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Playing by the Book(s)

The Unwritten Rules of Football in Turkey

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The Unwritten Rules of Football in Turkey

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Abstract
This article investigates the tensions between official rules of Fair Play in football (soccer) and on-the-ground formations of the notion of fairness in Turkish football. I contend that while fair play guidelines prescribe universalists standards of ethical behavior for all football actors, there are multiple instances in mundane football events which result in players', fans' or other commentators' variant appreciations of the ethical. Specific contingencies give birth to alternative formations of fairness leading us to consider how ethics might be a matter of constant negotiation rather than of preset verdicts. Using legal anthropology's insights on legal pluralism and sports philosophy's discussion of conventionalism, I focus on specific footballing instances in Turkish football and offer various social rationales in regard to how multiple ethical verdicts might be reached. In this discussion, I include how some footballing conventions in Turkey come into conversation with the written rules of football and set guidelines of fair play to show that people draw on different sets of rules (written and unwritten) in their deliberation of fair action, fair play awards and ethics. This article is the result of a year's fieldwork in Istanbul beginning September 2010 towards a doctoral dissertation in anthropology on fair play and fairness in football in Turkey.

Keywords: Fairness, Fair Play, Turkey, Rules, Convention, Pluralism

Resumen
Este artículo analiza las tensiones entre reglas oficiales del Fair Play en el fútbol (soccer) y las idea de fairness en fútbol turco. Discuto que mientras las directrices de juego justo prescriben estándares de comportamiento ético universalistas para todos actores de fútbol, hay múltiples casos en acontecimientos de fútbol mundano que resultan en apreciaciaciones distintas por parte de jugadores , seguidores o comentaristas. Las contingencias específicas dan nacimiento a formas alternativas de fairness que nos conducen a considerar cómo la ética podría ser un asunto constante negocación más que de veredictos predeterminados. Utilizando las ideas de la antropología jurídica sobre el pluralismo legal y las discusion convencionalistas en el deporte, me centro en casos específicos de fútbol turco y ofrecezco una visión de como múltiples veredictos éticos podrían ser logrados. En esta discusión, incluyo como algunos convenciones futbolísticas en Turquía vienen a colación con las reglas escritas que gobierna el fútbol así como con as directrices de juego limpio (fair play) para mostrar que los individuos dibujann diferentes conjuntos de reglas (escritos y no escritas) en su deliberación acerca de la acción justa, fair play y ética. Este artículo es el resultado de un año de trabajo de campo desarrollado en septiembre a principios de 2010 en Estambul con el fin de acabar la disertación doctoral en antropología enfair play y fairness en el fútbol de Turquía.

Palabras clave: Justicia, Fair Play, Turquía, Reglas, Convenciones, Pluralismo

1. Introduction

As anthropologists often tell, taxicab conversations provide compact moments of insight, humor and revelation in the field. Returning from dinner one September night, I seized the opportunity to strike up a conversation about football with the cabbie as he drove by the Beşiktaş (BJK) İnönü Stadium[1]. Establishing his Fenerbahçe[2] (FB) fandom and his children's similar affiliations since "there is no bread in the house for those who don't support Fener[3]" I quickly turned the conversation to an incident vivid in Turkish football (soccer) memory. With no cues I asked, "do you think Alpay should have tackled the guy down?" Even though this is an ostensibly random question with few overt references, the cabbie instantly responded: "Of course he should have. He is a son of a donkey for not doing so. We're talking about the country here. Plus it's probably because he couldn't, rather than he didn't." I added, "and for that he received a fair play award." "Nonsense," he responded; "that's not fair play, that's not how you play football."

In 1996 the Turkish national football team qualified to compete in the EURO Tournament for the first time. Their first match in the group stage[4] was against Croatia and it was tied 0-0 until the 86th minute when Croatia scored severing significantly Turkey's chances to proceed in the competition. The goal came as Turkish defender Alpay Özalan had the opportunity but refrained from tackling down and fouling Croatian striker Goran Vlaović who consequently obtained a clear shot on goal and scored. At the end of the group stage, Turkey was eliminated and Alpay received a fair play award from the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) for having picked the "sportsman's option" of not fouling the rival striker. Fourteen years after EURO 1996, it still took less than five minutes of football conversation to recall this incident on my cab ride home. Turkish fan forums characterized Alpay's "fair" behavior as unintentional at best and stupid, upsetting, offensive and treacherous at worst. One might think that fans who are structurally disposed to side with a team dismiss fairness in sport and thus naturally oppose Alpay's actions. I argue that the verdict should be a little more complicated and less straightforward than that. It is *not* fans' opinion that Alpay should have been unfair or that he should have acted to win at all costs. It is rather that his actions do not *constitute* what fairness is in this case, or as the cabbie told me, "that's not fair

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[1] The home stadium for Istanbul's Beşiktaş JK football (soccer) team.

[2] Fenerbahçe is one of the three most popular football teams in Turkey, based in Istanbul.

[3] "Fener" is the common shortname for Istanbul's Fenerbahçe.

[4] The summer tournament begins with the group stage. Successful teams move on to the Knockout Phase where they play quarter finals, semi finals and the final match for the Cup

play, that's not how you play football." So what is fair play? Is it defined by the rules of the game? By the guidelines of UEFA or by precedents set through how the game is actually played?

In this article, my aim is to use the Alpay incident as well as other similar cases to give voice to different actors in Turkish football and illustrate how they substantiate and negotiate the definition of fairness. I found that even though UEFA deemed Alpay's action worthy of a fair play award, fans, former footballers and journalists did not think his actions represented what was fair in football. I also found that the latter were basing their verdict of fairness on what they thought was the "convention" of football in Turkey, or its unwritten rules. Alpay acted according to the formal rules of the international game of football by not committing a foul. He also acted in line with FIFA's and UEFA's fair play guidelines (which I disclose below). However, his actions fell short of complying with Turkish footballing convention which resulted in an overwhelming majority of the Turkish football community to reject that his actions were fair. As such, I begin this article with an explanation of how international governing bodies define fair play. Then, I delve into the unwritten rules of Turkish football. This specific incident reveals two particular components of these unwritten rules which I discuss in this chapter: a) Fairness in fouling defined in relation to what is permissible *(mübah)* for a player versus what is malicious *(çirkef)* b) National loyalty as a component of footballing convention in Turkey. I found that rather than the universal standards set by FIFA and UEFA, it was these two components of Turkish footballing convention that figured into the definition of fair in relation to the Alpay incident and other similar cases.

