tragedy demonstrated the incompetence of British police officers in dealing with large crowds of football club supporters who acted unexpectedly and anarchistically (Bidhuri & Gupta, 2017).

In Indonesia, football fanaticism began in the late 1990s (Imanuddin, 2022). Hardline fans and supporters of football clubs in Indonesia generally have a leader called the commander (capo) (Zaqi, 2020). One capo commanded many fans and stadium supporters to sing and yell and others to cheer up the team they supported. Violence perpetrated by football clubs fans and supporters are generally area-based, such as in West Java, Persija Jakarta against Persib Bandung (Jakmania vs Viking), and East Java Arema Malang against Persebaya Surabaya (Aremania vs Bonek). Recent events in Indonesia, where one of the contributing factors is football fanaticism and violence by football club supporters, was a tragedy at the Kanjuruhan Stadium on October 1, 2022. The match between Arema Malang and Persebaya Surabaya ended with host Arema losing 2-3. Thousands of Arema (Aremania) supporters who did not accept it ended up rioting and storming the football field. The Aremania pelted the opposing team's players and supporters with various types of items and tried to attack the field officers and the home team (Arema). The police, who saw the commotion on the ground also entered the area and fired tear gas to disperse the Aremania crowd. Spectators, Aremania, and Bonek panicked when tear gas was fired, but due to the insufficient number of exits and closed exits, the mass build-up was unavoidable (Hutton, 2022). Thousands of people crowded and trampled on those who were exhausted, out of oxygen, and exposed to tear gas. A total of

135 people lost their lives and 583 people were slightly and seriously injured in the deadliest football tragedy in Asia (Alam, 2022). The Kanjuruhan tragedy caused controversy, apart from the always hostile relationship between Aremania and Bonek (Duerden, 2022), the police violated FIFA regulations by firing tear gas at the stadium (Suryana, 2022). President Joko Widodo met with FIFA President Gianni Infantino, both agreed that football in Indonesia urgently needs reform and steps need to be taken to ensure the safety of spectators at football matches and fans of football clubs. The Kanjuruhan Stadium will also be demolished to build a new stadium that meets FIFA safety standards (Widianto, 2022).

Through this journal, researchers aim to find out why attitudes, behaviours and contradictions between fans and supporters of football clubs lead to violence. The researcher uses the ABC conflict triangle model theory (Attitude, Behavior, Contradiction), which Johan Galtung introduced. The researcher chose the conflict triangle theory because the researcher thinks that this theory can explain comprehensively how attitudes, behaviors, and contradictions shared between supporters of football clubs can trigger football fanaticism which leads to violence. The researcher, who is also a fan and supporter of the football club (Real Madrid), is interested in doing this research because football has a stigma as violent, and the researcher intends to find out why football has this stigma. The researcher did not take football violence as an example from Spain because the researcher avoided bias in this study.

From the stated research objectives, the researcher decides on "how do attitudes, behaviors, and contradictions drive fans and supporters of football clubs to commit violence?" as a research question. The researcher chose this question because the researcher believes that the three factors mentioned are key to triggering violence between supporters of football clubs.

METHOD

Researchers use qualitative methods. Researchers consider the use of qualitative methods to be appropriate because these methods can be used to answer research questions, through data collection such as journal articles and news about football fanaticism. Researchers used secondary data collection techniques which are data taken indirectly from trusted sources and third parties. The data used by researchers include journal articles and news reports.

Johan Galtung stated in the ABC conflict triangle theory that conflict and violence can be primarily triggered by a combination of three causal factors: attitude, behavior, and contradiction (Galtung, 2009). Researchers will discuss these three factors below. The researcher takes examples from Indonesian and English football in discussing aspects of attitude, behavior and contradiction as triggers for football fanaticism, leading to violence between fans and supporters of football clubs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Attitude

Attitude is part of the subconscious, therefore, attitudes, in general, are ingrained in humans and are not easy to eliminate and change, but can be influenced through actions, ideology, goals and sentiments owned by another person or group of people (McLeod, 2018). The attitude possessed by an individual also shapes the actions he takes. In the context of violence between supporters of football clubs, their attitudes such as hatred, dislike and distrust of opposing clubs and their supporters are the primary triggers of football fanaticism which leads to violence.

