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Kai Wilson
Macalester College

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Title: Touchline Democracy: How Soccer's Civil Society Shaped Democratization in Egypt and Turkey

Author: Kai Wilson
Touchline Democracy
How Soccer’s Civil Society shaped Democratization in Egypt and Turkey

By Kai C.K. Wilson

Political Science Department
Supervised by Andrew Latham
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"What I know most surely about morality and the duty of man I owe to [soccer]."
- Albert Camus

This paper is dedicated to my outstanding and beautiful mother, my inspirational and warm-hearted feather, and to my remarkably bright and compassionate brother. I love you all and hope we continue our adventures together. Thank you to all friends for supporting me and making these four years an incredible experience. Enjoy!
Soccer is a sport. It is also a unifying force that, in its most positive incarnation, can topple authoritarian leaders, reduce police brutality, and indirectly repeal oppressive government policies. People’s love for soccer has organized fans into powerful political actors, known as supporter groups. Originating in Sampdoria in 1969, supporter groups (also known as “Ultras”, or “firms”) have a distinct presence within their club’s neighborhood. Unlike hooligans, these groups hold meetings, organize community programs, and coordinate stadium experiences. Supporter groups are separate from the club, but dedicate themselves to the welfare of their team and community. More importantly, most groups have horizontal power structures that distribute power equally among members. Ultras are encouraged to openly discuss issues and participate in orchestrated programs. Supporters learn democratic principles of citizenship and public participation in these firms. Especially in non-democratic states, soccer gives agency to individuals, who can control the future of their organization. By teaching democratic values, strong civil society can instigate democratization movements in authoritarian or non-democratic regimes (Newton, Bernhard).

Despite its capacity for social change, soccer remains one of the least researched subjects in political and sociological literature on civil society and democratization. As the world’s most popular sport, soccer receives limited academic recognition because of its populist and widespread appeal; for many, soccer is a game, not a sociopolitical phenomenon. Soccer’s power to unite and divide people makes it an underdeveloped field in both political science and sociology that deserves further exploration. Several researchers have linked soccer to political unrest, but not to democratization movements. In Soccer Versus the Enemy, Simon Kuper argues that the institutions of soccer (including clubs, sports ministries, supporter’s groups) can both influence political unrest in authoritarian countries and keep dictators in power. Taking examples from Ukraine’s Shakhtar Donetsk in the 1950s and the Argentinean World Cup in 1978, Kuper contends that historically, governments use soccer as a political tool to sway public opinion and pressure opponents of the state. In Hooligan Wars, international researchers analyze sport’s sociological impact on supporters, the media, and clubs. A key tenet from Hooligan Wars purports that individuals join supporter groups in their search for personal
identity. The community and civil society of supporter groups attract people who anchor themselves in the team’s neighborhood. While these sources frame a political-sociological basis for soccer, academic research has not investigated cases relating soccer to democratization. There is a missing link in the literature that connects ‘soccer and civil society’ to ‘civil society and democratization’.

In this paper, I will argue that soccer supporter groups can strengthen civil society, which contributes to the success of democratization movements. Before democratization, non-democratic administrations freely exercise their political power to oppress opposition groups that ‘threaten’ the state. Many times, these opposition groups represent suppressed minority communities that rely on civil society to maintain their social identity. In response, civil society groups, such as Ultras, engage in social movements, promoting equal political rights and fair, free elections. As significant actors in civil society, soccer firms use coordinating, networking, and street-fighting skills in specific democratization cases. This paper is comprised of five chapters. First, I will explain and analyze democracy, democratization theories, and civil society’s role in social movements. Second, I will argue that soccer plays a critical role in civil society and the teaching of democratic ideals.

In chapters 3 and 4, I will apply democratization theories to civil society in two case studies: Egypt and Turkey. Although Egypt and Turkey experienced revolutions with vastly different scales, dissimilar initial government structures, and contrasting causes, both states present comparable preconditions that justify their shared analysis, as explained in my methodology. Both Egypt and Turkey are similarly populated, historically significant, strategically located nations that house the Middle East’s/East Mediterranean’s top soccer clubs and passionate supporters. Both states host secularist-Islamist party tensions and the history of military involvement in governance. Recent popular uprisings expressed similar demands for more expansive freedoms for minority parties, the end of government corruption, and greater accountability within the executive branch. The chapters do not argue that Egypt’s 2011 revolution compares to Turkey’s Gezi Park Riots. The chapters claim that variations of soccer’s presence in civil society played significant roles in the respective movements. After thirty years of Hosni
Mubarak’s authoritarian rule, Egypt’s infant civil society and soccer groups initiated the state’s democratization, but suffered from military intervention and internal difference within opposition groups. In Turkey’s established semi-democratic system (disassociated from the military), Gezi Park protestors and supporter groups created a movement that demanded a democratized form of Kemalism. In chapter 5, I will contrast the two cases, which both started with comparable beginnings, but ended with different outcomes, notably the demise of Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak and the persistence of Turkey’s Recep Tayyip Erdogan.
Methodology

The inspiration for this paper came from my semester-long study in Istanbul, Turkey, where I researched the history of Turkish democratization and soccer's impact on Turkish society. Based on my background knowledge of soccer and society (including print from authors like Dorsey, King, Kuhn, Kuper, and Murphy), I wanted to write about how soccer supporter groups have real political impacts as societal phenomena. From my previous studies on the Arab Spring and Middle Eastern security concerns, I embarked on a comparative analysis of Turkish and Egyptian social movements on democratization. I decided to compare Egypt and Turkey because both states experienced social upheaval for the similar reasons of government accountability, more equitable political participation, the decentralization of executive authority over legislative and judicial branches, concerns over Islamist power, general frustration with economic stagnation, and more. Both countries have populations of over 80 million people, a history of strategic importance for the Ottoman Empire and the West, and a passionate soccer support base. When formulating conclusions, I do not equate Egyptian and Turkish demonstrations to each other. I isolate the related variables in both cases and draw inferences from my application of these variables to established conjectures in political science and sociology.

In my comparative study of Egypt and Turkey, I employ theories on civil society's impact on democratization movements to the soccer narrative of these cases. I use John Stuart Mill's Joint Method of Agreement and Difference to argue that soccer contributes to the country's varying democratization movements. This method stipulates that:

If two or more instances in which the phenomenon occurs have only one circumstance in common, while two or more instances in which it does not occur have nothing in common save the absence of that circumstance; the circumstance in which alone the two sets of instances differ, is the effect, or cause, or a necessary part of the cause, of the phenomenon (Mill, p. 463).

This method of comparative analysis means that in cases where A B C occur with x y z, A D E occur with x v w also B C occur with y z. Comparing this 'ABC' scenario to my
research, I argue that the involvement of soccer supporter groups in social issues (x) and several other factors relevant to the case study (y z or v w) contributes to democratization movements (A). Other outcomes (B C or D E) occur because of the difference in the nature of each democratization movement. Examples of these different outcomes include Egypt’s extended military control of the interim government or Turkey’s external investigations in state actions. Soccer firms’ contribution to civil society remains as the constant variable in the thesis’ comparative study of Egypt and Turkey.

Based upon prior knowledge of soccer’s relationship with the movements, my research began with examining each country’s kind of soccer supporter group and their influence within their neighborhoods. I investigated each firms’ participation in the demonstrations and used this information to broaden my study of the politics behind the movements. Amidst this research, I connected soccer supporter groups to civil society associations with strong local identities. This mental connection coincided with my initial research on democracy and democratization theory. I turned to texts of Newton, Bernhard, and others for theories on civil society and democratization movements. When I started writing, I began with democracy theories, then soccer and civil society, then both cases, and finally my conclusion and introduction. My editing process consisted of many peer and professional edits, rereadings, the bolstering of introduction, theory and conclusion sections, the attachment of a glossary, and more references. In the next section, I review democracy, democratization, and civil society theories in order to frame my cases and conclusions.
1. Framing Democracy, Democratization and Civil Society

In the past century, democracy has been the most salient and globalized of political systems. People’s pairing of democracy with greater human rights and peace makes it appear as a vessel for human progress. Under autocracies and dictatorships, citizens have expressed the need for greater individual autonomy and accountability from the state. Samuel Huntington’s “third wave of democratization” acknowledges the increase of ‘full democracies’ from 44 states in 1985 to 93 states in 2005 (Haerpfer et al., p.2). Each state’s motivation for democratization varies, depending on the kind of governance of each previous regime. The democratization process of an autocracy to a hybrid regime has a different logic than the transition of a hybrid regime to a constitutional democracy. In essence, it is difficult to make basic comparisons in different types of democratization. Nonetheless, one can compare democratic theories in each case and analyze the relevance of each theory. In particular, the power of civil society and mass mobilizations plays a crucial role in democratization. Social capital and the skills taught by a political community mirror democracy’s fundamental principles. Inclusive social groups establish unifying norms and values to directly influence the public’s perception of appropriate governance. In this section, I will outline the fundamentals of democracy, democratization, and three modern sources of democratization. From these three connections, strong civil society plays an essential role in the democratization of authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes.

The Framework of Democracy

Democracy’s far-reaching appeal originates in its assumed support for populist and, quintessentially, ‘human’ action in government. Citizens enter into a nonconsensual social contract, where they trade their allegiance to the rule of law for the state’s protection and representation of their needs. In this social contract, citizens hold the state accountable for its actions based on fair and competitive elections and the state’s respect for citizenship (Hobbes, Locke).
Democracies require the freedom of a fair election. Fair elections necessitate equal accessibility to the polls, government non-interference in the process, and a choice of different parties in the competition for power. Openness to polling locations and other electoral institutions necessitate fair competitive elections. Freedom of association, expression, and press allow citizens to engage in an election unbound from state intervention. Political participation holds the government accountable by safeguarding the freedom of thought, political parties, and independent media.

