

Troublesome Thugs or Respectable Rebels? Class, Martyrdom and Cairo's Revolutionary Ultras

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This ethnographic article explores the politics of Egypt's Ultras football supporters. The Ultras have frequently been heralded as some of the Egyptian Revolution's most prominent rebels, in particular, after the Port Said stadium massacre in February 2012, when 72 Ultras members were killed. However, this essay focuses on an earlier phase of violent clashes in central Cairo when the Ultras were highly ambivalent about the ongoing

protests. As the article shows, the fan groups were hesitant to join the demonstrations, which at the time were heavily associated with "thuggery" (*balṭaga*). Only after the death of one of its members did the Ultras whole-heartedly take on their rebellious subjectivity.

Keywords: Football; Masculinity; Class; Martyrdom; Egypt; Revolutionary Politics

Introduction

The Egyptian Ultras are well-organized groups of young football supporters, first established in 2007. These fans played an important role in protests and street fights at the time of the 25th January 2011 Revolution. Almost exactly one year later, on 1 February 2012, 72 members of Egypt's largest Ultras group, Ultras Ahlawy, were killed after a match at a stadium in Port Said. Particularly after this massacre, the Ultras gained a reputation as some of the revolutionary struggle's most archetypal rebels. The young football fans seemed to embody a combination of ordered masculinity and untamed bravery that the post-revolutionary nation required. In addition, their history of fighting the security state well before 2011 stood out as an epitome of the rebellious Egyptian youth's quest for political rights and freedom.

This ethnographic essay homes in on the development of the Ultras fans' status and reputation during the month of protests and violent clashes that raged in Downtown Cairo in November and December 2011. This was a period when classed and gendered debates about "thuggery" (*balṭaga*)¹ dominated public debates in ways that severely discredited those who were protesting. Through a close examination of the ways in which the leadership of Cairo's Ultras groups reacted and acted during

this short but eventful period, this essay illustrates how and why the death of one Ultras member became a turning point for the fan groups' aspirations and politics. In conclusion, it attempts a more general suggestion regarding the interlocking politics of martyrdom, class and notions of respectability.

The ethnography presented in the essay weaves together a variety of different types of data: media sources, secondary literature, interviews and participant observation. It is part of a larger anthropological research project on Egyptian football, for which I conducted 20 months of fieldwork in Cairo between 2011 and 2013. While the name of one of my interlocutors that appears in the text has been changed to ensure anonymity, I have chosen to keep the real names of journalists and individuals who are mentioned in the media sources that I use.

The Egyptian Ultras Movement, 2007-2011

The Egyptian Ultras movement began to take form in 2007. The two largest and most influential groups were from the outset Ultras Ahlawy (UA) and Ultras White Knights (UWK), supporting the two dominant Cairo clubs, al-Ahly and al-Zamalek, respectively.² Inspired by similar fan groups in Europe and elsewhere in North Africa, the Ultras represented a new type

of fandom that appealed to broad layers of Egyptian youth. The supporter groups hence grew rapidly; already in 2009, UA and UWK occasionally managed to mobilize more than ten thousand young men and teenagers in their respective *curvas*—the curved sections behind the two goals—at Cairo Stadium. Staging spectacular shows, involving songs, dance, powerful fire crackers (*shamarikh*) and grand, choreographed “entrance scenes” (*dakhlāt*, sing. *dakhla*),³ the Ultras dominated Egyptian fan culture numerically, visually and audibly in the last years before 2011 (Sherif Hassan, Personal conversation).

The popularity of the Egyptian Ultras is typically related to their dedication and strict, non-negotiable principles: cheer for 90 minutes no matter the result on the pitch; stand up throughout the entire match; travel to all games, home as well as away (Bashir 78-81). By observing these rules, the Ultras came to self-identify as distinct from more conventional supporters. For instance, the Ultras made a point of supporting their teams irrespective of wins and losses, and their club loyalties were understood to transcend the worship of individual players. Furthermore, the Ultras' insistence on always watching matches live at the stadium set them apart from the great majority of Egyptians who for various reasons opted to watch the

games on television. This oppositional ethos often found expression in catchphrases such as “against the media” and “against modern football,” sententiously summarizing the groups' loathing for the commodified, globalized and mediatized spectacle into which football has turned in recent decades (170-84; Kuhn).