In Indonesia, the rivalry between Persija Jakarta against Persib Bandung, and its supporters, Jakmania against Vikings, can be seen that there is a grudge sentiment that Jakmania has towards Vikings, and vice versa. Football fanaticism between the two began to intensify in the 2000s. In 2001, when Persija fought Persib at its home ground, the Siliwangi Stadium, many Jakmania shouted slogans that offended the Vikings. This caused some Vikings to get angry, attack Jakmania members and caused many injuries. Since this incident, the relationship between Jakmania and the Vikings has always been hot (Saputra, 2022).

It could be said that the behavior of football fanaticism and violence among the fans of the clubs enjoyed when they fight against groups of supporters of opposing clubs. Residents of football clubs obtain a sense of satisfaction when they hurt opponents from the clubs they support, as a fulfilment and outlet for the attitudes they hold. Another psychological effect of this negative attitude towards opposing clubs is an increased sense of unity among those who support the same club, this collectively owned negative sentiment makes the supporters of the club more united and stronger in fighting opposing club supporters with violence (Ostrowsky, 2018).

Most fans and supporters of football clubs are young (under 40 years old) (Plenderleith, 2017) so that their attitude can be influenced by others. Supporters of these football clubs can be influenced to hate opposing clubs and their supporters and participate in acts of violence committed. A person's attitudes, such as fondness for the club and football player he supports excessively, can also make the supporter anarchist. Feelings of anger and disappointment when the club they support lose can encourage the person to commit violence and fight to the point of injuring the opposing club's supporters. Therefore, hatred can develop step by step, and violence continues to spread to others. When one person harms another or a member of a group harms another slightly different group, feelings of hatred may begin to develop. Various intolerant attitudes started to be created. Sociologically, prejudiced attitudes lead to acts of violence, because of the inner fear of the presence of "others" (heterophobia). Fear of self tends to see others as a threat (Haq, 2021; Navarro et al., 2013; Wibisono et al., 2021).

Most football clubs' fans and supporters consist of young men; they come together through their mutual liking and attraction to the football club they support and a sense of love for the game of football. Another fact that drives attitudes as a trigger for football fanaticism and violence are the level of education. Many football club supporters come from families with low economic levels and are lower-middle-class families. The low economic level owned by the football club's supporters resulted in him not being able to have a higher education. His low education makes it easier for him to be influenced by the traits, views, and actions that are owned and carried out by others (Baić et al., 2017).

Family attitude factors such as domestic violence can also make a person's character vulnerable to anger and violence. For football supporters, violence can be used as an outlet for their disappointment and anger when the club they support loses, the psychological effect they get is satisfaction when the enemies they hate, supporters of opposing clubs, are injured and in pain (Ostrowsky, 2018). There is also an assumption that if a football club supporter commits violence against a fan of an opposing club, then that supporter can be said to be manly (*macho*) and defend the honor of the club he supports. For young people who belong to the hardline group of fans and supporters of certain football clubs, committing football violence as part of their football fanaticism can be considered an attempt to prove their identity, like a brawl between schools. These youngsters need recognition to be accepted within the club's circle of fans and supporters.

The development of information technology, such as the rapid spread of the internet, cell phones and television, has made it easier for one person's attitude to spread quickly and affect more people. There are many *online* founded by supporters of football clubs, through these communities, hateful attitudes towards opposing clubs and their supporters can be spread more quickly and effectively (Brosnan, 2015). With easy access to information and communication, ongoing football violence can be recorded and disseminated to many people (Anwar et al., 2019). The development of information technology has made more people aware of football fanaticism and the negative impacts it causes, including violence by fans and supporters of football clubs. The perpetrators of violence can also call for reinforcements if they feel they are starting to get under pressure and lack people.

Behavior

Behavior is the embodiment (*manifestation*) of the attitude that is owned by a person. In football fanaticism that leads to violence, many behaviors can trigger and make violence worse. Seemingly harmless actions such as shouting chants and singing songs can irritate and provoke opposing teams. This then triggers dangerous actions such as beatings, persecution, and riots. The behavior of football club supporters who carry sharp weapons or blunt objects to injure opposing club supporters makes the violence worse and more dangerous.