Democratic regimes protect the sanctity of a person’s citizenship or political rights as loyal member of the country. Guillermo O’Donnell writes, “the guiding principle for democracy is citizenship, which is the right to be treated as equal when making collective choices and the [government’s] obligation to implement such choices to be equally accountable and accessible to all members of the polity” (O’Donnell, p.7). Perfect democracies respect these political rights, including the conversion of the winning number of votes into the appointment of an elected official, party, or bill. Also, citizenship is the equal accessibility to political opportunities and equal judgment under law. The state provides accessible election ballots, space for multiple parties, and a fair and equal hearing in court. Universal suffrage means equal political participation among all social groups in the country. The votes cast by adult citizens must delegate political power to the individual/party chosen. Democracy exists for citizens to “hold rulers accountable for their actions in the public realm through the competition and cooperation of elected representatives” (Whitehead, p.10). Through equal opportunity in politics, fair lawful judgment, and the translation of votes, democratic states safeguard citizenship.

There is a spectrum of the various levels of democracy. The degree of a state’s commitment to democracy’s principles designates its place on the spectrum from a ‘perfect constitutional democracies’ to hybrid regimes to extreme ‘totalitarian regimes’. States are categorized into different systems of governance based on their dedication to fair elections and citizenship. A constitutional democracy prescribes to the belief that the actions of regimes are constrained by both the mass electorate and the rule of law. Courts can void the actions of governors inconsistent with the law. In a plebiscitarian autocracy or “delegative democracies” (O’Donnell), the state conducts elections with mass
participation and competition between parties and candidates. But, the elections are not free or fair because the judiciary does not regulate the actions of elected officials. Weak institutional checks and balances allow the executive branch to use power to encroach on legislative and judicial institutions. With the manipulation of laws, a plebiscitarian autocracy could forgo fair elections indefinitely. An unaccountable autocracy does not conduct elections and can override the constitution with judges acting subservient to governors. Although the use of power becomes arbitrary for autocrats, social life is not a concern of the state. In totalitarian regimes, the state “systematically and pervasively [seeks] to control the whole of its subject’s lives” (Haerpfer et al., p.16). The different types of regimes establish distinct settings and outcomes of democratization movements.

Democratization Theories
The instigators of democratization movements pursue greater political participation by the populace and more accountability held by the government. As a “long-term process of social construction” (Whitehead, p.6), democratization introduces democratic criteria to hybrid democracies or non-democratic systems. Successful democratization brings about five criteria: effective participation, voting equality, enlightened understanding, control of the agenda, and inclusion (Dahl). Without a citizen’s ability to participate effectively in politics, elections would not be fair or free, thus violating a fundamental democratic principle. Universal suffrage grants equality and citizenship to all members of the democratic society. Enlightened understanding is interpreted as a citizen’s freedom of knowledge and accessibility to that knowledge from media sources (i.e. freedom of expression). The impact of a vote must translate to some indirect control of the government’s agenda in power. Finally, the inclusion of all societal members in the democratic process means equal citizenship on a statewide scale.

Democratization instigators may take action through mass demonstrations, military coup d’etats, inner government shifts, peaceful moves towards a constitution, or a foreign state’s intervention to restructure an undemocratic regime. O’Donnell classifies a democratic transition as “the processes whereby the rules and procedures of citizenship are either applied to political institutions previously governed by other principles...or
expanded to include persons not previously enjoying such rights and obligations...or
extended to cover issues and institutions not previously subject to citizen participation”
(O’Donnell, p.8). Democratization rarely happens overnight. The movements have false
starts, misjudgments, unintended consequences, and detours; the transitions involve many
different interests and goals. Furthermore, the end of a democratization movement is
generally not clear, stable, or predetermined.

Democratization can start at any point on the spectrum of political structures,
whether the previous structure was democratic or undemocratic. The transition can
happen from within the state structure or from popular mass action. When the democratic
transition is not forced by external actors but occurs from the citizens’ demands for
federal accountability, theorists classify this process as ‘responsive democratization’.
Given that the country itself chose to become more democratic, this kind of
democratization embeds democracy in the society and reinforces the governance’s
stability.

In the ‘third wave of democratization’, political scientists have identified three
key influences in triggering transitions: modernization, economic prosperity, and strong
civil society. Modernization involves many different processes such as urbanization,
social diversification, wider technological access, higher education levels, openness of
information, and communication within and outside the country, among others. But,
which of these examples particularly favors democratization? Christian Welzel argues,
“they enhance the resources available to ordinary people, and this increases the masses’
capabilities to launch and sustain collective actions for common demands, mounting
effective pressures on state authorities to respond” (Haerpfer, p.81). In essence,
modernization improves the masses’ political influence. Across new democracies in the
Soviet bloc, economic prosperity has risen following the Soviet Union’s demise and
capitalism’s control of the market economy. Historically, people have often linked the
trends of capitalism and democracy. They embody similar doctrines of individual
freedom and accountability of government/leadership. Democracy encourages
privatization of businesses and resources and capitalist firms want some freedom in
making market-decisions. However, capitalism can undermine the quality of democracy
by creating wealth inequalities, manipulating public opinion, and commodifying people's personal information (like data collection). Strong civil society brings together different kinds of people to interact and respect other ideas. Civil society encourages participation and citizenship, two core democratic principles. Laurence Whitehead points out that, "the obvious question...in new democracies is how associative and communicative practices of civil society are to be squared with the aspirational or juridical fictions of 'political society'" (p.78). In the next section, I will focus on strong civil society as a significant influence in democratization.

Civil Society in Democratization
Among the necessary facilitating powers behind democratization, civil society and voluntary associations serve as a state-monitoring device that helps the common citizen interpret their government's actions. Through the mechanism of civil society, groups of citizens meet, discuss, and relate politically. This vessel for community interaction establishes "the sphere of autonomy from which political forces representing constellations of interests in a society have contested state power" (Bernhard, p.307).

Since independent groups provide a space for political participation and action, strong civil society is a necessity for democratization. The presence of voluntary associations aids democratization in three ways. First, civil society emphasizes democratic principles such as social capital and citizen participation. Second, civic groups occupy political space that reinforces the stability of democratization. Third, the networks and outputs of a political community inspire agency in mass mobilizations and social movements. Civil society pressures regimes to be more democratic and responsive to society's needs.

First, by engaging citizens in political discourse in their community, civil society promotes the unifying force of social capital, which directly contributes to democratization. Through frequent meetings and events, a vertical voluntary association (like a church group or the Lion's Club) initiates dialogue between people with different interests and perspectives. When members of civil society understand and listen to alternative perspectives, they often develop trust and empathy for their fellow members. Social capital consists of subjective values and attitudes that bind citizens together.
through a mutual understanding of difference. Trust and reciprocity are imperative for social/political cohesion, stability, and cooperation. Generalized reciprocity requires risk-taking and vulnerability, where one person’s good service will be repaid at an uncertain future time, by an unknown stranger. Organizations espouse the messages of trust that mirror democratic values. Civic virtues of moderation, compromise, and balanced discussion teach members how to participate in a political structure that oscillates between priorities on social values. A trust or faith in the system of a community group runs parallel to the understanding of partisanship in a democracy. Without the consolidation of trust, democratization movements prioritize governance that favors individual’s interests rather than equal participation. Critics of civil society’s role in democratization believe that a small assembly’s interests control a larger group’s demands for a change in governance; through vertical power structures, an organization’s leaders dictate the norms of civil society (O’Donnell). In particular cases (like the US Democratic or Republican party), these statements hold validity. Yet, in locally influenced community settings, voluntary associations have horizontal linkages that allow equal participation and the socialization of citizenship (Newton, p.229). Based off the Tocquevillian model of civic virtue, socially integrated groups produce ‘thin trust’, an outcome of non-personal ties that constitute an enduring basis for community integration in large-scale society. By creating trust and social capital between different citizens, civil society teaches the skills of compromise that reinforce democracy’s principles of participation and citizenship.

Second, through the occupation of space, citizens exercise the freedom of assembly, expression and association with their participation in civil society. A voluntary association acts upon these democratic freedoms when it inhabits space. Spatial occupation displays the tangible existence of the norms and values that circulate society. During meetings, protests, events, or even imprisonments, an organization turns “constrained physical landscapes [like buildings or squares] into venues for people power” (Cruz-Del Rosario, p.2) By dissenting from the undemocratic values of a pre-transition regime, civil society exercises rights to expression through information dissemination. Groups use physical space as a podium for broadcasting knowledge and
the issues facing the community; they turn space into a strategic resource. Additionally, organizations hold onto public space independent from the exercise of state power, which gives them the ability to freely judge the nature of the regime. Democratization requires the physical manifestation of the opposition’s demands and the capabilities for political organization. During initial uprisings, undemocratic governments want control of all political space, in order to root out the materialization of democratic principles.

O’Donnell writes:

> By trivializing citizenship and repressing political identities, authoritarian rule destroys self-organized and autonomously defined political spaces and substitutes them for a state-controlled arena in which any discussion of issues must be made in codes and terms established by the rulers (p. 48).

In a transitional period, civil society and the ruling collective place high value on spatial power and symbolism, because civil society applies the freedom of expression and association to the manifestation of the democratizing goals.

Third, civil society socializes individuals into cooperative behavior and provides them with the skills to shape politics at a local and national level. Each voluntary association has a particular mission with norms and values that correlate with the group’s aims. Civil society’s physical promotion of democracy building unites members in the cause for equal rights and control. The development of social capital and presence of an organization grows the networks of civil society. Through networks of newsletters, websites, face-to-face interactions, and social media, groups expand and enhance their community beyond a dedicated few. Networks “permitted long-term and long-distance coordination of the activities of many people who had never met...to experience themselves as members of a community—a movement—engaged in a common purpose” (Markoff, p.25). Networks link people to give them agency in democratization.