The Egyptian Ultras' rebellious principles and attitudes were not only a key reason behind their appeal among the Egyptian youth. The same oppositional attitude also provided them with many enemies, both within the security state and in the football media establishment. Already in 2008, the police started to monitor and regulate the groups' activities, equipments and messages in the *curvas*, and as the Ultras refused to compromise, violent confrontations ensued between the fans and the security forces on several occasions (Sherif Hassan, Personal conversation). Criticism of the new supporters was also a regular and increasing feature in the sports press, where the Ultras were accused of violence, fanaticism, drug addiction, hatred and insults (Thabet 39-40). The reasons behind the groups' rapid growth were also questioned, as prominent journalists insinuated that the Ultras must be supported by some “political organization hiding behind the curtains” (45-46). In sum, Egypt's Ultras supporters were regularly portrayed as a

serious problem to be dealt with by a broad coalition of older individuals and established institutions in the last years prior to January 2011.

This more or less unified criticism of the Ultras fans' intentions, activities and politics drastically fragmented after the outbreak of the Egyptian Revolution. Contrarily, the Ultras were now increasingly portrayed as a vanguard of the revolutionary struggle. It is important to note the reluctance with which the supporter groups became enmeshed in the accelerating national-political developments. True to their explicitly non-political profile and principles, none of Cairo's Ultras groups actively encouraged their members to join the protests on Tahrir Square. However, many joined in "as individuals," and as a result, the football supporters' characteristic songs, flags and fireworks were very much present throughout the eighteen days of protests (Hassan). Because of their experience of efficient on-the-ground organization and street fights, the groups played an important role as protectors of the sit-in on the square, in particular on 28 January, the so-called Day of Rage (Dorsey; Zirin). Indeed, the Ultras movement's long-time aversion to, and struggle against, the police—summarized in the famous abbreviation A.C.A.B. "All Cops Are Bastards"—became

part of a dominant narrative of the revolution as an anti-authoritarian quest for "freedom," run by the "revolutionary youth" (*shabāb al-thawra*). In the years that followed, many journalists, activists and academics would note how the fan groups' particular history had "prepared" them for street fights and fostered a discipline and organization well suited for the revolutionary moment (Elgohari; Hamzeh and Sykes; Mosbah).

The Balṭagiyya on Muhammad Mahmoud Street

By the end of summer 2011, this narrative of the Ultras' importance in the 25th January Revolution was well established among journalists and activists inside Egypt and abroad (Bilal; Elkayal; Lindsey). However, as winter was approaching, the status of any "revolutionary"—the Ultras very much included—was increasingly facing problematic questions. One term that perhaps more than any other encapsulated the mood in Cairo this first revolutionary autumn was *balṭaga* (approx. "thuggery"), and its derivative *balṭagiyya* ("thugs"; sing. *balṭagī*). This highly contentious problem was discussed most intensely during the bloody protests and street fights that took place on and around Muhammad Mahmoud Street, Tahrir Square and (slightly later) outside the

Cabinet building in November and December 2011. During this month of bloody unrest, I noted how distinctions were frequently drawn between good "revolutionary youth" (*shabāb al-thawra*) and those "thugs" (*balṭagiyya*), who presumably attempted to destabilize the nation and derail what had so far been achieved. Friends of mine, who previously had been largely positive towards Tahrir Square, popular power and demonstrations, began to ask troubling questions about the usefulness of the protests and about the protesters' origins and identities: who were these people who kept on defying the Ministry of Interior's tear gas and bullets? Where did they come from, and what did they really want? Were they really revolutionaries, fighting in the nation's interests? Or were they simply *balṭagiyya*, who had come to destroy and break down?

To understand how and why the problem of *balṭaga* affected the Egypt Ultras movement at this historical moment, a contextualization of the concept's origins, uses and abuses is necessary. As the Egyptian novelist Youssef Ziedan details in an article published in *al-Miṣrī al-Yawm* on 30 November 2011, the *balṭagiyya*'s identity, aims and actions have always been surrounded by ambivalence. Ziedan notes that the term originally derives from the

Turkish word *balta*: a particularly heavy weapon, which it was the task of the *baltagī* to carry in times of war or at public executions in the Ottoman era (see also Ghannam 122). However, as the modern Egyptian state took shape in the nineteenth century, the *baltagī* was gradually disassociated from the state apparatus. Instead, his societal role came to oscillate diffusely between extortion and protection, predominantly in Cairo's popular (*sha'bi*) neighborhoods. In constant tension and dialogue with the similar but more favorably connoted male figure *al-futuwwa*, the history of *al-baltagī* is hence a steadily shifting one (Jacob 225-62). However, the *baltagī* has consistently embodied a somewhat problematic, semi-legal and masculinized subjectivity, associated with physical strength, violence and money.