This article is the result of a year's fieldwork in Istanbul beginning September 2010. For one year, I attended football matches, interviewed fans, former footballers, coaches, referees, federation, club and media representatives towards a doctoral dissertation in anthropology on fair play and fairness in football in Turkey.

2. Theoretical Background

This article is mainly inspired and informed by the burgeoning field of anthropology of ethics (Lambek 2010) and moral anthropology (Fassin 2012). I take from Lambek and Fassin two key ideas in approaching ethics and studying it within the social sciences. First, I see ethics as a constant process of negotiation rather than a quest for one absolute verdict. With this in mind, my efforts lie in voicing the ethical legitimization processes of multiple societal actors so that we may observe ethical notions in the making. This moves me away from posing normative questions and seeking singular ethical "oughts" in any given case. Second, I see ethics as a comportment of the everyday whereby social actors are in a constant process of engaging with ethical questions, deliberations and

evaluations in daily life. This allows me to concentrate on the nuances of situational contingencies in the description of ethical legitimacy so that each ethical verdict is necessarily complemented with the context it was formed within[5]. Specifically, I refer to two key bodies of literature to contextualize my argument in this article. Despite their differences in discipline and subject matter, legal anthropology and sports philosophy complement each other in providing theoretical background for this article.

From legal anthropology, I borrow the concept of legal pluralism. Using definitions from Pospisil (1971), Griffiths (1986) and Moore (1986), Merry (1988) explained that legal pluralism is "generally defined as a situation in which two or more legal systems coexist in the same social field" (870). "The classical domain of legal anthropology" in Merry's (2006) words, has been the investigation of "village law" in the absence of centralized law, rule making or formal courts. Initially developed with the understanding that there are alternative (to formal law) legal orderings in colonized indigenous communities of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, legal anthropology growingly realized that every society was in fact legally plural, colonized or not (Merry 1988). Early anthropological interest focused on indigenous ways in small communities to maintain social order in the absence of "European Law" (Malinowski 1926). Witnessing the coexistence of indigenous law and European law and how informal networks of social pressure, reciprocity, gossip and custom provided socio-legal codes alongside formal legal organizations, anthropologists began speaking of legal systems that "mutually constitute" each other (Merry 1992, 2006). Writing about conflict and dispute resolution processes that are organized by codes alternative to formal legal structures, legal anthropologists (Nader 1969, Nader and Todd 1978, Redfield 1967, Comaroff and Roberts 1981) were increasingly drawing attention to the clout and power of local network and custom in managing governance. Using an alternative term to mutual constitution, Santos (1995) coined the term "interlegality" to talk about "how legalities clash, mingle, hybridize, and interact with one another (Merry 2006, 103). Today, legal anthropologists continue to work with the notion of legal pluralism to investigate the ways in which the multiple, conflicting or cooperating systems of law and codes function in any given society (Agyenim and Gupta 2010, Lipset 2004, Pirie 2006, Timmer 2010).

In Turkish social scientific literature, the discussion of legal pluralism has been prevalent in studies which focus on legal reforms in late Ottoman Empire and the legal facet of the transition

[5] This approach of ethical pluralism readily calls into question the issue of cultural and/or ethical relativism. Following Lambek (2010), I urge the reader to consider Geertz's (2000) notion of "anti-anti relativism" in embracing a non-normative approach to ethics.

from Empire to nation-state as the Turkish Republic adopted secular law from various European countries to replace Ottoman Islamic law (*sharia*) and the way in which these different configurations of social and legal organization were dealt with by sectors of society experiencing the transition. (Çolak 2006, Mardin 1991, Starr and Pool 1974, Starr 1989, Yılmaz 2002, 2003). Koğacıoğlu (2004, 2011) shifted focus by concentrating on the discourse of "tradition" and "custom" in official descriptions of women's "honor killings" in Turkey where she substantiated just exactly what *made* these so-called traditions and customs that resulted in the killings of sexually disapproved women by their families. My study is informed by how Turkish studies thus applied the concept and notion of multiple legal systems coexisting in Turkey.

My discussion of the unwritten rules of football and the way in which they organize sectors of the footballing community in decisions of fairness is follows from the legal anthropological discussion of legal pluralism. In football, as well as in formal state organization and law formation, there exists more than one set of criteria that lead to verdicts about justness and fairness. While FIFA and UEFA guidelines represent one such criterion and verdict, local convention and unwritten rules point to other alternatives. Using thus a concept all too familiar to anthropology, this chapter investigates the specific components of Turkish footballing convention that come into conversation with the international guidelines of football's governing bodies in deliberating whether Alpay's action was fair or not.

Besides legal anthropology, I have also drawn on sports philosophy's writings on sports ethics in framing this chapter. From sports philosophy, I borrow the discussion of formalism versus conventionalism. Simon (2010) explained that in the philosophical discussion of sports ethics, formalists embrace the "formal structures" or the "constitutive rules" of games when evaluating which moves are allowable and which are not. In this view, the rules of any sport in fact constitute that sport and thus ethical action is that which follows these foundational rules. Feezell (2004) uses the term "absolutism" to define this stance since formalists hold absolutely that all implicated actors must abide by rules that are universal and thus morally compelling. There are no particularities or exceptions. If a player fouls someone with the intention of gaining advantage for his team, he is breaking the rules of the game (or in fact the "Laws of the Game" according to FIFA[6]) and he has committed an ethical mistake. Conventionalism, the stance opposed to formalism, is the philosophical position in sports ethics which holds that the ethical deliberation of an act can only

[6] Find document here: http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/footballdevelopment/refereeing/81/42/36/lawsofthegame_2012_e.pdf

take place once we consider what the conventions are for that sport. Talking about the "ethos" of the game, some conventionalists hold that "strategic fouling" (where a footballers fouls a rival player in order to stop them from scoring a goal or delivering a critical pass) is not unethical or unfair since the shared convention of the game of football dictates that the customary way in which this game is played permits such actions. As Simon says "Since the players all accept the convention, and since each team knows the other team will strategically foul at appropriate points" (49) no ethical breaches have been made.