Organizations with denser networks reinforce impersonal trust, which brings citizens to work together. While the norms of civil society emulate political participation, “we learn to participate by participating” (Pateman, p.105). A popular upsurge plays the essential role of pushing the transition further than it might otherwise have gone. The deprivation of citizenship inspires voluntary associations to act in ways that mirror their beliefs in
dialogue and inclusion. “Fraternity (or social capital) turn a self-defeating concern with individual liberty into a sustainable concern for collective liberty and social justice” (Newton, p.226). The networks and collective action of civil society inspires members to consolidate as a functional unit for democratization and state accountability.

The success of democratization is embedded in the strength of a society’s civic engagement collectives. Not only does civil society instruct citizens on the democratic principles of participation and compromise, organizations occupy public space to espouse a message, with the emphasis placed on their freedom of expression and association. The involvement of civil society in transitional periods provides networks, skills, and organizing factors that expedite the process. Civil society does not always include everyone. But horizontally structured groups, which root themselves in a community mission, facilitate the construction of democracy.
2. Soccer Supporters as Civil Society

Throughout the world, sports teams act as the ambassadors of cities, communities, or countries. Citizens identify with their team as the embodiment of their local pride and traditions. Even when the players hail from different locations, sports clubs possess a strong local tie to the geographic and social landscape of its origins. The roots of a soccer team include the community’s history, politics, economics, and culture. With the increasing integration of world markets and information, many soccer communities have grown beyond the boundaries of a neighborhood or a state’s borders; the corporatization of soccer has erased certain traditional practices and styles of play for a club. Nevertheless, a soccer club remains tied to a local identity that can unify people from across the globe. Within the clubs, supporter groups express a club’s identity and their loyalty through marches, banners, and organized events. Also known as firms or Ultras, some supporter groups in the Mediterranean have open membership, equal power distribution, and community outreach. These firms become an integral part of civil society, where they engage in democratic discussions, occupy a political space, and participate in political action. In this section, I will outline how soccer creates solidarity that reaches beyond its neighborhood’s boundaries. Moreover, I will argue that supporter groups, as a part of civil society, teach and influence democratization processes.

Soccer and Identity

Through cultural markers, geopolitics, and a club’s socioeconomic background, a soccer club’s supporters act as a unit in their representation of their local community’s culture and politics. Unlike most other sports, soccer clubs establish themselves as a cultural center within urban neighborhoods. Fans interweave their club’s history into the social fabric of their community. A supporter group will buttress their community’s space with cultural markers, including colors, statues, and symbols. Surrounding their stadium, restaurants, pubs, community centers and other neighborhood spaces post banners of a team’s colors, their club’s symbol, or even erect statues of icons in the open air. Team territorial markers usually originate in a cultural/political/economic institution that
distinguishes the neighborhood apart from others. In the case of West Ham United, their colors of claret and blue derived from the Thames Ironworks house colors, an East London shipyard where the future West Ham United began. In the center of Kadikoy, a neighborhood on the Asian side of Istanbul, Turkey, the statue a charging bull, called Boğa Heykeli, was given to Enver Pasha in 1917 during the German Occupation. Supporters of Fenerbahce, the soccer team based in Kadikoy, reclaimed the statue and named it after Serhat Akin, a swift winger known for his bullish playing style. Using overt indicators of their club’s territory, a community reinforces the presence of a soccer team in their area’s physical space.

Additionally, supporters mark their club’s space through non-physical means, including songs, chants, and legends. The songs and chants act as supporter’s anthems, which unify viewers with a social history. While many chants insult opposing teams or venerate their players, particular melodies hold their place in the community’s identity. Originally based on a Rodgers and Hammerstein tune, ‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’ echoes across Liverpool FC’s grounds before every game. Yet, each April 15th, Liverpudlians remember the 1989 Hillsborough Disaster, where 96 fans died in a stadium catastrophe and controversy still circulates over police accusations and the retribution of the deceased. The Broadway melody ‘You Never Walk Alone’ represents supporter’s solidarity and commiseration that drastically shaped their community and, more broadly, soccer stadium regulations.

In accordance with the cultural markers of a soccer club’s followers, the socioeconomic and political background of supporters can form the identity of a club and establish political rivalries between urban neighborhoods. Even though widespread broadcasting and global financial integration of soccer clubs has commodified the identity of clubs and supporters (as discussed in the next paragraph), non-European fringe leagues still retain strong connections between teams and the geopolitics of the neighborhood they are based in. For example, in Istanbul, there are three primary teams that boast the strongest support in the 15 million-person city: Galatasaray (in the Galata neighborhood), Fenerbahce (in Kadikoy), and Besiktas (in Besiktas). Generally, supporters pledge loyalty to the team from the nearest neighborhood or based on their
familial ties to a club. The geographic and social landscape of these communities reflects
the identity and supporter’s self-identification.

Galata, a sub-neighborhood of Beyoglu, is located in the epicenter of Istanbul
commerce and political institutions. Surrounded by foreign consulates, theaters, and some
of Turkey’s most luxurious restaurants, this neighborhood encompasses Istanbul’s
entertainment and commercial nucleus. As Turkey’s oldest and arguably most prestigious
high school, Galatasaray Lisesi prepares Turkey’s future leaders and has long been the
bastion of Turkish aristocracy. This school founded Galatasaray Spor Kulubu (GS),
where the school’s political and economic preeminence carried over into soccer
dominance with 46 domestic titles and a UEFA Cup title. As a club, Galatasaray has been
associated as Istanbul’s ‘old wealth’ club, where influential individuals influence the
administrative decisions of GS. Club chairman Unal Aysal stated, “Galatasaray is
property rich. We have places across Istanbul, we have 25 million fans around the world”
(Hughes).

Across the Bosphorus Strait on Istanbul’s Asian side (Anadolu), Fenerbahce’s
success as Turkey’s wealthiest soccer club mirrors the economic rise of Anadolu
businesses. Less than a century ago, Kadikoy embodied traditional Ottoman values and
poor economic growth. Without the two bridges that connected the sides in 1973, the lack
of efficient cross-continental integration left neighborhoods like Kadikoy and Uskudar
from Istanbul’s rise to regional power. In these respects, Turks recognized Fenerbahce as
the team of Istanbul’s working class. During the 1970s, Istanbul’s rapid urbanization and
booming construction industry changed the landscape of the Asian side. The bridging of
both continents opened inexpensive property opportunities for industrial development in
Anadolu. Kadikoy’s growing wealth index gentrified the neighborhood and Fenerbahce
as a club. Parallel to the influx of capital into the area, Fenerbahce won four league titles
and made itself as powerhouse. Today, Fenerbahce stands as Turkey’s richest team with
annual revenues of $142.7 million (“World’s Richest Soccer clubs”).

Besiktas, Turkey’s third largest club, sits in one of Istanbul’s transportation,
commercial, and population-dense communities. In the pedestrian market place,
apartments overlook the maze-like streets that snake between hidden hookah bars and
subterranean barbershops. Located in a central neighborhood on the European side, Besiktas square has spatial significance for upset citizens voicing their opinion. Since Taksim Square in Beyoglu is characterized as the battleground between people and the government during demonstrations, police anticipate protestors marching to Taksim and, in recent years, have closed off access to Istanbul’s center (Sozen, 2013). The police erect barriers in Besiktas Square in order to prevent Taksim from being occupied as political space. As a transportation hub with thousands of commuters daily, Besiktas became an important space for gathering demonstrators and voicing political frustration. With industrial architecture and condensed urban living, Besiktas identifies as an area controlled and unified by the people and community values. Even with a police headquarters nearby, the constant flow of workers, families, and businessmen attracts a degree of anonymity from the police. In soccer, Besiktas Jimnastik Kulubu (BJK) is Istanbul’s oldest club and the less wealthy of the other two teams. In comparison to Galatasaray and Fenerbahce, residents classify BJK as the team of the proletariat, even though these claims are not necessarily true.

With soccer’s accessibility to infiltrate foreign markets through TV broadcasting and the greater mobility of people through urban landscapes, the corporatization of clubs dilutes a team’s social and political identity. Since the 1980s, distinctions between neighborhood teams have deteriorated until few clubs in major leagues retain their local ties. Since a club’s owners and upper administrators do not reflect the demands of the fans and since a club’s squad hails from different continents, a soccer club no longer represents the club’s supporters. In the Istanbul cases, the cultural identities still exist in the cores of each neighborhood, but socioeconomic backgrounds do not separate fans based on teams. The geopolitical distinctions between the clubs live on in the public’s psyche, but the commercialization of each club and Istanbul’s urbanization trends dismiss this myth. Furthermore, a club’s socioeconomic background does not accurately characterize their supporter’s identity. Erden Kosova, an Istanbul art critic, explains,

1 This statement is in comparison to the other two main Istanbul teams. Istanbul B.B. was founded in 1990, and is less prosperous than the other three clubs. Also, there are sixteen lower division teams that are from Istanbul. In comparison, there are forty soccer clubs in London, England.
“Besiktas, Fenerbahce, and Galatasaray share more or less the same sociology… Surveys show, for example, that Besiktas supporters have stronger economic backgrounds than both Fenerbahce and Galatasaray” (Kuhn, p.171). Cities’ growing infrastructure and educational support causes greater job mobility and movement in habitation. A more equal social distribution between Galata, Kadikoy, and Besiktas means that the clubs project a less politically charged image. Especially in the Premier League and La Liga, a club no longer fully represents a neighborhood with local players, owners, or even facilities. On October 2nd 2013, Manchester City fielded the first ever Premier League team without an English player and they won 7-0 over Norwich City. Moreover, Manchester City lists their supporter’s chants on their websites (with explanations of all cultural references) so that fans abroad can join the club’s fan network. Although owners have always recognized their sports team as a business enterprise, economic decisions guide the endeavors of club administrators in modern soccer cases. When Malaysian billionaire Vincent Tan took ownership of Cardiff City, he rebranded the club for marketing purposes by changing Cardiff’s colors (from blue to red) and their emblem (from the bluebird to the dragon). The backlash from Cardiff supporters continues two years later, as fans continue to wear blue jerseys and lament their club’s profit-maximizing mindset (Manfred). As detailed in the next section, supporter groups better represent a community’s political aspirations rather than the clubs they support.

