

# SPECTATOR VIOLENCE IN MOROCCAN FOOTBALL STADIUM: PREVALENCE AND REASONS

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## Abstract

In last decades, Violence in stadium become a complex phenomenon that requires an urgent intervention. The objective of current study was to determine the prevalence and critical factors responsible for violent behavior in Moroccan Football stadiums. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 144 spectators by the end of Boutoula meetings. The interview including questions about sociodemographic characteristics of participants and violent behaviors by determining the type of violence; physical, verbal, symbolic and cyber violence. Results show that different forms of violence are shown and greatly vary depending on the sociodemographic characteristics. A relationship between age and socio-economic level and soccer stadium violence. A significant difference in the prevalence of violence ( $p < 0.5\%$ ) between drug users and non-users was observed. According to these results, it seems necessary to adopt new strategies like mobilization of all sports and youth organizations in different districts of the city to raise young people's awareness of the phenomena of violence and hooliganism in stadiums, also the dissemination of sports culture through the media.

**Keywords:** Violent Behaviour, Football Stadium, Prevalence, Morocco.

## INTRODUCTION

The term “violence”, from its Latin origin, evokes power and use of the body to exercise strength, we measure its proximity to sport[1]. From a legal perspective, violence encompasses all delinquent acts. Sport is clearly part of a historical process of symbolic and ritual domination of violence and regulation of aggressiveness [2], it is at the heart of sporting activities [3] and one of the main ailments from which they suffer[4].

Historically, in the games and physical activities of ancient Greece, bodily violence (broken fingers for example) was tolerated and the games were sometimes accompanied by murder[5]. This violence was accentuated in the Roman era, particularly in gladiator fights, and was perpetuated during the middle Ages, where in many forms and in a number of exercises, we find the image of the duel and the war (Jusserand, 1986). Among these activities, one of the best known is Soule, the violence of which has justified the multiplication of bans.

In football stadiums, violence has existed for a long time and has changed in its form and nature since the 1970s in Europe. The events at Heysel in Belgium (39 dead and 200 injured in 1985), Sheffield in England (95 dead in 1989) or Furiani in Corsica (15 dead and 2,177 injured in 1992) underline the dramatization of the issues around stadiums.

Several factors are linked to violent behavior like mental diseases, drug consumption, psychological family history, alcohol consumption... [6–9]

Football is one of the sports, like hockey and baseball, where the confrontation of teams is accompanied by violence (insults, spitting, blows, fights, destruction of property, etc.) also involving supporters and spectators [10]. For football, researchers' estimates show that currently between 10% and 20% of matches experience violent incidents. On a long scale, it is nevertheless difficult to maintain that violence really increases on the stadiums (Thuillier, 1996).

Football proved to be the sport that best embodied the sense of representativeness of the units territories, thus giving free rein to local, regional or national entities [11]. The identification process, produced around teams as community representatives, constitutes, moreover, a characteristic of modern sport as Norbert Elias [2] has underline. In reality, the behavior of supporters, during the championships, whether they are joy and support, or opposition or even violence, are reinforced by rivalries existing between the different smooth communities, as has been demonstrated in various studies [5]. We are thus witnessing an intensification of the character of football, through identity investments that transform championships into real disputes for the supremacy of committed communities, with a special upsurge during the world championships, where free rein is given to the most grandiose demonstrations of national exaltation. The objective of current study was to assess the psychological aspects of violent behavior in soccer supporters in stadium

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Study Population**

The city of Kenitra is located on the Atlantic coast and bounded to the North by Larache, to the South by the Prefecture of Sale and to the West by the province of Sidi Slimane (figure1). According to the last general population and housing census 2014 (HCP 2014), the province of kenitra is home to a population of 1,052,177 inhabitants of which 49.97% are male. The active population is estimated at 62.4%. In this population, the unemployment rate is 14.4%. The work took place in the form of a survey of spectators during the football matches that took place at the Kenitra municipal stadium as part of the Moroccan professional Boutola 2016/2017

### **Measure**

#### **Types of Violence in Football Stadiums in Morocco**

##### **Physical Violence**

1. Fight between supporters of the same team or pushing one or more supporters
2. Throw an object on the lawn or break objects and equipment (seat, toilet, doors...)
3. Invading the Lawn
4. Physically assaulting law enforcement

##### **Verbal Violence**

5. Threatening other supporters
6. Insult or use racist or xenophobic remarks
7. Vulgar and insulting songs
8. Insulting supporters

## Cyber Violence

9. Threatening fans on the internet (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter...)
10. Insult supporters on the internet (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter...)
11. Spreading false rumors about supporters or players on the internet (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc.)
12. Insulting or threatening players on the internet (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter...)