While this discussion juxtaposing formalism and conventionalism is useful for me, it also has significant shortcomings. As an anthropologist, I lean more towards the conventionalist stance since it allows for a consideration alternative to formal structures in the deliberation of fairness. However, the kind of "convention" this stance embraces only refers to the "conventions of a sport" as if that sport will carry the same conventions across the world and across time. What I bring to this debate is a component of convention that not only focuses on the conventions of football as a game but also how these conventions are shaped, substantiated and implemented in Turkey at the beginning of the 2010s. This is precisely the reason why I focus on two specific components of Turkish footballing convention (fouling vis-à-vis *mübah* vs. *çirkef* and national loyalty) and aim to show their influence on how fairness is made.

3. FIFA and UEFA's description of fair play and Alpay's award

The UEFA (2011) website declares that the fair play award is given to "exceptionally sportsmanlike conduct," where the UEFA's aim is to "guarantee that football's sporting ethics are respected by players, officials and supporters." Specifically about Alpay's case, here is what the UEFA (2002) has published:

> He already has made his mark in a major finals, winning the UEFA fair play award at EURO 96™. With just five minutes left in Turkey's opening game against Croatia, the score standing at 0-0, Goran Vlaovic found himself free in front of goal. Alpay, behind him, had the choice of bringing him down or letting him run on to surely win Croatia the game. The sportsman's option was chosen, allowing Vlaovic to clinch a 1-0 victory for Croatia that signalled a coming early exit for Turkey.

In this line of thinking, Alpay deserved a fair play award because he chose not to commit a football foul even though it meant that his team would lose. His actions proved to the UEFA that he ranked defeat as less important than the negative effect of fouling the rival striker. In other words, he showed that he was not willing to win at all costs and that the cost of fouling someone was too high to be worth his (national) team's progress in the tournament. UEFA terms this line of reasoning

the "sportsman's option" and this kind of behavior "sportsmanlike conduct." By doing this the UEFA discourse on fairness is able to locate an essence of fair play within sports itself. This assigns all sportsmen the mission to abide by the rules of fair play and to accept the definition of fairness as defined by these rules.

The rules of fair play are codified by world football's governing body, FIFA, of which UEFA is the European branch. Below I present the FIFA Fair Play Code in its entirety of "10 Golden Rules" (2010). These are the 10 rules which prescribe ethics in football, ideally universal for all footballing actors around the world.

> The FIFA Fair Play Code for football encapsulates all of the sporting, moral and ethical principles for which FIFA has always stood and for which it will continue to fight in the future, regardless of the influences and pressures that may be brought to bear.
>
> The ten golden rules not only serve as a credo for FIFA as world football's governing body, but they also reinforce the sense of fraternity and cooperation among the members of the worldwide football family.

1. **Play fair**: Winning is without value if victory has been achieved unfairly or dishonestly. Cheating is easy, but brings no pleasure. Playing fair requires courage and character. It is also more satisfying. Fair play always has its reward, even when the game is lost. Playing fair earns respect, while cheating only brings shame. Remember: it is only a game. And games are pointless unless played fairly.
2. **Play to win but accept defeat with dignity:** Winning is the object of playing any game. Never set out to lose. If you do not play to win, you are cheating your opponents, deceiving those who are watching, and also fooling yourself. Never give up against stronger opponents but never relent against weaker ones. It is an insult to any opponent to play at less than full strength. Play to win, until the final whistle. But remember nobody wins all the time. You win some, you lose some. Learn to lose graciously. Do not seek excuses for defeat. Genuine reasons will always be self-evident. Congratulate the winners with good grace. Do not blame the referee or anyone else. Be determined to do better next time. Good losers earn more respect than bad winners.
3. **Observe the Laws of the Game**: All games need rules to guide them. Without rules, there would be chaos. The rules of football are simple and easy to learn. Make sure you learn them; it will help you to understand the game better. Understanding the game better will make you a

better player. It is equally important to understand the spirit of the rules. They are designed to make the game fun to play and fun to watch. By sticking to the rules, the game will be more enjoyable.

4. **Respect opponents, team-mates, referees, officials and spectators**: Fair Play means respect. Respect is part of our game. Without opponents there can be no game. Everyone has the same rights, including the right to be respected. Team-mates are colleagues. Form a team in which all members are equal. Referees are there to maintain discipline and Fair Play. Always accept their decisions without arguing, and help them to enable all participants to have a more enjoyable game. Officials are also part of the game and must be respected accordingly. Spectators give the game atmosphere. They want to see the game played fairly, but must also behave fairly and with respect themselves.

5. Promote the interests of football: Football is the world's greatest game. But it always needs everybody's help to maintain its greatness. Think of football's interests before your own. Think how your actions may affect the image of the game. Talk about the positive things in the game. Encourage other people to watch and play fairly. Help others to have as much fun from football as you do. Be an ambassador for the game.

6. Honour those who defend football's good reputation: The good name of football has survived because the vast majority of people who love the game are honest and fair. Sometimes somebody does something exceptional that deserves our special recognition. They should be honoured and their fine example publicised. This encourages others to act in the same way. Help to promote football's image by publicising its good deeds.

7. Reject corruption, drugs, racism, violence, gambling and other dangers to our sport: Football's huge popularity sometimes makes it vulnerable to negative outside interests. Watch out for attempts to tempt you into cheating or using drugs. Drugs have no place in football, in any other sport or in society as a whole. Say no to drugs. Help to kick racism and bigotry out of football. Treat all players and everyone else equally, regardless of their religion, race, sex or national origin. Show zero tolerance for gambling on games in which you participate. It negatively affects your ability to perform and creates the appearance of a conflict of interests. Show that football does not want violence, even from your own fans. Football is sport, and sport is peace.