In the fringe leagues of Egypt and Turkey, soccer is still tied to a community’s cultural identity, but the club’s administration and players react to soccer’s increasing integration to the global political economy. The commodification of a club’s crest converts a neighborhood insignia into the club’s owners’ brand. Ever more, a club will make a transformative decision independent from the community and supporter’s consent. However, while the clubs attempt to exploit the romanticism behind cultural rivalries, soccer still unites neighborhoods under the umbrella of a team’s history and attachment to the area. Supporter groups have replaced clubs as the main unifying political agents of a community. The soccer networks between friends, family, and community members are stronger than the connection between a fan and his/her club.
Soccer and Civil Society
With distinct cultural/historical ties to their community, supporter’s groups act as political units within civil society. Commonly known as firms or Ultras, these supporter groups are highly organized factions that dedicate themselves to their clubs and their fellow supporter. Unlike ‘hooligan’ firms, Ultras focus on the betterment of their team/community, rather than the fighting of another club’s supporter’s group. Supporter groups are linked through their allegiance to their club, family connections, political leanings, and ultimately, their role within their urban neighborhood. By displaying flags, flares, banners, and symbols, Ultras employ a club’s cultural markers to demarcate territory and to intimidate opponents. Defined as spectator groups with varying violent proclivities, Ultras collectively recognize that “the unifying goal… is to offer strong expression and colorful support for their club” (Perryman, p.142). Occasionally, there is more than one firm per club; a club can have multiple firms generally differentiated political leanings. Firms occupy public space through community centers, pubs, city squares, streets, and stadia. In this section, supporter groups are identified as civil society in four ways. First, average fans join supporter groups in order to reaffirm their place in society and develop their own identity. Second, Ultras give agency to public areas, turning them into political areas. Third, Ultras organize themselves through formal institutional structures. Fourth, these supporter groups teach democratic principles that enable democratization movements. With these four aspects, supporter groups establish themselves as key political actors in civil society.

First, the reasons for joining civil society groups are both the interest in the group and the development of self-identity. In a community that draws its cultural values and history from a specific credence (whether it be religion, political party, or soccer), an individual has a natural interest in the unifying bond between themselves and the community. While an individual will have an awareness and interest on a socially embedded topic, this enthusiasm does not translate to joining a civil society group. Becoming a member of a community group originates in an individual’s need to attach one’s identity, including values, passions, and outlooks, to something bigger. Dorothy Rowe writes:
We need other people to confirm our theories, to assure us that we are valuable and lovable, that our life will unfold as we expect it to unfold, and that the world is what we see it. To get such confirmation, we join and identify with these groups whom we expect will provide that confirmation (p. 56).

Joining an Ultra organization gives self-awareness and reaffirms significance to an individual’s place in society. It helps develop status, reputation, and the search for inclusion and differentiation. Membership in a firm establishes an individual as a key role within the operation of bonding a community through soccer. Supporters project their collective love onto the community and their team. “We are drawn to people who share our views, and so all those who share a particular team as their patron saint come together as a group with shared attributes, rituals, and songs” (Perryman, p.57).

Second, soccer firms give agency to public areas. Supporter groups transform streets, bars, transportation, and the stadium into a strategic resource for civil society. Before matches, Ultras, who have spent all week preparing spectacles, congregate in the centers of neighborhoods to converse, sing, eat dinner, and inevitably drink. As the squares and restaurants begin to overflow, supporters chant and march towards the soccer community’s nucleus: the stadium. A team’s arena is the epicenter of territorial integrity that must be held from opposing supporters. Ultras believe that holding the stadium translates to their team’s wins and the health of their neighborhood. They use chants, flags, symbols, flares, and occasionally violence to maintain their possession of the ground from police presence. Simon Inglis describes the terraces of a stadium as, “nominally part of a private estate, [but] regarded by most of its users as a public space. You paid to enter, but once inside, you were part of a free-form gathering. As long as consensus prevailed—in the form of self-policing and mutual respect—there was seldom any need for concern” (Perryman, p.92). Moreover, the stadium creates a unifying anonymity for supporters to express their dreams and grievances with little to no governing control. Harry Sewell identifies this spatial agency as a conversion of “constrained physical landscapes into venues of people power” (Cruz-del Rosario, p.2). Stadiums set up a space for disenfranchised voices against authoritarian regimes. As explained in the Egyptian and Turkish cases, stadiums become a battleground between Ultras and the state for control over civil society. Supporter groups take space that are
entrenched facets of social life and employ occupational strategies to affirm the significance of people in society. Although supporter groups are institutionalized, the seizure of space shows people’s dislodging of public establishments.

Third, unlike the covert, unorganized violence of hooligan culture, a small group of leaders design Ultra groups to organize visual expression, marches, and political agendas. Ultras have a formally institutional structure with headquarters, elections for leadership, membership lists, and a “rational-bureaucratic model of association” (Perryman, p.142). Some organizations have hierarchal positions like president, treasurer, and secretary. However, many others, like Ultra White Knights (from Cairo’s Al-Zamalek club) in Egypt, derive leadership from coordination committees and horizontal synchronization. In this vein, most firms do not have strict membership eligibility requirements. Even though the structures of firms have a core group of leaders, the groups remain open to anyone with a love for the club and team. As highly organized factions, firms perform weekly activities like program events, prepare for matches, organize trips, fundraise, and rally in political settings. The Egyptian club Al-Ahly’s firm, called Ultra Ahlawy, designates members to execute an ‘al-mission’ each week, which varies each week. These duties reinforce the cohesion of supporters that pledge to Ultra Ahlawy. Equal participation and individualized missions distributes power horizontally among Ultra members. Additionally, Ultras use familial, social and online networks to connect different members of the community to each other. Increasingly in political protest, Ultras around the Middle East use Twitter and Facebook to coordinate the movements of protestors and announce issues about community security. These technologies construct an instantaneous virtual association between Ultra groups in different communities or countries. Digital social networks spread information among many members and gives individuals’ agency. Firms’ horizontal structures and networks will be outlined in the respective cases of Egyptian and Turkish soccer.

Fourth, some supporter groups establish social capital, a respect for the election process, balanced political discussions, and citizen participation. Fan organizations center around the essential themes of club, equal inclusion, and just process. In specific urban areas, community members trust the horizontal organization of Ultras over underhanded
law enforcement (Batuman). A degree of unspoken altruism connects supporters in urbanized communities. The Tocquevillian model of civic virtue translates to the social trust built between members of soccer’s civil society. Coined by sociologist Emile Durkheim, ‘organic solidarity’ is the impersonal, yet altruistic connection that stems from trust and reciprocity. By constructing ‘thin trust’, firms unite the weak ties of a heterogeneous neighborhood through the adhesive of sports’ passion. The supporter’s social capital changes an individual’s worries for self-expression and liberty into the “sustainable concern for collective liberty and social justice” (Newton, p.226). Soccer’s concept of impersonal reciprocity serves as a civil society’s contribution to democratization. When an individual’s good service might be repaid at an uncertain time, by an unknown stranger, reciprocity underpins political cohesion, cooperation, and other democratic ideals. “The existence of a civil society with a democratic state is a absolute necessity... [a] solidarity movement [is] able to force the party-state regime to recognize the principle of autonomous organization and the boundaries of the public space” (Bernhard, p.325). Historically, civil society increases voter turnout during election years because organized groups increase political awareness through debate and a stronger bond to the greater good of their area. In an attempt to show how civil society plays in the elections process, American Citizen Participation Study (1990) recorded that non-members of civil society scored 2.9/10 on a political knowledge test, while members of churches, veteran’s groups, and sports groups scored 5.6/10. While Ultras may not believe in their political system, they acknowledge sociopolitical problems that impact their daily life and the livelihood of their soccer family. Through balanced networks of political debate, supporter groups use disseminated knowledge to hold accountable politicians, their club’s board, and even leaders of their Ultra group. The broader issues of unemployment, poverty, corruption, or environmental concerns circulate group meetings, pub-talk, and stadium chants. In a case of Egypt’s Al-Ahly, their Ultra firm Al-Ahlawy dismissed a founding leader of the firm because he spoke openly to the media about the organization. In most Egyptian institutions during the Mubarak era, an upper level coordinator would not be democratically dismissed for violating one institutional rule. Yet in the case of
firms, "participation in voluntary associations, consistent with a theory of social capital, seems to enhance the ability of some citizens to hold the executive accountability for policy outputs" (Claibourn and Martin, p.199). The power held within citizen participation teaches democratic norms of election turnout and political accountability.

As detailed in this section, soccer plays a pivotal role in determining community identity, civil society, and modes for democratic action. Displaying symbols, banners, colors, and territorial presence, soccer groups mark social and political difference between other firms and their club’s corporatization of the sport. Moreover, Ultras act as political units through the sociological binding of a community, the occupation of public space, their internal structure, and their learned democratic values. In non-democratic regimes, these values create an early understanding for how equality operates before law. Firms’ horizontal structures empower members when these individuals lack any political influence in local or national governance. In authoritarian regimes (Egypt) and plebiscitarian autocracies (Turkey), supporter groups provide the stepping-stone for the democratization movements. The following chapters will outline how soccer contested the non-democratic state power, created avenues of organized protests, and faced challenges in implementing their demands. The chapters will argue that as creators of ‘thin trust’ and civic virtue, soccer groups pioneered the initial success of democratization in Egypt and Turkey.
3. The Rise of the Egyptian Ultra Movement: Revolutionary Soccer

Without soccer, the Egyptian 2011 revolution would not have been successful. In the past decade, several uprisings against Mubarak have challenged the authoritarian regime, but they did not become popular movements. Before January 25<sup>th</sup> 2011, Egypt wilted under the weight of poverty, unequal income distribution, a flawed educational system, government and police corruption, unemployment, militarism, and many other political/economic factors. Egypt’s vastly heterogeneous demographics demanded different needs from the stalwart administration; they could not articulate their need for greater representation in government. While secular liberals requested a Western-style democracy, Islamists called for a reinforcement of their lost identity’s roots in Islamic tradition; military officials inquired a new system to control Mubarak’s legislation; anarchists called for freedom above all else. After thirty years of Hosni Mubarak’s rule and of a perpetual ‘state of emergency’, groups not affiliated with Mubarak felt disempowered without citizen participation, fair or free elections, adequate implementation of democratic policy, judiciary oversight, or human rights freedoms. The authorities disallowed non-religious forms of expression, community organizing, or art.