The *baltagī*'s precarious position at the fringes of legality went through a series of particularly quick perturbations in the last decades of the Mubarak era. Indeed, Salwa Ismail has argued that thuggery effectively replaced Islamist terrorism as the main threat to the nation in Egyptian public imaginations in the late 1990s.⁴ In her ethnography, Ismail details how the focus on poor, young males as threatening *baltagiyya* led to heavily increasing securitization and middle-class moral panics.

For particularly "suspicious" characters—such as street vendors, minibus drivers or just any working-class man in Cairo's informal neighborhood (*al-ashwā'iyya*)—this implied vastly increasing police violence and surveillance (*Political Life* 139-45). Many times, the problematic masculinity of the *baltagiyya* was also associated with the serious and widespread problem of sexual mob violence against women in Egyptian public spaces (Amar, "Turning the Gendered").

As has been shown by Paul Amar (*Security Archipelago*), the Mubarak regime did not as much confront as cynically make use of the *baltagiyya*. Facing increasing numbers of protests in the 1990s and early 2000s, the police gave up their half-hearted attempts at fighting the thugs and instead "appropriated them as a useful tool" (211). More precisely, Amar claims that the

Ministry of Interior recruited these gangs to flood public spaces during times of protest [...] ordered [them] to mix with protestors and shout extremist slogans in order to make the activists look like 'terrorists', or, alternatively, to wreak havoc, beating civilians and doing property damage in the area of the protest (211-2).

The result of this incorporation of the *baltagiyya* into the security apparatus, Amar has termed the "*baltagī* effect": a manufactured depiction of oppositional demonstrations "as crazed mobs of brutal men [...] according to the conventions of nineteenth-century, colonial-orientalist figurations of the savage 'Arab Street'" (212). Moreover, it is also well known that the police employed a network of former prisoners that many would consider as *baltagiyya* to act as informers all across Egypt. In this way, the issue of the *baltagiyya* at the same time crystallized as a discursive construction, a political tool applied by the regime, and as hordes of men of flesh and blood who roamed the Egyptian streets.

Before returning to how the Ultras football fans came to tackle this emerging problem, one final dimension of the distinction between *baltagiyya* and revolutionaries should be made clear. As several commentators have noted, the tendency to separate the country's political actors between good and bad elements came with a bundle of problematic knock-on effects. During a round-table discussion at the conference *Narrating the Arab Spring*, held at Cairo University on 21 March 2012, political scientist and leftist activist Rabab El-Mahdi, for example, pointed to the strong class connotations of the *baltagiyya*

discourse, which in her view created a counterproductive split between “respectable” middle-class “revolutionaries” and the “vulgar” lower classes. Another similar and very timely intervention was an article by historian Lucie Ryzova, published on Al Jazeera’s website on 29 November 2011. Ryzova here noted a distinct division between the lower-class men on the front-line of the Muhammad Mahmoud clashes and the middle-class protesters, who were more likely to be located in the relative safety of Tahrir Square. Coming into central Cairo from the informal neighborhoods on “cheap Chinese motorcycles,” whilst sporting “a particular dress code and hairstyle that often involve copious quantities of gel,” the type of men that Ryzova saw fighting at the frontier had for many years been portrayed as trouble-makers, sexual harassers and a threat to public order in the Egyptian mainstream. Hence, Ryzova argued, the notion of *balṭagiyya* would always come in handy for middle-class Egyptians when speaking about this particular lower-class masculine habitus. And yet, it was precisely these young men—often driven by a deep desire for revenge after years of police harassment (see also Ismail, *Political Life*, “The Egyptian”)—who threw rocks at the police, carried the injured to hospital on their motorbikes, and paid with their blood as

the security forces retaliated with birdshot and sharp ammunition. In a highly ambivalent fashion, the group of men labeled as *balṭagiyya* were hence simultaneously the villains and the unsung heroes of the revolutionary struggle.