When fans and supporters of football clubs gather in large numbers and meet groups of supporters of opposing clubs, riots can occur. The main trigger for riots is a heated situation, which can result from provocation by both parties and actions such as yelling and singing provocative songs (King, 1997). Football riots generally occur in stadiums on match days, the locations where they act riotously can be on the football field to the streets outside the stadium. Because most rioters are young men, their behavior can be very aggressive, coupled with socio-economic factors as the researchers explain in the *attitude*. People who are not part of supporters of football clubs can become victims of football violence if they person is in an area of rioting.

In Indonesia, matches between Persija Jakarta against Persib Bandung, and Arema Malang against Persebaya Surabaya are often accompanied by supporters who commit acts of anarchy. As sworn enemies, Jakmania, Viking, Aremania, and Bonek have each been involved in violence against opposing parties (Imanuddin, 2022). Not infrequently, the violence they commit results in many people being injured or losing their lives. Not only are supporters of opposing clubs attacked, but violence perpetrated by football clubs on the football field often targets football players from competing clubs, security forces and police officers, and ordinary citizens who are not

supporters of football clubs (King, 1995). Violence and riots in football stadiums could overwhelm the authorities in trying to disperse the riots due to large crowds and anarchy.

Another form of football fanaticism that leads to violence occurs in England. England has a large black population, and there is still discrimination against black Britons. On the football field, the racist attitudes held by some of the hardline supporters of football clubs have resulted in black players experiencing racist acts such as throwing banana peels and shouting like animal noises (Lewis, 2021). Many white supremacist and neo-fascist organizations in England saw an opportunity, they invited supporters of racist football clubs to join their organizations (Campbell, 2000). The existence of fans who act racist has made several football clubs in England get sanctions from UEFA.

In addition to the Hillsborough tragedy, which researchers have elaborated on in the problem identification section, examples of the behavior of football fans and supporters that resulted in injuries and fatalities occurred in the 1985 European Cup final, May 29, 1985 at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels, Belgium. Many Liverpool (Kopites) supporters entered the football pitch before Liverpool's match against Juventus started and ran towards the Juventus support area. Panicked Juventus supporters started scattering and trying to escape, however, due to the large number of Juventus supporters, the available exits were not enough, and because they were crowded together, the parapet at Heysel Stadium collapsed and fell on hundreds of Juventus supporters. As many as 39 people died, and 600 others were injured in the worst football tragedy in Belgian history (Mullen, 2015). Eyewitnesses stated that many of the Kopites drank when the tragedy occurred. The investigation concluded that 14 Kopites were guilty of the Heysel tragedy and were sentenced to 6 years on the murder charge. UEFA banned all English football clubs from competing in the European Cup for 5 years, while Liverpool were banned for 6 years as a sanction for the Heysel tragedy. The Heysel tragedy shows that the behavior of the drunk Kopites before the game contributed to the disaster that cost many people their lives.

Contradiction

Contradiction is when two or more parties involved in a conflict have different goals and interests. This can lead to disputes breaking out into violence and complicating de-escalation. Contradiction can help shape attitudes and determine behavior. The existence of differences in goals and interests makes conflict unavoidable.

In the context of football, the rivalry between fans of football clubs, such as Jakmania against Viking, and Aremania against Bonek, is a manifestation of contradiction created by the differences in the clubs supported between them. In a football match, both teams and their supporters want to win. Differences in goals and interests in football can make an attitude of dislike towards opponents arise. When the goals and interests of the football club and its supporters fail to be achieved, the disappointment they experience can easily turn into emotions that lead to chaos. In this situation, the existing contradictions increase the potential for violent behavior. Contradictions can worsen an already bad situation, as written by researchers in the Heysel tragedy, where Kopites aim to injure Juventus supporters. In contrast, Juventus supporters have the goal of escaping from Kopites.