In 2007, the already soccer-mad country created their first supporter groups in Cairo. Separate from the preexisting, board-managed Football Associations (FAs), fans operated their supporter groups without the oversight of Mubarak-appointed club chairmen. As some of the freest parts of civil society, Ultras became increasingly organized and opposed to the restrictions by the police, Egyptian Football Association (EFA), club boards, the state, and the media. Initially as apolitical firms, Ultras from Cairo’s rival clubs Al-Ahly and Al-Zamalek engaged young men in soccer, social discourse, civic service, and civil participation.

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2 Egypt’s heterogeneous interests come from religious, and political divides between citizens. Among Egypt’s various religious perspectives, 90% are Islamic (with a Sunni majority and Shiite minorities) and 9% are Coptic Christians. However, “Islam in Egypt is plural (if not always liberal) and diverse (if not necessarily heterogeneous)…this homogenous Sunni population is diverse in its approach to politics” (Sullivan and Abed-Kotob, p.19). Egypt’s political pluralism includes Islamists, secularists, liberals, Marxists, Mubarak followers, and military supporters (Springborg).
In early 2011, Ultras became an essential part of the demonstrations that toppled Mubarak. They used the tools of community engagement, organization of the masses, street fighting, and networking. They replaced fear with a collective courage. The nature of the demonstrations evolved and so did the identities of Ultras. Mirroring the passion of the young revolutionaries, Cairo’s two Ultra firms Al-Ahlawy (from Al-Ahly) and Ultra White Knights (from Al-Zamalek) transitioned from apolitical attitudes to a celebration of the revolution and collective action across rival lines. Even though many other factors attributed to the success of Mubarak’s deposition, Ultras’ actions developed civil society and contributed significantly to Egypt’s democratization. In the post-uprising period of elections, Ultras struggled with direct political influence.

Since civil society was in its infant stages under Mubarak’s oppression, the young revolutionaries lacked the political knowledge or clout to form a viable political party. Ultras faced further challenges in the police and military intimidation during the Port Said disaster in 2012. Skepticism for the state still exists and the deposition of Mohamed Morsi unearths further criticism of the Egyptian military. While soccer supporters were essential for the awakening of Egypt’s populace, they understandably could not fully democratize their nation overnight. Currently, Ultras continue to resurrect Egypt’s civil society as the leading protestors of the justice, police, and governance systems. From January 25th to February 10th 2011, Egypt transitioned from an authoritarian rule to plebiscitarian autocracy, but following the suspension of the legislative and judicial bodies, I argue that the Egyptian state still operates as an authoritarian government.

In this chapter, I will map out the Ultras’ role in the Egyptian uprisings and how slow democratization stemmed from the tools acquired by an infant civil societal structure. The chapter will be split into six sections. First, supporters created Cairo’s apolitical Ultras as independent entities that represented the supporters’ needs over the higher-powered board members. Second, with influences from Tunisia, Ultras imparted revolutionary individuals with necessary skills for protest, but did not actively endorse

3 These other key factors to the revolution’s success include the military’s intervention in deposing Mubarak (Kirkpatrick), the protestors’ use of social media (Juris p.260), demands by outside countries (“Pressure builds on Mubarak”), and many others.
the movement. Third, these firms adopted the spirit of the protests and changed the
groups’ essence from club-focused to democracy-building. Fourth, supporter groups used
specific networks and soccer’s unifying bonds to connect Egypt’s heterogeneous
population in a single task. Fifth, soccer’s role in Egypt’s developing civil society did not
completely democratize Egypt; strong military intervention and wide-spread
demographical needs halted the country’s progressive democratization. Sixth, Ultras’
power grows as grassroots campaigns for social justice, secularism, and peace. This
uprising involved multidimensional political identities that contributed to the ‘end’ of the
modern country’s longest autocracy. Without noting the role of Egypt’s Ultras, outsiders
fail to grasp the full picture of Egypt’s young revolutionaries’ motivations and
quintessence.

**Egypt’s Pre-Revolution Ultras**

Before supporter groups existed in 2007, Mubarak’s state apparatus controlled soccer
clubs and supporter organizations. Half of Egypt’s Premier League clubs were affiliated
to the military, police, government ministers or provincial authorities (Cruz-del Rosario).
Military-owned construction companies built 22 Egyptian stadiums and former President
Mubarak appointed loyalists in charge of the league: Samir Zaher as president of the
EFA, Hassan Saqr as National Sports Council chairman, Hassan Shehata as national team
coach, and Hassan Hamdi as chairman of Al-Ahly SC (arguably the most successful club
team in the African continent). Supporters could join Fan Associations (FAs), but the
clubs’ board members managed the events, expression, and mission of the groups. In a
broader sense, Egyptians were restricted from joining opposition political parties, anti-
neoliberal movements, or even local art troupes. As a former associate to the Nasser
regime, Mubarak introduced a 30-year ‘state of emergency’ that suspended individual
rights for Egyptian security purposes. While he lifted Egypt out of immense debt and
modernized the economy, the restraints on individual freedom and the growing income
gap marginalized millions of Egyptians.
In response to the state’s control of soccer, several passionate supporters of Cairo’s teams, Al-Ahly and Al-Zamalek, formed distinctive rival Ultra groups in 2007; the most prominent of these firms were Al-Ahlawy for Al-Ahly and Ultras White Knights for Al-Zamalek. Egyptians founded these Ultra groups as a reaction to society’s estrangement of soccer supporters and an unrepresentative political system (Elgohari, May 2013). For both clubs, free expression of their passion for soccer guided the mission of the firms. Ultras unfurled banners that covered a quarter of the stadium, organized deafening chants, and marched openly to the stadium as a perceived threatening force. While each club despised the other, Ultras identified the enemy as repressive authority, including the police, EFA, their club’s board, and the state. One militant Ultra stated, “there is no competition in politics, so competition moved to the soccer pitch. We do what we have to do against the rules and regulations when we think they are wrong. You can’t change things in Egypt talking about politics. We’re not political, the government knows that and has to deal with us” (Cruz-del Rosario, p.12). Ultras advocated for equality and respect within their internal structure, but regularly faced armed police in violent street conflicts. Police officers used teargas, water cannons, sheer numbers, and force to their advantage; young supporters, while mostly beaten by the police, learned street fighting organization and techniques.

From their abhorrence for authoritarian control, Ultras emphasized a horizontal internal structure that integrated all members into their organization. While the performances, events, and violent outbursts required coordination and a leading direction, Cairo’s two main firms balanced different operating committees so that no true leader existed: all members decided the mission of the respective firms (Elgohari). For both Ultras White Knights and Al-Ahlawy, open membership allowed any dedicated supporter to join, anybody could be nominated to administer group affairs, and nobody was forced to act against their will. Common among all supporter groups is seniority as a criterion for a position of authority. Al-Ahlawy organized members through face-to-face and

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4 In 2007, younger members left their FAs because of their close ties to the club administration. Drawing from Tunisian Ultras (the first North African Ultra groups), Egyptian youth created supporter groups across the country in order to develop stronger supporter identities (Elgohari, June 2013).
social networks, and kept cohesion through the assignment of specific weekly duties, termed ‘al-mission’. Ultras White Knights had a more centralized system, described as “circumpunct” (Elgohari, May 2013, p.15): if Ultras White Knights was pictured as a big circle, the firm’s influential coordination subgroups represented smaller circles that would move closer to the center of influence depending on their importance at the time. For example, if Ultras White Knights witnessed the need for greater community outreach, a subgroup that organized food drives or youth development would have more authority during that time. Both Al-Ahlawy and Ultras White Knights have designated protective subgroups that operate to defend members in altercations with the police or rival Ultras.

During the Mubarak years, protection of the stadium became vital for the survival of Egyptian firms. As the only public space of anonymity, the stadium was the only public area liberated from police oversight. “The soccer match offered the disenfranchised a voice in an environment of forced silence and official misrepresentation, challenged the political and social boundaries set by authoritarian regimes and thrived on goal posts enlarged by globalization” (Cruz-del Rosario, p.1-2).

Since Al-Ahly and Al-Zamalek share the Cairo International Stadium, each Ultra group claims an opposite curve/terrace behind the goal. Historically the most inexpensive seating area, the “curva” has significant value to Ultras as their home and sanctuary. Riot police have attempted to displace Ultras in the past from curvas, but the density of fervent supporters secured their territory. When police forces tried to stop a game in 2008, the police and Al-Ahlawy clashed in a violent battle for control of the area. From the stadium conflicts to the streets, Cairo’s Ultras operated as horizontally organized, anti-state, apolitical agents. They attracted supporters from different races, religions, classes, and yet connected them through soccer. Ultra groups did not recognize the power of this connection in Egypt’s heterogeneous, disintegrated society until the 2011 revolution.