## Symbolic Violence

13. Fan whistles are provocative
14. Fan chants are provocative
15. Tifos are provocative
16. Banners that insult or carry a message are provocative

## Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyzes are performed by Excel Software. We have used the chi-square test for checking the adequacy of a data series to a family of probability laws or for testing the independence between two random variables. The one-way analysis of variance test (ANOVA) was used for comparing the means over several samples.

## RESULTS

### 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics and Violent Behavior

The table represent the demographic characteristics of participants, the results of the survey show that the majority of violence cases are recorded among spectators aged 10 to 20 years old. The survey results showed that violence is noticed among single people Hooliganism is characterized by aggressive behaviors produced by an individual and which interact with situational factors. As mentioned in the figure 4, the majority of agressed people have primary and secondary level school followed by illiterate spectators. According to the results, there is a significant difference ( $p < 0.5\%$ ) in the number of cases of violence among drug users compared to non-drug users (table 1).

**Table 1: Relationship between Sociodemographic Characteristics and Violent Behaviors in Studied Population of Spectators**

		Violence		p-value
		Yes	No	
Gender	Female	16	12	p<0.05
	Male	72	44	
Age classes (years)	10-20	56	20	p<0.05
	21-30	21	19	
	31-40	10	14	
	40 and more	1	3	
Family situation	Single	72	33	p<0.05
	Married	10	19	
	divorced	6	4	
Origin	urban	60	24	p>0.05
	rural	28	30	
Level study	primary	45	10	p>0.05
	Middle school and higher	43	44	

Professional activity	Without work	32	12	p>0.05
	work	56	42	
Psychological family history	without	42	34	p>0.05
	with	46	20	
Drug consumption	No	36	38	p<0.05
	Yes	52	16	

## 2. Type of Violence

The figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 show the distributions of spectators according to different types of violence. The results confirm a half population prevalence of