8. Help others to resist corrupting pressures: You may hear that team-mates or other people you know are being tempted to cheat in some way or otherwise engage in behaviour deemed

unacceptable. They need your help. Do not hesitate to stand by them. Give them the strength to resist. Remind them of their commitment to their team-mates and to the game itself. Form a block of solidarity, like a solid defence on the field of play.

9. **Denounce those who attempt to discredit our sport**: Do not be ashamed to stand up to anybody who you are sure is trying to make others cheat or engage in other unacceptable behaviour. It is better to expose them and have them removed before they can do any damage. It is equally dishonest to go along with a dishonest act. Do not just say no. Denounce those misguided persons who are trying to spoil our sport before they can persuade somebody else to say yes.

10. **Use football to make a better world**: Football has an incredible power, which can be used to make this world a better place in which everyone can live. Use this powerful platform to promote peace, equality, health and education for everyone. Make the game better, take it to the world, and you will be fostering a better world.

The rules define fairness as honesty and respect for rights. Fairness is proof of courage, character and grace and it is supposed to bring pleasure, satisfaction and joy. Moreover, fairness deserves reward. Unfairness, on the other hand, defined as cheating and deception, is shameful. The rules instruct one to be fair, help others to be fair and tell on those who are not fair. Examples of fairness include congratulating the winner after a loss and examples of unfairness include going easy on a weaker opponent, arguing with the referee and finding excuses for defeat. Later in the document, the more philosophical identifications of fairness get substituted with concrete social issues where fairness is defined as peacefulness standing in contrast to drugs, violence, racism, sexism, nationalism, gambling and all "other dangers." There are definitive moral, aesthetic, emotional and social implications here about what fair play is and its worth. Playing fair means being honest. It is morally superior through courage and character. It is aesthetically appealing through grace. It is emotionally attractive through satisfaction, joy and pleasure. It is socially required on both the level of the immediate community where it will earn you respect (as opposed to shame) and also on the level of larger society since it will combat "all dangers." At the same time, the document is imbued with assumptions about what football is and its place within community. Accordingly, football is "just a game" albeit the "world's greatest game" and "fun" thanks to its rules. It is also a sport which is supposed to flourish peace. Football is a game and a sport we "love." If we can protect its image as such, we can use its power to better the world.

These are the assumptions about fairness and football on which the rules of fair play are constructed. These assumptions underlie FIFA's entire discourse about fair play including the fair play awards and the Fair Play Days which they organize every year to promote fair play. These ideals are borrowed by the UEFA (2012) through its "Respect" campaign. Similarly the Turkish Football Federation (TFF 2012) has borrowed these assumptions to start the Turkish "Gentlemanly Leagues" in all divisions of professional football where they quantify acts of fair play according to FIFA standards of quantification and rank teams on the basis of fairness read as gentlemanly conduct.

In regard to the specific case of Alpay, the fair play code would consider it cheating if he were to commit a defensive foul to prevent the rival from scoring against Turkey. Alpay's fouling Vlaović would have been voluntary: A deliberate move to prevent his rival from scoring, as opposed to an involuntary charge made towards a footballer while trying to gain possession of the ball. According to the code, Alpay's actions prove that he has character and merit respect. His fouling would have been shameful, an obvious display of valuing winning over morality. The code would also put forth that Alpay would have acted against the rules of football if he were to foul the striker; this is one other element which points to how fouling would have gone against fair play. Having won the fair play award for his actions, the code would prescribe that Alpay congratulate the winner with grace.

In the rest of this article, I analyze two components of Turkish footballing convention which prove that the above scenario about how Alpay's award should have been interpreted or received if one adhered by the codes of fair play in fact do not hold among the people I worked with. By going over my interactions and interviews with Turkish football fans, former footballers and a journalist, I point to alternative ways of conceptualizing fairness. These ways stand alongside and in opposition with the official rules of fair play. They illustrate the multiplicity of fairness codes in Turkish footballing society, its "legal" pluralism (to borrow legal anthropology's term) and the cultural specificity of the conventions (to refer to sports philosophy) of the game in this time and place.

4. Footballing Convention in Turkey and its contribution to the making of fairness

1.Unwritten rules of fouling in Turkish football: Permissibility (Mübah) v. Malice (Çirkef)

I met Tunç[7] first in Chicago in May 2010. I was there for a conference and he was visiting a common friend of ours (Bora) pursuing a history PhD at the University of Chicago. Both Bora and

[7] All interlocutor names have been changed for privacy purposes.

Tunç are adamant Fenerbahçe fans and the week I was there happened to be when Fenerbahçe played Trabzonspor[8] for the final week of the Super League. Fenerbahçe would be champions if they won that day; alas they did not. The three of us watched the game together since Bora was able to find an illegal online link that broadcast the match and projected it on a large screen in an otherwise empty university building on a Sunday at noon. When I met Tunç again after a year, he still remembered our initial meeting with bitterness and near pain for having conceded the championship that day.

The next time I saw Tunç was in Kadıköy, Istanbul when we met for an interview in August 2011, a few months after Fenerbahçe had won the championship in their last game in May 2011 and also a few months into the match fixing scandal where Fenerbahçe had allegedly fixed this last game. Tunç was 24 years old at the time and lived in Kadıköy while he worked on his master's thesis at Sabancı University. He is originally from İzmit, nearby Istanbul but has been living in Istanbul since the age of ten. He told me that would be open to living elsewhere in Istanbul but has preferred to live in Kadıköy because he enjoys the fact that this is Fenerbahçe's neighborhood. After all, this is where the stadium is and the Kadıköy marketplace is oftentimes the meeting point for Fenerbahçe fans who go to football matches.