**Ultras in the Revolution’s Buildup**

As public frustration mounted in the Arab World, tensions between Ultras and the police heightened with more arrests, tighter-security procedures, and further unrest. In April 2010 at an Al-Ahly match, the state enforced 30 police checkpoints, hid security cameras,
and refused entry to certain supporters. During a match between Al-Zamalek and Al-Masry in November 2010, police tortured an Ultras White Knights leader, Turek Masakin, and in solidarity, supporters from both teams wore black clothing. In December, the police detained 50 Ultras as a precautionary measure during a Cairo derby. Increasingly, the role of Ultras focused on the call for political order and justice. When Tunisia revolted against state repression on December 14th 2011 and deposed president Ben Ali, Egyptian youth explored their power to protest. In a match between Al-Ahly against Al-Makasa, Al-Ahlawy members raised the Tunisian flag in the terraces and chanted in support of Tunisia’s revolution. However, Egyptian students, secular liberals, Islamists, and many other kinds of people guided the commencement of the revolution, not the soccer Ultras. In the direct lead-up to January 25th 2011, both Al-Ahlawy and Ultras White Knights issued statements to their members that their mission was to display support for their respective clubs, not protest politically. During this nascent uprising, the firms distanced themselves from a political stance and gave power to the individual’s actions. Groups asserted the absence of their political, ideological, economic, or religious orientation; it was the freedom of the individual to choose their ideal country. Al-Ahlawy’s message stated “the individual members have the freedom to believe in whatever ideas they want” (Elgohari, May 2013, p.41). In a private message, Ultras White Knights affirmed, “this is what we are preparing for” (Pollock, p.80).

Even though Ultras understood that this public awakening could transform spaces for expression, politics, and society, it initially conflicted with their mission as supporters. Ultra groups represented varied interests from a diverse fan base; they were not supposed to be unified in a political movement. Therefore, on the first day protests, individuals marched against the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) without a distinctive collective body. Members of Ultras White Knights saw their opponent members of Al-Ahlawy marching and vice versa. Aggravated by electoral corruption, censorship, police brutality, unemployment, and economic disparities, both Ultras united in participation in the demonstrations. When approaching the front lines of protest, an Al-Ahly fan and his Ultras White Knights neighbor realized that, “when we saw the police violent reaction, we remembered what the police was doing with us on our way to the
stadium or even in the streets” (Elgohari, May 2013, p.43). Within the next few days, Al-Ahlawy and Ultras White Knights, as whole firms, collaborated, shared resources and shifted their identity in support of the protests.

Unity in Action

Ultras did not start the movement, but quickly joined and organized the protests. After years of street fighting conflicts and organizational coordination, Cairo’s two firms joined forces to occupy the streets and drive out police presence. By January 25th, the plausibility of a successful transitional period sparked the Ultras’ involvement in the uprisings. From their initial apolitical (almost anti-political) position, both firms saw the revolution as an opportunity for deposing the authorities that they had always opposed. The regime, media, club boards, and EFA had painted them as criminals (Amara). Al-Ahlawy and Ultras White Knights changed their identity by celebrating the members as martyrs of the revolution. The civil participation and civic duty taught during Ultra meetings was manifested onto the streets. As one enormous mass, young revolutionaries, elderly workers, Ultras, and many other kinds of protestors, Egypt stormed the streets of Cairo, demanding the end of an authoritarian era. “[The Ultras] fought battles, they understood organization, they understood logistics and they understood fighting a street battle with the police… and in this sense, they played a very key role in breaking the barrier of fear” (Pollock, p.80).

For eighteen days, hundreds of thousands of Egyptians occupied Tahrir Square. With makeshift tents sprouting up over night as the fighting continued, the Ultras used their mobilization skills to keep order in the square. The firms organized social services within the settlement, including trash collection, medic booths, and demarcation of media members. Ultras mapped out the square and supplied consistent flow of information on the violence. They patrolled the square’s perimeter and controlled entry. The occupation of public space signified the physical disruption of Egyptian life that the regime had started. The protests would not end until the authorities met their demands; the revolutionaries gave agency to public space by holding Tahrir Square captive. In the violent confrontations between protestors and police, the Ultras used battle-like
coordination to dislodge the security forces’ presence. “The ultras’ battle order included designated rock hurlers, specialists in turning over and torching vehicles for defensive purposes, and a machine like quartermaster crew delivering projectiles like clockwork on cardboard platters” (Cruz-del Rosario et al., p.14). Pro-Mubarak supporters that infiltrated the square were captured and humanely imprisoned in the Sadat metro station. The organized occupation and militant defense eradicated the longstanding fear of many Egyptians. Muhamed Hassan, a leader of Ultras White Knights, declared, “When the police attacked, we encouraged people. We told them not to run or be afraid. We started firing flares. People took courage and joined us, they know that we understand injustice and liked the fact that we fight the devil” (Cruz-del Rosario et al., p.15).

Protestors constructed unity through chants, songs, and graffiti that did not focus on club, ethnic, or religious difference, but on freedom and a new future. Since protestors needed order to hold onto the square, occupants worked to keep areas clean, help injured neighbors, and feed their fellow citizen; this unity in Tahrir taught the values of civil society to revolutionaries involved. This micro-society fabricated thin trust between protestors and fostered the need for civic virtue. Other Ultra groups around Egypt joined the protests including Ultras Yellow Dragons from Ismaily in Ismailia and Ultras Green Eagles from Al-Masry in Port Said. During an Al-Ahly versus Kimah Asman match, both Ultras chanted anti-Mubarak messages and targeted Habib El-Adly, the Minister of the Interior. While soldiers stopped the game and attempted to evacuate the stadium, the united firms held the terraces and collectively rebelled. Over 74 people were injured. Egypt’s non-existent civil society during the Mubarak era started to emerge with the occupation and Ultras’ use of networks.

Networking and Communication

Across the globe, observers marveled at technology’s impact on the organization and management of Egypt’s revolution. Labeled Egypt’s “Twitter Revolution”, the uprisings used social media and interpersonal networks to spread key information (Gvosdev). With hundreds of thousands of protestors moving in different directions, the messages of revolutionaries needed to travel quickly and reach a broad audience. Ultras’ combination
of online media, graffiti, and television coordinated a diverse mass of protestors. Sociologists identified Egyptians' communication as the logics of aggregation, which assembles people with different backgrounds into a physical space, by using nonphysical networks. Online networks were organizational tools to highlight the direction of protest movements and to map out the occupation's landscape. Twitter and Facebook provided instant information for hotspot areas of violence and safe-havens for injured protestors. Ultras networked with other members to ensure the effective success of demonstrations. “The occupations were liminal spaces where participants put into practice the alternative values related to the direct democracy, self-organization, and egalitarianism they were fighting for” (Juris, p.268). Soccer's online networks furthered the creation of a digital civil society.

As a sociological tool, social media connected Egypt's ethnically, religiously, and politically heterogeneous population by giving power to its members. Al-Ahlawy and Ultras White Knights reached out to thousands of members by posting images, videos, and messages on their victories over the police. In the safety of their own homes, supporters engaged and shared the stories with other social circles. After thirty years of suppressed expression, Egyptian individuals could undermine the state by navigating the unregulated pathways of the Internet. Hassan Mostafa, a defensive midfielder that played for Al-Ahly in 2005 and Zamalek in 2009, stated, “Social media has created bridges, has created channels between individuals, between activists, between even ordinary men, to speak out, to know that there are other men who think like me” (Pollock, p.78). The power to share, criticize, and post on one's profile fostered the revolution's strong virtual community. These networks allowed the circulation and exchange of ideas that reinforced interaction, collaboration, and debate of complex ideas. Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and email list-servs produced a sense of co-presence, which elicited feelings of solidarity in the community. This connectedness manifested itself in the physical occupation of public space. Ultras used the logic of aggregation to unify members and non-members from heterogeneous backgrounds to support the revolution. Social media gave Egyptians the opportunity to participate actively in a nation-building movement. The logic of aggregation “helped to facilitate and reinforce a widespread politics of aggregation that
conceived the occupations as both an effective protest tactic and a model of an alternative, directly democratic world" (Juris, p.268). Although the government periodically shut down Internet and phone connections, protestors used ‘Thuranga’ satellite phones that could send videos to other countries, which were eventually uploaded to social media sites.

Additionally, Ultras expressed its anti-authoritarian mission through graffiti and television channels. As a purposefully illegal form of communication, street art and graffiti detailed the histories of previous clashes with the police, giving the revolution a narrative. While it mostly involved anti-establishment words and symbols, graffiti demarcated Ultras territories, safe havens in homes, and escape routes. “During and after [the] revolution, graffiti was considered one of the most important communication tools between the revolutionaries and the rest of the people. The Ultras depended on this graffiti to communicate their mentality, beliefs, and causes” (Elgohari, May 2013, p.27). Moreover, Egyptian television was a contested area of communication during the revolution. Egypt has the largest number of state-owned TV channels in the Arab World and used these channels to divert attention away from the uprisings (Amara, p.50). With news networks not covering the demonstrations, Al-Ahly and Al-Zamalek’s privately owned team channels opened discussions on the protests. As independent channels geared towards the supporters, these fan channels “are still among the few spaces where it is possible for journalists and sports analysts to disapprove of Arab government policies for youth and sports development and to engage in debates on accountability and citizenship” (Amara, p.69). The opening up of media allowed freer flows of information between protestors and observers. More instantaneous and mobile technologies created ‘communities of communication’. These networks broadcast the revolution to foreign media sources, transforming every demonstrator into an insider. Supporter group’s use of networks established closer bonds and more effective coordination.