Hesitation, Action

The focus on *balṭagiyya* in Egyptian public discourse at the time of the Muhammad Mahmoud Street protests made legible an abject, problematically masculine Other. Simultaneously and dialectically, the trope also carved out a set of revolutionary ideals that connoted non-violent respectability and middle-class normality. This discursive split clearly affected the stance of the Ultras groups towards what was happening. While Ultras I spoke to later confirmed that many members of both groups actively participated in the protests in November and December 2011, neither Ultras Ahlawy nor Ultras White Knights ever directly called upon their members to join the fights via their official Facebook pages.⁵ For UWK, this attitude changed to some extent, when one of their members—a young man called Shihāb Aḥmed from the impoverished, informal (*ashwā’i*) neighborhood Bulaq al-Dakrur—was killed on Muhammad Mahmoud Street on the third day of the fighting. Thereafter, the criticism of

the police and the military became fiercer on UWK’s Facebook page, and all members were instructed to attend the martyr’s funeral (22 Nov. 2011).

However, not even at this point did UWK officially tell its member to join the struggle en masse. Instead, representatives of UWK as well as Shihāb’s family had to face questions about the dead man’s history, morals and motives. In an interview published in the online football magazine *alforsan.net* five days after Shihāb’s death, his mother struck back against those who questioned that her son was a proper revolutionary martyr. Understandably shaken and pressured by the media questioning her son’s role in the street fights, she claimed that “the one who goes to a protest prepared to sacrifice his life (*musta’id li-l-tadḥiyya bi-ruḥī*) cannot possibly be a *balṭagī*, but he is a hero and a man and not a tramp (*mutasharrid*) as some people claim.” The title of the article was indicative of the mood in the country and the protesters being on the defence: “The mother of the martyr: those who die in Tahrir are not *balṭagiyya*” (Diyāb).

The longer the unrest wore on, the more difficult it became to rid the protestors of accusations of *balṭaga*. After a short period of calm during the parliamentary elections in early December, the fighting broke out again on 16 December after a sit-in out-

side the Cabinet building was broken up by military police. The scenes of tear-gas, Molotov cocktails, stone-throwing teenagers and armed police firing rubber bullets, birdshot and live ammunition all seemed a ghastly re-run of an all-too-familiar script. Yet, a distinct change in attitude towards what was going on was at the same time noticeable. One taxi driver told me: “The police must hit them harder, to save the revolution.” At the grocer’s I was told: “The state must defend itself against those criminals. The people in this country need someone strong, someone like Mubarak.” My interlocutor Mahmoud, a gym teacher and Zamalek fan in his early 30s, was one of those who drastically re-conceptualized the political process around him. Only a few weeks earlier, Mahmoud had been firmly against the unacceptable violence committed by the military and the police. Three days into the second wave of violence—and just 24 hours after footage of Egyptian military police dragging and beating a veiled woman across Tahrir Square, famously revealing her bare belly and blue bra, had spread across the world—he instead told me:

Have you seen those who camp in Tahrir Square now? I pass them every day on my way to work, and I can tell you, they are not good people, not respectable (*mish muhtarama*). Probably they

are paid by [the ousted President’s son] Gamal Mubarak to destroy the elections. By the way, that woman [in the blue bra], she was not a real *mu-naqqaba* [woman wearing niqab, full-body veil]. You could see that on the type of underwear she wore. This is a Muslim country, Carl. It cannot be run this way. But *Insha’ Allah*, it will be re-built step by step through elections and institutions. All of them are *balṭagiyya*! Honestly, it does not matter to me if they die or not. (Mahmoud, Personal conversation)

In the midst the growing public concern about the disreputable and randomly violent *balṭagiyya* that roamed the vicinities of Tahrir Square, public statements in support for those protesting were rare. The Ultras were very much in line with this general pattern; a couple of days into the second wave of clashes, leaders of both UA (18 Dec. 2011) and UWK (19 Dec. 2011) made statements on their Facebook pages, stressing their non-political stance and disassociating themselves from what was going on. Moreover, the UA *capo* Ahmed Idris came out in the press to vigorously deny the rumors that one of the men who had been killed in the clashes had been a member of his group. Instead, he made clear that UA were against “any action that hurts the interest of the country

and its institutions (*maslaḥat al-balad wa munsha’atiha*),” and that all individuals present at the protests were there as “citizens” only and not as members of any kind of group (*al-Shurūq*, 21 Dec. 2011). In a politico-discursive climate where the protests connoted *balṭaga*—a concept which in turn was singled out as the main threat to the nation—Idris and UA sided with the “respectable” common good against the troublemakers.