It was quite clear to me earlier on in fieldwork that "winning and losing" was the relevant and most immediate frame through which to begin talking about fairness. The reason why the conversation about fairness is so available through football is because the verdict of victory or defeat is so obvious and therefore people are repeatedly presented with the opportunity to question whether they have won fairly or not. Confronting the controversy about "winning at all costs" when talking to fans and seeing that the FIFA Fair Play Code frames fairness through winning and losing too, I began asking my interviewees a version of the following question: "Do fans always want to win; what else is an expectation they might have from their team?" Tunç gave me the following answer (I will explain his references below):

> Of course fans want to win. No one goes home happy after a defeat…but…what Bilica did... that upsets me. On the other hand, how Lugano acts, that doesn't bother me. The game has some unwritten rules. Within that frame, you can do whatever you want. For instance, I hate Bülent Korkmaz but Galatasaray[9] [GS] fans adore him. Or take Hagi, for example... Hagi would even breach those unwritten rules.

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[8] A Turkish football team from the city of Trabzon.

[9] Galatasaray, along with Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş, is one of the three most popular football teams in Turkey, based in Istanbul.

When I asked from him to elaborate on what he means by the "unwritten rules of football," he continued:

There are a lot of things that are *mübah* [permissible]for the sake of winning. Not everything is. I can't bring myself to support what Roy Keane did. Even though he might think his actions are justified. Fouling to injure someone is not *mübah*.

Tunç's initial sentence where he said that much is permissible for the sake of winning is basically the Turkish reference to the term "winning at all costs." He means to say that you may act to win at some costs but not all. Tunç starts out with Bilica (Fábio Alves da Silva), Fenerbahçe's Brazilian center back between 2009-2012. In the derby against Beşiktaş in April 2010, Bilica was caught on camera digging into the penalty mark with his foot, right before Beşiktaş executed a penalty kick which they missed since the ball was almost buried in the ground by the time Bilica was finished. Tunç tells me, "when you say *çirkeflik* (malice), it's things like what Bilica did – when you dig into the penalty mark. Some do this. This is something that goes beyond pulling on an opponent when the ref is not looking." Tunç clearly explains to me that while some actions are permissible on the pitch, others are not due to their malicious nature. For him, as long as you don't breach the unwritten conventions of football, as long as you remain within the boundaries of a set of rules that might not be formally codified yet are evident to members of the Turkish footballing community, your actions are permissible. However, when a footballer goes out of his way to secure advantage for his team by resorting to actions that are not integral to these conventions, then Tunç believes that his actions are not justified; they signal bad intentions and deliberate maliciousness. I argue that the juxtaposition of permissibility and malice is how Turkish footballing convention on fouling substantiates and defines fairness. The verdict of fairness arises from within situations where the action in question is understood to be either *mübah* or *çirkef*. It is through these notions that fairness is conceptualized; it is with these considerations that fairness is made.

I have used Tunç's words to identify a major axis on which deliberation of ethics takes place Turkey; among the people I worked with. This is the axis of *mübah* and *çirkef*: permissibility and malice. *Mübah* is among the many Turkish words with Arabic origins and it means "that which is neither sinful (*günah*) nor deserves merit (*sevap*)" in a religious sense. It is a permissible, allowable or acceptable act; it goes. Actions that fans think are *mübah* are those which they argue to be integral to the game of football and how it is actually played in Turkey. *Çirkef*, on the other hand, literally means "disgusting, dirty, tainted and polluted." The word is used to refer to people and actions that are deliberately cruel, often involving dishonesty, bad intentions and malice. I found that what is deemed unfair in relation to convention is that which does not belong to how the game

is played, excessive and *çirkef*. It is especially in instances of fouling where these concepts are utilized to discuss fairness. The way these concepts are employed gives us clues into what are considered the unwritten rules of football in Turkey.

One might stop here to question how I tie the notions of permissibility and malice to fairness in the first place. Yes, something might be permissible (or not) but how does that make it fair? At this point, I ask of the reader to rethink his/her definition of fairness. We each have a conception of how fairness works and what the category of ethics includes and we find it hard to accept contexts where fairness might have alternative connotations or components. Here, in the case of Turkish football, I have found that it is (among others) the terms *mübah* and *çirkef* that contribute to how ethics is conceived.

Tunç contrasts Bilica to Lugano and Bülent, their actions and their reputations. Diego Lugano, Fenerbahçe's former defender from Uruguay, and Bülent Korkmaz, Galatasaray's defender during the 90s, are examples of defenders who both have reputations for being aggressive players on the pitch who commit strategic fouls when they need to prevent goals. Defenders in Turkey are applauded for intimidating rival strikers and executing necessary fouls in order to curtail attacks. The right volume of aggression, display of physical strength and the *façade* of impenetrability is tolerated and appreciated in defenders, albeit at times earning them the nickname "butcher" (*kasap*). Tunç tells me that this kind of behavior on the part of Lugano does not bother him, as a Fenerbahçe fan and that even though he personally does not like Bülent (since he played for GS), he understands why GS fans adore him, because once again his actions do not overstep the line to *çirkef* given footballing convention for defensive fouling in Turkish football. The problem arises when in Tunç's words, "the unwritten rules of football" are broken, of which he accuses (Gheorghe) Hagi, "Maradona of the Carpathians" and Galatasaray's legendary mid-fielder of late 90s. His talent much appreciated by football fans across teams in Turkey, Hagi was also infamous for "spitting when the ref wasn't looking and swearing at rival footballers to provoke them" as Tunç told me. He drew the line of footballing convention where Hagi's behavior was classified as malicious and thus unfair: Tunç said it was not "fair enough to try to win at all costs" or to go this distance to secure victory.