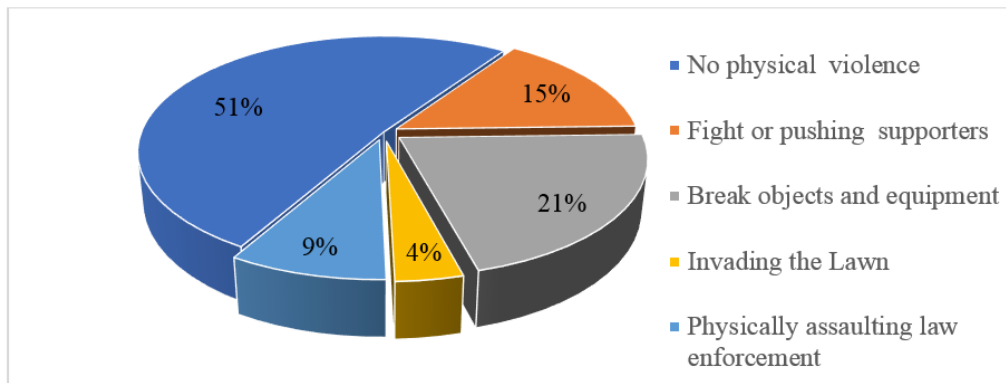


Figure 1: Distribution of Spectators According to type of Physical Violence

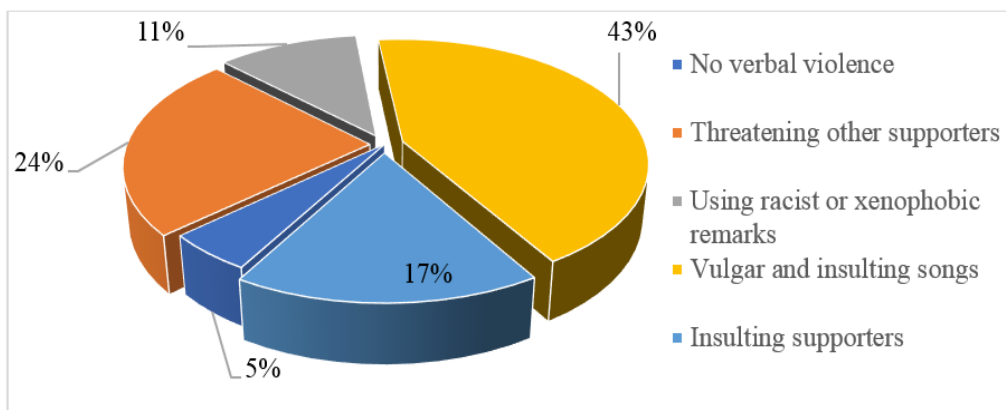


Figure 2: Distribution of Spectators According to type of Verbal Violence

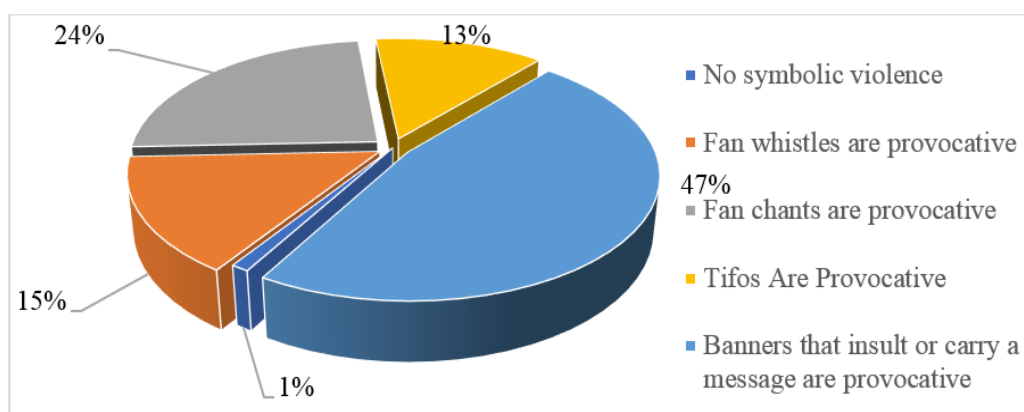
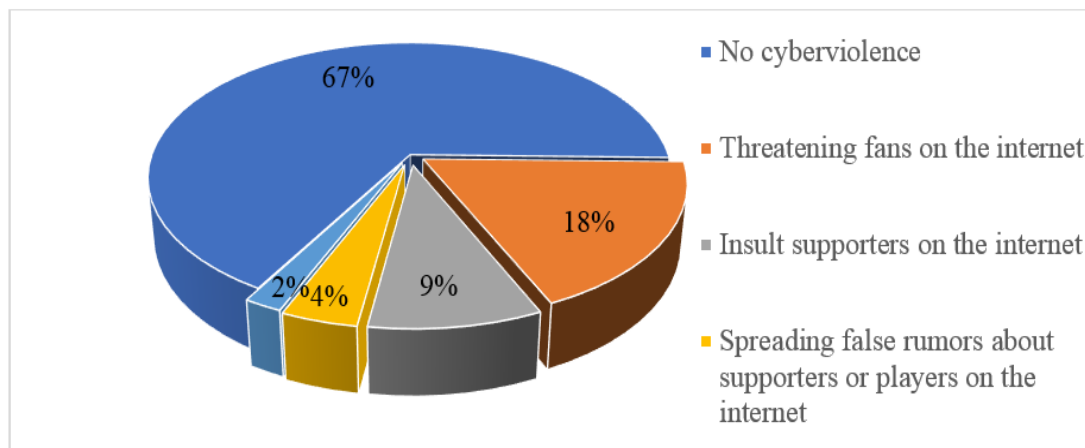


Figure 3: Distribution of Spectators According to type of Symbolic Violence



**Figure 4: Distribution of Spectators According to Cyber violence**

## DISCUSSION

Generally, Sport and particularly football must promote the development of physical abilities, such as strength, flexibility and liveliness of reflexes, but also that of moral qualities, such as self-confidence, will, discipline, taste for effort, self-control, tolerance and altruism.

First, the reasons that push young people to have aggressive behavior during football matches are linked to the bad management of clubs and inadequate sports infrastructure. Then, arbitration is cited as the main cause of the triggering of the violence at football matches. This highlights the disagreement of individuals chosen by the referee against the player.

Finally, hooliganism (behavior of hooligans; a person or group of people who engage in acts of violence that damage public goods) is mainly due to social problems, economic and political, unemployment, lack of means of leisure and of distraction.

