How Ultras Football Clubs Breed Activist:
An analysis of the media culture and protest practices of Spanish and Egyptian football clubs

by: Ana Maria Quiros

CMS861 Networked Social Movements: Media & Mobilization
Professor Sasha Costanza-Chock

Image Source: RebelUltras.com
Ultras - The Ultimate Sports Hooligans?
Ultras are Social Groups of Young Male Sports Fans
Egypt's revolutionary soccer ultras: How football fans toppled Mubarak

By James Montague, CNN
June 29, 2011 — Updated 2211 GMT (0611 HKT)
Research Questions

What are Ultras groups online media-making practices and how do social media platforms relate to physical mobilizations both on the streets and in the stadium?

Process

1. Literature Review

2. Define Accounts + Recent Mobilizations

3. Code Facebook Data for Media Making Practices

4. Reassess Preconceptions of Football Youth Cultures as Movements
LEFTIST ULTRAS AROUND THE WORLD

HERRI NORTE TALDEA, BILBAO SPAIN
BOIXOS NOIS, BARCELONA SPAIN
WHITE KNIGHTS, CAIRO EGYPT
AHLAMY, CAIRO EGYPT
“Nowadays we are witnessing the ever growing and ever expanding threat of Fascism, Neo-Nazism and extreme Nationalism in all four corners of the world. We believe in a world were all people are created equal, governed by tolerance, understanding, empathy and common sense.”

-RebelUltras.com
Anti-Racist

“All Colours Are Beautiful. Rebel Ultras does NOT discriminate! We embrace diversity and resist any form of discrimination whether it be distinction of race, nationality, colour, religion, sex or class.”

-RebelUltras.com
“We are against high ticket prices, mass commercialization, bad game hours due to TV rights manipulations, fully seated stadiums, CCTV incrimination, police brutality and subjugation and all that turns football into nothing more than a business were profit is placed above passion!”

-RebelUltras.com
IDENTITY + THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

THE STADIUM AS AN EXTENSION OF POPULAR SENTIMENT

SPAIN: Movimiento 15-M
Youth movement against poverty + neoliberal order

EGYPT: Egyptian Revolution
Youth movement against poverty + authoritarian regime
IDENTITY + THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

COMMON ADVERSARY: THE STATE

H.N.T
SUPPORTERS ANTIFASCISTA
HERRI NORTE TALDERA
"101% ANTI-FASCISTS & ANTI-RACIST"
SEPARATIST AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY

Boix Nois
F.C. BARÇA
"BARÇA OR MORT!!"
SEPARATIST AGAINST MODERN FOOTBALL

Ahlawy
"WE WILL NOT FORGET AND WILL NOT FORGIVE"
ANTI-INTERIOR MINISTRY

White Knights
ANTI-POLICE AGAINST MODERN FOOTBALL
## Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>Mobilization</th>
<th>Mobilization</th>
<th>street</th>
<th>stadium</th>
<th>field</th>
<th>Photo</th>
<th>Notes on Picture</th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Notes on Video</th>
<th>emotiona l language on main</th>
<th>emotiona l language from</th>
<th># Days till next Mobilization</th>
<th># Comments</th>
<th># Shares</th>
<th># Likes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/18/14</td>
<td>NHT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 NHT fans with blurred faces and Illumina flag</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Picture of NHT retail</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NHT fans during game</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>267</td>
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<tr>
<td>08/26/13</td>
<td>NHT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shows the Basque flag, lampposts and trees in the street of Donostia (San Sebastian)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>325</td>
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<tr>
<td>08/27/13</td>
<td>NHT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Uraga with posters at an indoor game</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/02/13</td>
<td>NHT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rock song on Athletic fans with clips showing NHT fans in the streets with flags and during the games.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/18/13</td>
<td>NHT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NHT fans display banners behind the goal stating &quot;VICTO D'ACIAS JUSTICIA&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/15/13</td>
<td>NHT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NHT fans display banners behind the goal stating &quot;VICTO D'ACIAS JUSTICIA&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/26/13</td>
<td>NHT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information on their relocation in the stadium. Link to detailed article attached. shot of match with NHT banner behind goal</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/25/13</td>
<td>NHT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>NHT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HERRI NORTE TALDERA

IDENTITY: Basque Separatist. The Basque flag, Ikurrina, is their main symbol.

MARTYR: Iñigo Cabacas, killed on April 9, 2012 by a police’s rubber bullet while celebrating a victory in the streets. He was 28 years old.

STATS:
Coded 18 posts from: Herri Norte Taldea Facebook Account
Date range: 2012-2014
Followers: 27k
Created: 2011

METRICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th># of Posts</th>
<th>% of Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social mobilization</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football mobilization</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AVG:
Comments: 15
Likes: 195
RESULTS - Boixos Nois

IDENTITY: Football hooligans
anti-modern football + corruption
“Barça or mort!!”

Recent Boixos Nois mobilizations have been related to club corruption and traditional rivalries.
- Recruitment of minors (illegal)
- Recruitment scandal of Neymar
- Resignation of manager

Breakdown of Social Media Posts By Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Football Related</th>
<th>Stadium</th>
<th>Football Match</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stats:
coded 13 posts from: Boixos Nois-FC Barcelona Facebook Account
date range: 2013-2014

Followers: 29k
Created: 2010

Metrics # of Posts % of Posts
Pictures: 7 54%
Videos: 0 0%
Social mobilization: 0 0%
Football mobilization: 5 38%
Avg: comments 34
Likes 810
RESULTS - White Knights

IDENTITY: Anti-modern football + anti-police

破爛的光輝

IDENTITY: Anti-modern football + anti-police

MARTYR: Amr Hussein is a young martyr who is remembered on accounts and in matches.

STATS: coded 14 posts from: Ultras White Knights Facebook Account date range: 2012-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METRICS</th>
<th># OF POSTS</th>
<th>% OF POSTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social mobilization</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football mobilization</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Followers: 196k
Created: 2007

Avg:
Comments: 299
Likes: 4082

Breakdown of Social Media Posts By Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-football related</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadium</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football match</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS - Ahlawy

IDENTITY: Anti-police + interior ministry. Demand private security at matches.

Retribution for Port Said victims and members on trial.

Breakdown of Social Media Posts By Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Posts</th>
<th>% of Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-football related</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadium</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football match</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football mobilization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>647</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes</td>
<td>8052</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stats:
Coded 8 posts from: Ultras Ahlawy UA07 Facebook Account
Date range: 2012-2014

Followers: 1m
Created: 2007
**CONCLUSION**

1. **Despite all being leftist ultras, each group has different media making practices based on their unique resistance identity.**

2. **Local-global network linkages differ for each group. Some groups aim to include the global network of leftist ultras more than others.**

3. **First hooligans then leaders. More research is needed to understand how ultra membership empowers young sports fans.**