Tunç follows up on these with an example from the English Premier League. Roy Keane played for Manchester United (England) for 12 years between 1993 and 2005. In the 1997-1998 season, he suffered a cruciate ligament injury induced by Leeds United's Norwegian player Alf-Inge Håland who accused Keane of feigning injury after his foul. Keane had to sit out the rest of the season due

to this injury. In 2001, the two footballers were rivals once again where Håland was playing for Manchester City. Keane went on to seek vengeance through what seemed to be a deliberate knee-high foul, causing Håland's leg to break. Keane's autobiography states the following, "I'd waited long enough. I fucking hit him hard…Take that you cunt. And don't ever stand over me sneering about fake injuries." He continues, "My attitude was, fuck him. What goes around comes around. He got his just rewards. He fucked me over and my attitude is an eye for an eye" (Hattenstone 2009). Tunç's opinion which I have heard other fans agree with is that certain fouls are "integral" to the game of football, a part of how you actually play this game. Where you foul for the sole purpose of injuring someone however, this is where you become "malicious" (*çirkef*) thus unfair. Tunç concedes that Keane might justify his actions by a logic of fair exchange or "eye for an eye" as Keane himself puts it, but still believes that this extra-footballing foul is unfair since it is meant to hurt and that alone. The Englishman's justification falls short of fairness for Tunç whose experience as a Fenerbahçe fan, living in Turkey has taught him a footballing convention that points to defining Keane's act as malicious: *çirkef*. This kind of unfairness is significantly different for Tunç than if Alpay, for instance, were to foul Vlaović; that would have been a just or intra-football foul, not in dissonance with his conception of fairness defined and made through the notion of permissibility (*mübah*).

Consider also the words of a former footballer I interviewed, Hasan, pertaining to the unwritten rules of football fouling in Turkey. Hasan was 47 years old when I met him in August 2011 and had been playing football in Istanbul since the age of 14. He began playing in the Galatasaray youth squad from where he transferred to the Beşiktaş youth squad. Afterwards he played in the amateur league for four years at Altınmızrak. Then, he played professionally for six years at Beykoz, followed by Anadoluhisarı, Küçükköy and Çengelköy. Later he began coaching amateur league teams and since 2008 he has been working at Beşiktaş with various divisions of the youth squad. He is also a fan of Beşiktaş and has been so since childhood even though he feels a strong connection to Beykoz where he played for six years and coached for three. He and I talked extensively about fair play, what sorts of actions might be considered conventional for football thus fair even though they would technically be against fair play given its official description by UEFA or FIFA. Here is a part of his narrative describing what fair play includes and what it does not:

You know, there are instances when for example the defender pulls the striker down just as he is about head the ball for a goal. If the ref sees it, it's a yellow card. That's a foul. But it happens. You pull him. You foul. Do you say you're sorry afterwards? [I'm not sure]. But then there are malicious fouls. Those are not considered fair play. But where you need to, you foul. If you couldn't foul where you need to, there would be no fouling in football. Sometimes you interject with the hand.

Say it's a long shot and it looks like it'll be a goal…Take Alpay for instance, I think it was 1996. He didn't foul the guy. He could have held him. It would be a foul. But he didn't and he got a fair play award. OK. It might be the right fair play not to hold him. But you have to hold him if you have to hold him. You make your money like this. What is the job of the defender? To make sure the opponents don't score. So I'm against fair play in that sense. But if someone is down and you step on them, you kick someone who has fallen or step on their foot when the ref is not looking…don't do that. Don't spit. But within football, when you need to, you hold the man down…a footballer does that. 'Oh let me not do that.' No. That's the ref's job. If it is a handball, he's supposed to see it and book it. Fair play cannot prevent those.

Hasan makes a clear distinction between what is "within" football thus justifiable stating explicitly that he is "against fair play" that dictates otherwise. This does not mean that he is against fairness, it means that he is against fair play which represents fairness as a defender who does not strategically foul an attacking striker. His line of where you cross into unfairness denotes the boundary between what is a "just foul" and a malicious act that has no conventional place in Turkish football. For Hasan these fouls are fair even though they are against the written rules of the game of football and despite the fact that they go against UEFA's criteria for fair play awards. They are fair because they are *mübah* according to footballing convention within which has been playing football and training young footballers for years.

My study was born out of a desire to rethink the phrase "fair play" and whether or not it fully represented fairness in Turkish football. Hasan's words are testimony to how they do not. He says that Alpay's actions might have been the "right fair play" using the term FIFA and UEFA have theorized but that he is against this kind of fair play. In other words, the "right fair play" or the way in which "fair play" is accurately implemented falls short of his definition of fairness because his definition is based on the footballing convention he grew up with where certain fouls are permissible. He says that "fair play" cannot prevent actions that are integral to football. In other words, one cannot very well present an abstract notion of fair play as a just reasoning for why a defender should not commit a foul. The fairness of that foul relates to the unwritten rules of football and not to a top-down, imposed notion of fairness we get from fair play.

Having found it quite useful to hear about footballing convention from someone who has played football in Turkey and coaches football today, I went on to speak with another person with a similar professional background. Tolga, 41 years-old when we met in July 2011, played football for seven years in the Istanbul clubs of Karagümrük, Sarıyer and later outside of Istanbul in Bandırma, Yozgat and Tokat. He then went to serve in the military where he was in the football team of the ground forces which is a part of the amateur leagues in Ankara. He said that this job included having to wake up at 2 AM sometimes to play football "because the generals needed entertainment."

Afterwards, he coached the youth squad of Istanbul's Vefa for one year but had to quit since his regular job at Philip Morris was demanding more and more of his time. When I met him in İzmir that summer, he had been living there for six months working for this company.