Post-Mubarak Politics: Military Intervention

“One of the key measures of progress in the process of democratization in any given country is the implementation of regular, properly scrutinized, free and transparent elections of government officials”
After the military deposition of Mubarak, Egypt’s full democratization movement failed because of military domination of politics (Blanche) and the absence of populist political parties that represented Egypt’s diverse interests. With vast sectarian, ethnic, and political differences, Egypt’s ideal democracy needed a spectrum of grassroots parties that connected to Egypt’s different communities. However, this section argues that three areas of weakness diluted Egypt’s democratization transition. Military intervention in the legislature, protestors’ political inexperience, and destabilized civil society disconnected the new political structure from the protestors’ goals. Ultimately, soccer united Egyptians to demonstrate, but could not transform this infant civil society into a formal political party. As a protest and outside-the-government tool, supporter groups could not enter a militarily governed system, which still dictated the terms for governance.

Following the 18-day occupation of Tahrir Square, Hosni Mubarak resigned as president and gave transitional power to the SCAF for six months before elections would occur. SCAF Chairman Mohamed Tantawi became chief-of-state and subsequently dissolved the constitution to the demands of the protestors. In the first step towards democratization, the military held a constitutional referendum, where 40% of the population turned out to vote 80% in favor of the modifications. Yet over the next six months, an onslaught of protests continued to demand clarity and justice for former regime members. This frustration grew over the SCAF’s failure to follow protestor demands. Between February 2011 and the presidential elections in June 2012, the interim government polled Egyptians five times, causing election-fatigue (Mayton). Also, the military had a strong presence in the constitution-writing process through a military-appointed constituent assembly. The presidential elections occurred in a hostile, skeptical environment that was characterized by poverty, unemployment, and insecurity. Egypt’s Presidential Election Committee, which was created by the military-interim government, disqualified ten contenders, including three popular candidates, from the race.5 Hundreds

5 The three popular candidates included Hazem Abu Ismail (Salafist Nour Party), Omar Suleiman (National Democratic Party), and Khaled Al Shater (The Brothers, the Freedom and Justice Party). The Committee disallowed Ismail’s candidacy because his mother
of thousands demonstrated after these decisions and the young revolutionaries worried their democratization was only theoretical (Araim).

By May 23rd 2012, the first round of elections saw three candidates come out on top: Mohammad Morsi (Muslim Brotherhood) and Ahmed Shafiq (Mubarak’s last Prime Minister), with Hamdeen Sabbahi, the favorite of the young revolutionaries, soon falling to the side (Araim). With the Muslim Brotherhood’s dominance of the People’s Assembly, Morsi gained additional support from his platforms on social justice, charity, and Islamic values. While not active participants in the revolution, the Muslim Brotherhood acquired votes from “well-organized political activities, including assistance programs for the poor and their protests concerning human rights abuses, government repression, and manipulation to undermine the democratization process” (Sarquis, p.887).

By building social safety nets during authoritarianism, the Muslim Brotherhood garnered the votes to elect Mohammad Morsi as the new Egyptian president. In the first elections after the revolution, the Muslim Brotherhood, one of only forms of civil society under Mubarak dedicated to community needs for over 30 years, swept the elections. Egyptian voters trusted an organization that, whilst Islamist, prioritized social welfare over political gain.

Yet, before Morsi could declare himself victor, the SCAF abrogated power from both legislative and executive branches of Egypt’s government. In a ‘soft coup’, SCAF invalidated the Peoples Assembly elections and dissolved both houses of parliament. Additionally, the military issued an interim constitution that granted themselves control over the prime minister, lawmaking, the national budget, and declarations of war without oversight (Kirkpatrick). “Under these circumstances, both national and international analysts felt that either Morsi or Shafiq would represent only slight differences in practice, as the military would remain the real power behind the scenes” (Sarquis, p.893).

The young revolutionaries deconstructed the hierarchal authoritarian structure only to witness the SCAF directly influence constitutional and electoral committees, as well as held dual citizenship, which violated the earlier constitutional amendment. As Mubarak’s former chief of military intelligence, Suleiman, popular amongst Mubarak loyalists, fell short of the required amount of endorsements. Al Shater, leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, was disqualified because he served a jail sentence. (Golia)
control legislation. Without any strong progress towards democratization, Ultras raised questions over why the protestors could not access the Egyptian political system.

With Egypt’s exceptionally diverse demographics, soccer supporter groups could not gather the political clout to compete against mainstay institutions. While Ultras clearly did not want to construct policy, the young revolutionaries lacked the institutional history of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Mubarak regime, or the Egyptian military. Many protestors came from professional and powerful backgrounds with political knowledge and wealth. But, “no one has offered detailed, informal plans for institutional and economic restructuring. This is partly because [revolutionaries] lack key skills, including experience in participatory governance, which was simply never allowed” (Golia, p.23).

The revolutionaries needed political development to accommodate diverse interest groups with common goals and a respect for the greater good. Political sociologists like Claus Offe and Danilo Zolo attribute democratic hardships with fragmented civil societies. “As a result of modernization, society has developed into a highly differentiated and fragmented set of subsystems which now make it impossible to bring it under the control of democratically elected representatives of ‘the people’” (Nash, p.222). These subsystems clash under different social environments, divisions of labor, religious beliefs, and levels of trust between people. Many Egyptians trusted the Ultras to organize demonstrations and ignite social waves, but, as evidenced from the elections, few believed in the structural integrity of the revolutionaries’ party. Traditional politicians won in controlling policy. Even though no populist organization could democratize with Egypt’s authoritative military, soccer supporter groups contributed to the awakening of Egypt’s civil society and civic participation.

Ultras failed to change state policy from within, but the supporters launched successful accountability and transparency missions against soccer and political officials. Cairo’s firms collectively outlined a blacklist of counter-revolutionaries and people that accused the youth of being Egypt’s ‘traitors’. Posted to the Internet, this list included Hassan Shehata (Egyptian national coach) Hossan and Ibrahim Hassan (pro-Mubarak coaches of Zamalek) Samir Zaher (Director of EFA), Ahmed Shoubeir (former Al-Ahly goalkeeper and TV personality), Hassan Hamdi (chairman of Al Ahly) and others. This
anti-corruption group included 250 sports personalities and representatives of the revolution. This group called for a military investigation of sports corruption during the Mubarak era (Amara, p.161). As a result, Zaher stepped down as director of the EFA with several pro-Mubarak officials following suit. The firms succeeded in restructuring Egypt's sports politics.

**Port Said Disaster: Military Intimidation**

During the election on February 1st 2012, Ultras suffered from mass causalities in the city of Port Said, raising questions on police/military intimidation. During a match between Al-Ahly and Al-Masry, a violent outbreak between fans lead to 72 supporters dead and hundreds injured. With the crowds crushing individuals and weapons brandished, the police did not interfere but rather watched the event unfold, according to televised evidence. As a united group of supporters that coordinated communications and occupations, this aggressive behavior in the Al-Ahlawy section was uncharacteristic of the supporters, who usually stood against the authorities. Mohamed Hamoud, a goal­scorer for Al-Masry, stated, "When the match was over supporters rushed on to the pitch and then the lights went off. People didn’t know who was who. I then saw people throwing the Al Ahly supporters from the stands" (Chulov). While the media accused Ultras of holding fireworks and weapons, Cairo’s Ultras believed the police negligence and planting of aggressors was an intimidation tactic. The SCAF understood that the Ultras opposed the interim government and had coordinated protests after the revolution (Elgohari, May 2013). Ultras White Knights and Ultras Yellow Dragons stood in solidarity with the victims of the disaster. Both Al-Ahlawy and Ultras White Knights agreed not to attend a friendly game, placing justice for Port Said first. Cairo’s Ultras continued to demonstrate, but took a hiatus from its political presence to mourn its losses.

By March 11th 2012, a coalition of Cairo’s firms issued a statement of solidarity to the interior ministry and soccer authorities. This statement made six demands that stemmed from the Port Said Disaster. The demands called for the just retribution for the victims, the end of fabricating evidence against the Ultras, no sports activities until achievement of the first goal, and releasing of all Ultra detainees. In their last two
demands, Ultras reaffirmed their rejection of all state coercive policies targeted at supporters, and that they would continue to sacrifice themselves for their country’s freedom. Ultras blamed military intimidation and demanded that the SCAF hand over power to a civilian government. Ahmed Gamel Eldin, the interior minister, “asserted that Ultras members were patriots and should not engage in the political conflicts between the political forces in society” (Elgohari, May 2013, p.52). After days of teargas and protests, Egyptian courts reviewed the case and, in January 2013, sentenced 21 people to death. The decision triggered mixed reactions. Some Ultras felt betrayed by the courts, which convicted their fellow Ultra members. Protests broke out in Cairo, where 11 people died, including 2 policemen. In reaction to the justice system’s decision, Ultras alienated themselves as agents for democratization, falling into the stereotyped category of urban thuggery.

Morsi’s Deposition and Ultras’ Current Campaigns
While Morsi’s tried diminishing military authority and political instability, supporter groups led grassroots campaigns to promote state accountability and citizen rights. While soccer has not infiltrated the government structure, it has changed citizens’ perspectives on Egypt’s justice system and on soccer’s internal structure. As the military and Muslim Brotherhood battle for control of the state, soccer remains a battleground for the freedom of expression, justice, and individual empowerment. Soccer’s current battleground is set by Morsi’s forced resignation and continuing Egypt’s continuing transitional period.

During the early months of Morsi’s rule, the president attempted to redistribute legislative and executive powers from SCAF control to assigned or previously elected officials from the Muslim Brotherhood. Upon coming into office, Morsi found himself surrounded by the military officials, who had operated the interim government. While Islamists held around 70% of the parliamentary seats, the interim government suspended People’s Assembly, declaring that one-third of the seats were illegitimate (Leyne, June 2012). On July 8th 2012, Morsi ordered the dissolved parliament to reconvene, but, under the new constitution, Egypt’s Supreme Constitutional Court ruled against Morsi’s order and stated that the SCAF held the power to reconstitute a new assembly (Leyne, July
Within the state apparatus, Morsi attempted to reduce the SCAF’s power by requesting Mohamad Tantawi, head of Egyptian armed forces, and Sami Anan, Armey chief of staff, to resign. In a televised event, Morsi stated, “I want the armed forces to devote themselves to a mission that is holy to all of us, which is protecting the nation,” (Londono). Many civilians viewed this action as the consolidation of Islamist power in government. As this power struggle between Morsi and the SCAF continued, liberal secularists viewed Morsi’s actions as a return to authoritarian control. Zeinab Abul-Magd, a history professor at the American University in Cairo denounced, “Now, officially, it is a Brotherhood state. Now it is official they are in full control of state institutions” (Londono).