Contradiction as a trigger for football fanaticism which leads to violence, has occurred since the Middle Ages. In 1314, King Edward II felt that his people were distracted by football and were becoming unproductive. King Edward II then banned football matches (Ingle & Hodgkinson, 2001), which was a new sport at that time. Angry British people eventually kicked the ball into the churches as a protest. The contradictions between the security forces, who wanted to break up the riots, and football club supporters who tried to hurt opposing clubs, also made dispersing the crowd more difficult because it was difficult to encourage and persuade them to spread themselves. Contradictions such as the desire to provoke fans and supporters of opposing football clubs and injure and fight supporters of opposing clubs are not in line with the wishes of match organizers and football associations who want matches to take place in a conducive and smooth manner. Because the football association did not get what it wanted, and there was violence that claimed lives, the football association sanctioned football clubs whose supporters committed violence.

Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation is studied by targeting the intensity of hatred (attitudes), violence (behavior), and contradictory contexts to create a new, more creative atmosphere (Haq & Sen, 2021). When attitudes have changed, behavior has become less anarchistic, and contradictions no longer exist, where two or more parties find a *common ground*, efforts to de-escalate conflicts can be made. In football, this can happen after a tragedy that has claimed many victims. After the Kanjuruhan tragedy, fans and supporters of football clubs who were generally hostile, namely Jakmania, Viking, Aremania and Bonek, united in an atmosphere of sorrow and prayed for the dead

and injured (Hastanto, 2022). The Kanjuruhan tragedy is a conflict transformation towards peace between supporters of football clubs in Indonesia. Researchers believe that after hundreds of people have been killed, more people will consider football fanaticism and its harmful effects. The Kanjuruhan tragedy is an opportunity for the world of Indonesian football to improve itself and carry out reforms. Football matches in Indonesia have been overshadowed for quite a long time by the possibility of violence and riots. Those who lost their lives at the Kanjuruhan stadium will die in vain if Indonesian football does not improve.

Solutions

Supporters and fans of football clubs as one of the foundations of football is the cause of football fanaticism which leads to violence, however, they can also be a solution. They have a perfect aim: to cheer up and support the competing team as well as them. However, it can easily be manipulated by anger, hatred, and disappointment. Therefore, educational efforts by football players and club coaches that encourage good behavior and condemn violence can be used to make football matches more conducive. Preventive efforts such as segregating football stadiums where two groups of supporters and fans of football clubs are separated, prohibiting (blacklisting) groups known for violence from entering/approaching the stadium complex, and increasing the number of security personnel can play a role in securing football matches. Conflict transformation, as the researcher elaborates with the Kanjuruhan tragedy as an example, can be used to encourage de-escalating tensions between two groups of supporters of football clubs which are generally at odds. It is also a form of the transcendence method in which two or more conflicting parties find situations that clearly show the tension's impact. The parties involved in the conflict can unite in an atmosphere of grief, which further encourages efforts to de-escalation.

If the security forces did not try to disperse the violence and riots on the football field, many people could have been injured and lost their lives. The security forces' response must also be professional and follow FIFA standards so that tragedies like those in Kanjuruhan and Hillsborough will not happen again. De-escalation and prevention efforts, such as meetings between football club support group leaders to increase solidarity and segregation of sections of football stadiums according to supported clubs, can play a role in suppressing football fanaticism. The government can also play a role in its country's football organization by providing education for fans and supporters so that they are not anarchistic.

CONCLUSION

From the three aspects that have been discussed, it can be concluded that the attitudes, behaviors, and contradictions that shape football fanaticism between supporters of football clubs can trigger conflicts that lead to violence. The attitude of hatred, anarchistic behavior, and the difference in the supporters' goals make them capable of committing acts of violence that are detrimental to many parties. These three things can make a football club supporter become militant and willing to commit violence if ingrained and rooted.

In the process of making this research journal, researchers only find out how attitudes, behaviours, and contradictions affect football fanaticism and violence between fans and supporters of football clubs. Researchers did not examine other factors, such as social and economic, except for a brief elaboration in the **attitude**. The researcher also did not take the example of football fanaticism and violence from the Spanish state because the researcher herself is a supporter of Real Madrid and does not want to be biased in influencing this research journal.

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