When I saw that he too was referencing a set of "unwritten rules" that point to what is considered fair, I wanted to understand how as a coach he would transmit those conventions or values to his footballers. He said:

When they score with the hand for instance, you rub their back and say with a smirk "that was a handball wasn't it, you sly son of a bitch," or you say "that ball actually passed the goal line, didn't it you dishonorable bastard and squeeze his cheek." It's the dumb ref's fault for not having called it. Or say that I'm the left back defender and I step in to prevent the attacking striker. It's clear that he is about to run past me to score. I hear a scream from the bench: "bring him down!" How can I not? I have to. In tactical drills, they teach you how to foul. We teach this. How do you hold a man? Where do you hold him from? For how long do you hold? …It is easy to sit in front of your TV and go "oh but he scored with his hand!" You know what? You have to score. If it's with the hand, then it's with the hand. Or if you're a defender, your job is to make sure that the ball does not enter the goal. That's it. If your striker can score, that's all the better. But as a defender, you must protect the goal. You know what it's like in the cafeteria Monday morning after the game? No one knows this, the taunting, the bullshit you have to put up with. You don't see this anywhere, you can only experience it…

Tolga's narrative makes it clear that the line where you cross into being unfair is less than self-evident or predictable. For him, things like "dishonorable handballs" or bringing someone down if they're about to score a goal are a part of the job of the footballer. At the beginning of this article I provided a brief theoretical background to situate my argument about the unwritten rules of football. Referencing the legal anthropological focus on legal pluralism, I mentioned how anthropologists began studying this issue with a focus on non-Western societies and the ways in which they maintained social order. As such, I quoted Sally Merry's (2006) depiction of informal networks which contributed to governance and which included everything from social pressure to reciprocity, gossip and custom. Similar to this, Tolga too talks about a sense of responsibility towards the team and the kind of social pressure that footballers might face when they break footballing convention for the sake of an official notion of "fair play." Given these circumstances where the unwritten rules of how football is actually played in your league or how training is actually carried out in your club, footballers form their sense of convention in football against which develops their notion of fairness. This is a process of socialization into the notion of fairness. It is only within the presence and pressure of this convention that fairness will have any local meaning. Otherwise, when you talk about how scoring a goal with your hand is not fair in an

abstract sense, this means very little for the specificity of contexts since as my cabbie said in regard to Alpay, "that's not how you play football."

The fascinating point about footballing convention, like any other unwritten convention in society, is that as binding as it can be, its boundaries and components are also quite nebulous and shifting. Thus when convention becomes the criteria for fairness, negotiations of fairness become more intense and verdicts less rigid since people easily disagree on what is legitimately a convention. In this section, my aim was to reveal one such component of Turkish footballing convention to substantiate how it is possible to arrive at the verdict of fair (through a notion of permissible fouling) even though official fair play dictates otherwise.

1.National loyalty as a part of footballing convention in Turkey

The fact that Alpay's incident took place in a game during the international EURO competition in which Turkey had qualified to participate for the first time in 1996 acted as a frame to much of the discussion about his award in Turkey. In fact, the only reason why after fourteen years, this incident remains fresh in memories in Turkey is due to the fact that Alpay was generally interpreted as having done something quite negative against his home team, his country. As I will quote journalist Murat Aşan below, "everyone was swearing at Alpay that day." In a 2000 interview, Alpay complained about being declared a "traitor" for his actions which he earned him a fair play award (NTVSpor 2000).

People's unwelcoming reaction to Alpay's award has to do with the fact that the deliberation of fairness, in this instance, could not be separated from sentiments of national loyalty. As the cabbie told me "we are talking about the country here." This is a situation where a matter of ethics is necessarily a conversation about the country. As such, what is fair is necessarily tied to what is fair given Turkey's debut in the competition. Ethics is essentially a layered deliberation whereby in this instance the link to national loyalty cannot be separated out or disregarded as if fair play existed in a vacuum.

Much has been said about the relation between nationalism and football; how international competitions may be thought of as mimicry of nations fighting each other, how football may be used as a tool to mend political conflict, how football stadiums are places where fans gather to display nationalist sentiments and political affiliations or how sports in general can be a site for political leaders through which to pursue their nationalistic agenda (Alegi 2008, Armstrong and Giulianotti 1997, Bairner 2008, Benoit 2008, Brownell 1995, Lee 2009, Ren 2008).

Fairness is largely absent from this literature that revolves around the desire to better understand how nationalism works in society by asserting its agenda through football. I will bring fairness into this conversation about nationalism and football by showing that in Turkey fairness may easily be couched in nationalism. In other words, where the national team is concerned, a conversation about fairness and fair play is simultaneously a conversation about national loyalty and thus it is impossible to separate a verdict about fairness from the context of nationalism. This is what he meant when the cabbie told me "we're talking about the country here." National considerations make official fair play irrelevant, not because these people are morally corrupt but because they are playing by another set of rules, one where fairness is not represented by UEFA's award but is entangled with loyalty for the country.

I raised this issue with Murat Aşan, a football journalist. He has been the editor in chief for the Turkish sports radio channel, Lig Radyo, since 2006 and hosts a radio program on football every weekday morning. Lig Radyo is the radio division of Lig TV which is the subscription channel (under Digiturk) that owns the rights to air Turkish Super League (first division football) matches on television. I met Aşan in his office in June 2011 for what I thought was quite an honest and informal exchange on Turkish football. He was vocal and blunt about where he stood in relation to fair play as I brought up instances from Turkish football for him to comment on. He told me that he wishes to be "clear and open" since he "doesn't like to beat around the bush" so his comments were to the point and his verdicts at times harsh. When I brought up the case of Alpay and asked him what he thought of the fair play award, he said:

> I remember everyone was swearing at Alpay that day. Everyone said, "I wish he'd have fouled him." And I'm one of those people too… We were about to receive our first point in that tournament ever, as a country. It was our chance to get our first point. It was special. If he had fouled him there within the framework of football's rules, we could not have called it anti-gentlemanly behavior.

Aşan told me that if Alpay committed a foul which was not directed at injuring Vlaović (a foul "within the framework of football's rules", a *mübah* or permissible foul), this would not be a malicious act, not anti-gentlemanly and thus not a display of unfairness. Given the situation (which is really a phrase with which all verdicts of fairness must begin), his fouling would be permissible, even required.

When I was talking to Tunç, asking him to elaborate further on what he meant by "unwritten rules" he gave the following examples as well where he referred to two distinct cases of footballers handballing (to score or to prevent a goal) in international competitions to secure advantage for

their national teams. In the first case, he is talking about Thierry Henry's handball to score for France against Ireland in a World Cup qualifier. And with the second case he is referring to Uruguayan Luis Suárez's handball to prevent a goal from Ghana in a World Cup:

…when a footballer handballs to get the ball…Henry did this to be able to qualify for the World Cup. I wouldn't support France after that but I'm not incredulous as to how he was able to do it. Anyone would do it if they could; 90% of the players would do it. If the ref didn't see Suárez's handball, for instance…but even then [even if he knew the ref would see it], he is justified. It's the 100th minute, he is justified. This is how he makes his earnings. The ball is about to go in. What is he supposed to think about? They would kill him back in Uruguay.