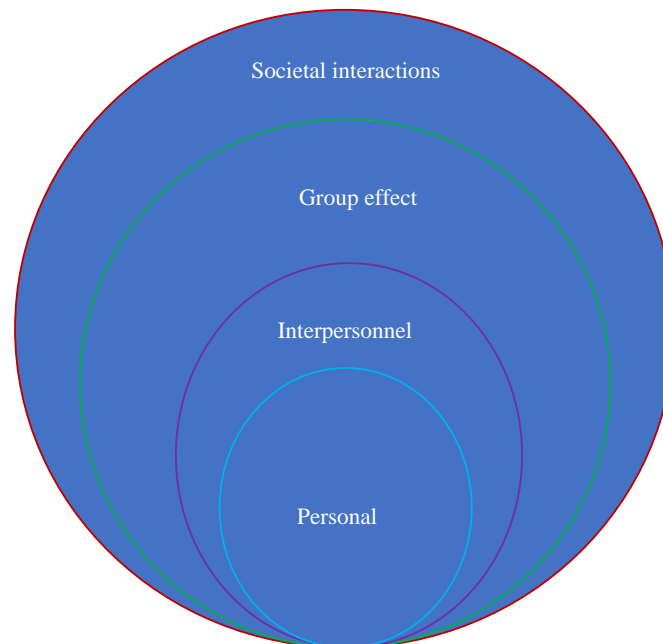
The stadium is the only place where young people can express, externalize their distress (not knowing what to do). Several studies in animal models have demonstrated dimorphism in the gender [12,13], dimorphism in the behavior

As for the implementation of its policy and Based on a logic of risk management, this policy is based on legal treatment focused on the repression of deviant behavior and on situational prevention. This type of prevention tends to reduce delinquent opportunities by controlling groups of supporters perceived as threatening, by adapting the architecture of stadiums and by developing video surveillance.

The aim is to guarantee the security of stadiums as widely as possible by considering addressing not only proven acts of delinquency, but also behavior which would present a security risk. This approach is part of a general context of treating delinquency and the emergence of the concept of risk in public policies [14–16]

Other studies performed in the same region of the study have shown a deficiency in vitamin D in this population and perhaps physiological parameters are related to violent behavior [17,18] Combatting violence in stadiums requires repressive measures, these measures are accompanied by preventive measures to identify dangerous individuals and groups with, in particular, the installation of video surveillance devices in stadiums and the integration of police officers into the most

violent groups of supporters. Other measures are imposed in the layout of stadiums in order to filter spectators and separate supporters of invited teams and local teams. At another level, national football federations impose, during international tournaments, increasingly secure stadiums meeting precise standards. Thus, to prepare for the organization of the 2030 football world championship, Morocco has created a set of renovated stadiums capable of accommodating 40,000 to 100,000 spectators in maximum security conditions with the arrangement of the stands by separations between the stands and limitation of standing places.



**Figure 5: A Socio-Ecological Model of Eventual Reasons Responsible of Violent Behavior in Studied Spectators**

The question of major sporting events and in particular football, the universal sport bringing together the most spectators, has become a planning issue to limit violent confrontations and try to create friendly, festive spaces. This desire to reconcile celebrations and security leads in certain cases, notably in the option chosen by the English, to make sporting events a place reserved for the middle and wealthy classes of the population and to reduce the presence of the working classes. Often justified by security issues, this regulation by the market which selects stadium clientele is less retained in the countries of southern Europe, where we find the largest and most diverse audiences[19].

In 2000, Brick observed that authorities became less tolerant of anti-social behavior in football stadiums[20]. Additionally, due to the severity of football hooliganism, over the last decade clubs have started to employ more police officers in football stadiums. an attempt to reduce violence against spectators. According to Penn, the safety of supporters is ensured through a dual strategy of management and cooperative policing. However, this "double strategy" is considered a bit ambiguous by spectators. According to a study carried out by Froadsick, to avoid attacks and injuries, supporters must be separated inside and outside the stadium [21].

We can resume the different implicated factors in violent behavior in the model represented in the figure 5.

According to these factors, we can propose some solutions to prevent violence in sport stadiums:

- Reinforce the security in the stadium by installing cameras at the entrance and inside the stadiums.
- Adopt a law that prohibits these acts by applying penalties severe, then declare it to put all individuals in information.
- The press must continue to work in the direction of training, the education and information of the public, players, coaches and leading sports. This press action will serve to raise awareness football environment, and generally whether it is any sport.
- The government must take seriously this phenomenon which threatens (threatens) our stadiums and deprives us of peacefully supporting our favorite teams. The authorities must take into account the violence in stadiums and during sporting events.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, a call of mobilization of all sports and youth organizations in different districts of the city to raise young people's awareness of the phenomena of violence and hooliganism in stadiums, the dissemination of sports culture through the media, involvement of federations, leagues and clubs to fully assume their pedagogical and technical responsibilities vis-à-vis players, teams and the public, the promotion of physical education in schools and local areas in neighborhoods popular and taking advantage of the successful experiences of certain countries in this area.

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