When the fighting finally subsided, the Ministry of Health reported that 12 people had died and 815 had been injured. What is crucial for our story is that one of those casualties, a young student called Mohamed Mustafa, who often went under his nickname Karika, was a well-known member of Ultras Ahlawy. When Karika was shot dead on Qasr al-Ainy Street on 21 December, Ultras Ahlawy were abruptly pushed straight back into the political struggle. Suddenly, their leaders’ recent statements, ensuring the group’s impartiality, seemed alien and out of touch. On the 23rd of the month, al-Ahly played Maqaṣṣa at Cairo Stadium, and the entire match was turned into a tribute to the martyr and a manifestation against the state violence that had killed him. Most Ultras fans present were dressed in black instead of the normal red, the *dakhla* (“entrance scene”) before kick-off covered the *curva*

with a huge black and white portrait of their dead friend, and al-Ahly's Portuguese coach Manuel Jose showed his sympathies by wearing a T-shirt under his grey tweed jacket, on which was printed "RIP Mohamed Mustafa." Throughout the game, the fans' chanting against the ruling military council and the Ministry of Interior was also more explicit than before; high up above the *curva*, an enormous banner was hung with a message that read: "The engineer Mohamed, martyr of freedom. The *balṭagiyya* killed him with live ammunition (*Al-muhandis muḥammad shahīd al-ḥurriyya. Qataluh bi-l-rusās al-balṭagiyya*) (Ultras Ahlawy's Facebook, 23 Dec. 2011). The contrast between the dead engineer—Mohamed Mustafa had been an engineering student—and the *balṭagiyya* who killed him—referring not so vaguely to the Ministry of Interior and the military—had an important function. In the days that followed, Mustafa's educational qualifications and the fact that he had been one of the country's best tennis players were constantly reiterated in the media (e.g. Maher). This framing of the dead supporter effectively disrupted the narrative of the ongoing protests as a matter of lawless *balṭaga*, because as most Egyptians would instantly recognize, an engineering student who in addition played an expensive sport like tennis was not just anybody, but a mem-

ber of the country's respectable upper middle classes. If anything, the killing of Karika seemed to prove that the demonstrators were real, honorable *shabāb al-thawra* ("revolutionary youth") after all. At least, this was what Ultras Ahlawy insistently claimed, when they honored Karika at Cairo Stadium. It made perfect sense for them to reflect the discourse of the establishment back onto the police and the military. Singing from the stands their most provocative song about Egypt's policemen as failures in school and corrupt "crows" that destroyed the fun for the youth, the fans returned over and over again to a rhyming chant that was both simple and effective: "*al-dakhiliyya—balṭagiyya* ("The Ministry of Interior—*are balṭagiyya*")" (Ultras Ahlawy 07 Media).

Class, Martyrdom, and the Production of Rebels

In the beginning of 2012, Ultras Ahlawy cranked up the pressure against the interim regime yet another notch. In the stadium and outside, the group continued its blatant accusations of the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces for Karika's death; they mocked the police more explicitly than ever before; and they turned more directly political in both words and deeds.⁶ Tragically, this period of mobilization would soon come to a

very bloody end. On 1 February 2012, 72 Ultras Ahlawy members were killed at the stadium in Port Said in a massacre that the Ultras themselves interpret as the security state's revenge for the supporters' oppositional activities. As I elaborate on elsewhere ("Revolution, Play and Feeling"), the tragedy in Port Said further politicized the Egyptian Ultras movement. In the months that followed, Ultras Ahlawy especially came out in a spectacular campaign for justice and revolutionary reforms that, at least for a while, turned them into some of the revolutionary struggles most heralded rebels. While the Ultras had been widely celebrated for their political participation already in 2011, the tragedy in Port Said further added to their revolutionary credentials. For many, the death of the 72 young men seemed to have confirmed once and for all that the Ultras' cause had been a just one, and it certainly made much broader segments of the Egyptian public aware of their history of struggle against the state and the police.⁷ As this essay has shown, the Ultras' uncontested position as revolutionary rebels in 2012 and 2013 was, however, precluded by a period in which the supporters' stances vis-à-vis politics, the state and the revolutionary struggle were characterized by hesitancy and ambivalence. In retrospect, the death of Mohamed Mustafa aka Karika