In Henry and Suárez's defense, Tunç means that they are justified to handball given the national stakes involved in the game. In both of these situations the players handballed to secure their teams' accession to a next round in the World Cup. As in the case of Alpay, the stakes were quite high and the players were seen as responsible not only towards their team or teammates but accountable by entire national publics. Tunç's comment "they would kill him back in Uruguay [if he had not handballed to prevent that goal]" with respect to Suárez is testimony to this. He reads the situation as a matter of national loyalty where a seeming act of unfair play (if we were to define fair play by an adherence to written rules) gains legitimacy and permissibility. Similarly he says that he "was not incredulous" as to how Henry was able to score with his hand. Henry's seemingly unfair act is legible from the standpoint where fairness is enmeshed with national loyalty. In fact, when I was talking to Hasan, he reached a similar verdict about Henry. He said:

Henry scored with his hand. It was the ref's job. He should have seen it. But on the other hand, my country's chances of going to the world cup are at stake – are we seriously going to discuss fair play there?

Once again, Hasan's words prove that the phrase of "fair play" is insufficient in representing all the implications of fairness and that it fails to capture how fairness works in the context of international competitions in Turkey. These people who have grown up experiencing footballing convention in Turkey point to the component of national loyalty both in evaluating Alpay's award and in passing judgment about international cases where national stakes are high.

What would be the alternative to this conceptualization of fairness as couched in nationalism itself? It would be if the people I spoke with referenced a universal conceptualization of ethics divorced from any particular social situation and thus unaffected by the specificity of any instance. My interviewees could very well refer to a notion of ethical standards that all footballers must abide with no matter which side of an opposition they find themselves in. I found that this sense of objective universalism in ethical deliberation was, while possible, quite absent among the people I

spoke with especially in situations where national priorities were present. Even in instances where we were talking about different countries' national teams, my interlocutors expressed sympathy with decisions to favor one's home team (see Bora 2013 for how the interests of militarism and nationalism line up with those of football in Turkey where the national team and international tournaments are concerned).

In fact not even Alpay himself owned up to his actions or celebrated his award. With an aim to shed responsibility of his actions, four years after the incident Alpay gave an interview (NTVSpor 2000) where he called his not-fouling a "momentary impulse" which unfairly led to the entire country calling him a "traitor" and "blaming him for the defeat." In other words, Alpay was trying to assert that his refraining from fouling was an uncalculated and impulsive move for which he should not be blamed. He was denouncing his actions let alone embracing them for the sake of fair play. Moreover, in an interview as recent as 2011 (Haber7 2011), Vlaović interpreted Alpay's award as a "consolation prize" and admitted to feeling like he has "denigrated" Alpay's career, explicitly showing that he too shared this footballing convention where fairness was calibrated with national loyalty.

Once again, when we hear that Alpay is hesitant to embrace his past behavior and that Vlaović has not received Alpay's actions as a graceful display of fairness, we must not conclude that these are morally corrupt people who will do anything to win. Nor must we assume that nationalism trumps fairness, end of story. The more nuanced and anthropological conclusion is see how these actors define fairness and how fairness is *made* as a sentiment, concern and concept entwined with national considerations and other footballing conventions. My intention is not to assert that Turkish footballing convention demonstrates fairness that is fairer than UEFA's fair play; it is to establish that footballing convention contributes to the making of fair as a subjective notion.

5. Conclusion

The goal and thus the most palpable effect of formal and codified rules is that they rank over unwritten customs and conventions. Santos (1987) explained that while the legal system is only "one" regulatory body, it is still the strongest one. In describing legal pluralism, Santos (1987) likened laws and legal systems to maps because they are practical and convenient but also produce misreadings, ruptures and absences. This is very similar to de Certeau's (1988) discussion of literal maps which necessarily obscure and misrepresent the real experience of walking in a cityscape. Maps, laws and formal rules are all different manifestations of overarching societal impositions that all communities are subjected to in one way or another. These codes iron out the wrinkles of lived

experience for the sake of producing universally applicable guidelines. In Turkish football, one set of such rules are those which define fair play

Alpay Özalan is a household name in Turkey. He played for Beşiktaş in his early twenties after transferring to Fenerbahçe. He was later recruited by Aston Villa and remained in England playing for various clubs until 2005 when he transferred to FC Cologne, Germany. He quit playing football in 2008, at the age of 35. All this time, he remained fixed at the Turkish national team's defense line. During his career, he built a notorious reputation for having disciplinary issues wherever he went, getting into rifts and arguments with fellow footballers and committing excessive fouls. Yet, the rules of fair play have ironically made it so that this person is among the few Turkish footballers who have been given the fair play award by the UEFA. One might argue that UEFA's award was presented to an action rather than a person to encourage this action and to show that it is the desired course of behavior. Still, the fact that Alpay was presented this award is proof to how divorced the official notion of fair play can be from the popular experience and making of the notion of fairness.

In this article, I detailed this divorce showing how and due to which components of footballing convention in Turkey it has come about. I argued that FIFA and UEFA present a set of written rules on fairness which differs from the unwritten rules of football in Turkey. To substantiate those unwritten rules, I elaborated on the notions of permissibility (*mübah*) and malice (*çirkef*) vis-à-vis fouling and I explained how a sense of national loyalty is implicated in the making of fairness. I used the legal anthropological notion of legal pluralism and sports philosophy's discussion of formalism versus conventionalism to theoretically contextualize my argument. Ultimately, I contend that universal ethical standards offer but one way to reach ethical judgment among multiple criteria which social actors utilize in their negotiation of fairness. A holistic understanding of the concept of fairness must necessarily take into consideration these myriad voices, their definitions and formation of ethics so that we may begin to make sense of the ethical messiness of social life in all its complexity.

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