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comes across as a crucial turning point within this decisive phase of late 2011: a particularly ‘generative event’ (Kapferer) through which the Ultras groups managed to dispose of their hesitation and unequivocally assume their rebellious ethos. It is particularly intriguing to compare the ease and confidence with which UA acknowledged and publically honored Karika as the group’s revolutionary martyr, and how this narrative came into circulation in the Egyptian press, with the much less extensive and more ambiguous coverage of Shihāb Aḥmed’s death a couple of weeks earlier. Clearly, Shihāb’s humbler origin as a son of Bulaq al-Dakrur (an informal neighborhood stereotypically associated with *balṭaga*) bestowed on his martyrdom a very different positionality within the discursive field of respectability, class and thuggery that dominated Egypt at the time. The contrast is all the more striking in light of the changing general opinion vis-à-vis the protests. In fact, and as I have shown, at the time when Shihāb was killed on Muhammad Mahmoud Street, the attitude toward the protests was more *positive* than a month later when Karika died a few hundred meters further south on Qasr al-Ainy Street.

In order to understand the powerful emotional and political “work” (Gibbon) and “productivity” (Armbrust) of Mohamed

Mustafa’s martyrdom—in contrast to that of Shihāb Aḥmed’s—the former’s respectable middle-class status must hence be taken into account. In a period ridden by “hyper-visibility” (Amar, *Security Archipelago*) of low-class *balṭagiyya* as the urgent challenge of the nation, it would have been difficult for Egypt’s Ultras groups to partake in the struggle on Muhammad Mahmoud Street without tarnishing their newly gained popularity. Mustafa’s death provided UA (and to a lesser degree UWK) with a way out of the deadlock. Not only did it push the tentatively non-political Ultras Ahlawy back into the fight against the police and the military, but through grand stadium spectacles, graffiti portraying Karika’s face on the walls of Cairo and extensive coverage in the traditional press and on social media, his life was also “mattering” to the idea and memory of the struggle itself (Paul). After the death of a middle-class member, Ultras activities could not as readily be dismissed as *balṭaga*. Indeed, in course of time, the entire month of violence—including the earlier clashes that the groups had refrained from joining as well as the death of Shihāb Aḥmed—would be folded into a more linear narrative of the Ultras group’s long revolutionary struggle against the Egyptian security forces (e.g. Mosbah). This particular historical moment, and its

conflation of class, martyrdom and respectability, is thus crucial to bear in mind if we are to fully understand how and why the Egyptian Ultras steered clear of the looming accusations of *balṭaga* and surfaced as one of the Egyptian Revolution’s most celebrated groups of rebels.

Notes

¹ Since most of the discourses that I explore in this essay occurred in spoken Egyptian Arabic, I have chosen to use the Egyptian colloquial transliteration *balṭaga* instead of the Standard Arabic variant *balṭaja* throughout this essay.

² Famous examples elsewhere in the country are Yellow Dragons (supporting al-Isma'ili from Ismailiya), Green Eagles (al-Masry from Port Said) and Green Magic (al-Ittihad, Alexandria).

³ Most European Ultras groups use the Italian word *tifo* when they talk about these entrance scenes.

⁴ An indicative event that Ismail identifies as the beginning of a new era is the passing of the "thuggery law" (*qānūn al-balṭaga*) in 1998 (Political Life 121-22). Perhaps, it could be argued that the period when the *balṭagiyya* were assumed to have been the main threat to the nation ended in summer 2013. Since the 3rd of July coup, and President al-Sisi's war on terror, Islamist terrorism once again seems to have taken the place as the most acute issue to be dealt with.

⁵ The two Facebook pages <<https://www.facebook.com/UltrasAhlawyCom?fref=ts>> (UA) and <<https://www.facebook.com/whiteknights2007?fref=ts>> (UWK) were at the time the standard medium through which the leadership of the Ultras groups communicated with their members.

⁶ See e.g. the photo album from the match al-Ahly vs. Al-Shurta 18 January 2012 on Ultras Ahlawy's Facebook.

⁷ Hamzeh and Sykes have described this process as a transformation of the Ultras' masculinity. After the 2011 Revolution and the Port Said tragedy in early 2012, layers of "anti-militarist" masculinity and "martyrdom" masculinity were added to the "anti-corporate" masculinity that the fans had embodied already prior to 2011.

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