On the one-year anniversary of Morsi’s inauguration, Egypt erupted with demonstrations, condemning Morsi’s increasingly authoritarian rule and negligence for the rule of law. Many Egyptians opposed the violent protests, either supporting Morsi or respecting the democratic process. On June 28th 2013, General Abdul Fatah al-Sisi suspended the constitution and deposed Morsi in a coup d’etat. Violent clashes between protestors and pro-Morsi supporters ignited the streets of Egypt’s urban areas. Within the week, the military propped up appointed Adly Mansour as interim president. The military bestowed to Mansour executive power in the Supreme Constitutional Court and the right to issue constitutional declarations; Mansour held the reins of executive, constitutional, and judicial powers. The SCAF enforced forceful security measures in their conflicts with pro-Morsi demonstrations; during one crackdown on August 14th 2013, 683 people were killed according to the Egyptian Health Ministry (Fahim).

Unlike in the 2011 revolution, Ultras were not organizing political entities in the deposition of Morsi. Firms did not overtly state their allegiances to a particular side. The protests after the Port Said court decision tarnished their image as fighters for justice. Nonetheless, supporter groups maintained their anti-police message and still defend the interests of their members. In November 2013, Al Ahly supporters marched by the thousands to the interior ministry, demanding the release of 25 detained supporters. These detained supporters were welcoming their handball team home at the airport when police deployed teargas to manage the crowd. Khaled Abu Qiraa, an Al-Ahlawy member,
declared, “We have come here today to send a message to say free those who are imprisoned, free the oppressed, rescue us from the tyranny of the interior ministry. We say to the court and to the state, free our oppressed sons, free the youth against whom you fabricated a case” (“Al Ahly football fans march through Cairo demanding detainee release”). Additionally, Egypt’s soccer politics remain tense and closed for political expression. In Al Ahly’s African Champion’s League final match against Orlando Pirates, Ahmed Abdul-Zaher celebrated after scoring a winning goal, by raising a pro-Morsi four-finger sign for ‘Rabaa’. This gesture represents the Rabaa El-Adaweyah Square march that opposed the military’s removal of former President Morsi. After the match, Zaher was suspended indefinitely and condemned by current sports minister Taher Abu Zeid as having issued a “grave insult” (Salah). At the beginning of next season, fellow players and Al Ahly supporters plan to protest the suspension.

Conclusion
Through the coordination of social movements, Egyptian Ultras have strengthened domestic civil society and pushed for the state’s further democratization. From 2011-2014, Egypt has transformed from an authoritarian regime to a plebiscitarian autocracy, where elected officials’ actions were not checked by other institutions, and then back to an ‘emergency’ military-rule. The country’s democratization remains in a transition period as a moving target. As typically apolitical groups, the Ultras never intended to pursue policy-making roles in the new government. These organizations united Egypt’s clashing demographics in a revolution against corruption, police brutality, economic imbalances, and authoritarianism. While Egyptians still struggle to see the fruit of their demonstrations, Ultras maneuver bureaucratic waters and act as the populace’s voice. “The struggles of social movements are radically plural since they involve a multiplicity of identities and political sites; in this way, they also mitigate for the extension of ‘liberty’ to new groups of citizens” (Mouffe, 1988, found in Nash, p.246). Ultras became Egypt’s political outsiders, built on trust and passionate unity.
Al-Ahlawy members calling for justice over the Port Said victims (Oliver Weiken/EPA, 2013)

Ahmed Abdul-Zaher displaying the pro-Morsi ‘Rabaa’ sign after scoring against Orlando Pirates (Sport’s Illustrated, 2013)
Carsi members hijacked a bulldozer to break through police barricades (Wikimedia)

A side-by-side comparison of Turkish and American CNN during Gezi Riots
(OccupyGezi Tumblr)
4. Turkey’s Search for Modern Kemalist Democracy: Soccer and Gezi Park

Turkey’s stronger civil society had a greater initial impact on democratization compared to Egypt. Over 75% of Turkish citizens are active soccer fans (Batuman, p.691). In a survey by sociologist Ahmet Talimciler, 63% of citizens prioritized their team below ‘only their family and nation’, and 30% labeled their team ‘more important than anything else (Batuman, p.691). As a cornerstone of the country’s lifestyle, soccer joins together Turkey’s ethnically diverse population with supporter groups, and it divides people between team allegiances. Istanbul’s three main teams, Galatasaray, Fenerbahce, and Besiktas, continually battle for supremacy on the pitch, and in the streets. For decades, supporter groups have protested in the streets and clashed with police forces. However, the Gezi Park protests in the 2013 summer were different.

When Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that Istanbul’s last central green-space, Gezi Park, would be replaced by a shopping mall, environmentalists occupied the park and Istanbul residents expressed frustration with this proposal. Upon the riot police’s use of excessive force to evict occupiers, Turkey’s democratization movement began in Gezi Park. Protestors called for greater state accountability, decentralization of Prime Minister powers, and the end of discriminatory policies against Turkey’s oppressed minorities. In the thick of organizing the occupation and street fighting, Istanbul’s united Ultras alleviated the fear of demonstrators and participated in the state’s democratization. As an established civil society group, some firms saw the political message to represent an open, diverse, and accepting community. This openness to ethnic, religious, and gender heterogeneity countered previous Kemalist modes of governance. In essence, Turkish protestors and Ultras espoused a progressive ideology that updated and democratized Kemalism.

In this case study, I will argue that the civil society of Turkish soccer abetted the Gezi Park protests and the demand for a modern Kemalist democracy. Moreover, I will compare Turkey’s accomplishments in democratization to the earlier case study of Egypt. This argument will cover five sections. First, Turkey’s historical regime oscillations show
the military and people’s dedication to upholding Kemalist ideals. Second, Besiktas’ Ultras, ‘Carsi’, have anti-political and leftist beliefs that encourage progressive political participation. Third, before the protests, this anti-commercialist, secularist, and progressive sentiment grew in Ultras, environmentalist, and liberal communities. Fourth, Carsi and other firms joined together to demand accountability in Erdogan’s regime, greater citizen participation in city projects, and political inclusion of Turkey’s minorities. Fifth, political demonstrations continue on the street and in the stadium, with increasing signs of progressive democratization.

20th Century Turkish Democracy
Since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish democracy has been a work in progress. In the past century, Turkey survived six political transition periods: the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) revolution in 1908, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk’s formation of the Turkish Republic, and military coups in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997. Turkey experienced ‘regime oscillations’ between military authoritarian rule, competitive electoralism\(^6\) and democracy (Sozen, 2010). Through these regime oscillations, the state and military’s priority of Turkey’s independence from foreign interference remained constant. Yet two main problems hindered Turkey’s full democratization: military interference in politics and the oppression of opposition movements. This section will briefly outline both the history of Turkish democracy and the impact of Kemalism, as a political ideology. Both are critical in understanding current democratization movements.

After the failed efforts of Sultan Abdullamid II, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) led a constitution-writing movement in 1908. Labeled as the ‘Young Turks’, this group of young, educated bureaucrats deposed the Sultan and pushed for nationalist reforms to the Ottoman Empire. When Turkey sided with the Central Powers in WWI, the CUP government witnessed its land in the Balkans, Arabia, and the Levant dissolve into independent states after the war ended in defeat. Since Germany’s demise appeared imminent, Turkey wanted to survive as an independent state, rather than as an

\(^6\) As a hybrid form of democracy, competitive electoralism is where “fair, free, and competitive elections [occur] with inclusive suffrage” (Sozen, 2010, p.3). However, the state holds greater power over citizens’ freedoms whilst in office.
European subsidiary (Kalaycioglu). At the Battle of Gallipoli, General Mustafa Kemal defeated the invading British force and established himself as a military and folk hero. By 1923, Mustafa Kemal ‘Ataturk’ (meaning father of the Turks) led the War of Independence and created Turkey’s first republic.

Among Ataturk’s many reforms of the government, he instilled Kemalism, an ideology that still dominates Turkish politics. Based on the need to maintain Turkish independence and sovereignty, Kemalism comprises of six arrows: republicanism, populism, secularism, nationalism, statism, and reformism (Mango). Republicanism originates in Turkey’s movement away from Ottoman sultanate towards a Western style republic. Populism calls for the transfer of political power to citizenship, where the state serves the people’s interest. With the abolishment of the Caliphate, Turkish secularism ended religious influence over government action. Following the creation of the Turkish republic, Ataturk used a singular nationalist identity to unite Turks within its borders. Statism prioritizes economic and technological development after years of stagnated innovation and scientific process. Reformism called for the abandonment of Turkish traditions for modernization; this process included changes to the alphabet from Arabic to Latin and ‘Western’ fashion protocol (such as the banning of the Fez).

As noted above, the Kemalist arrow of nationalism was instituted to use identity to define the nation. Ataturk’s notion of ethno-religious homogenity in Turkey meant that all Jews, Kurds, Armenians, Christians, Muslims were Turkish. Multiple identities could not flourish in the wake of Turkish nationalism. Schools forbade Kurdish language instruction, the state banned Sufi Islamic practices, and the government did not formally recognize the Kurds as an ethnic group. Ataturk’s disregard for ethnic and religious variety began a long period of suppressing opposition movements. Even after Ataturk’s death in 1938, state officials and the military upheld Kemalist principles and glorified his ‘saving’ of Turkish independence. As the model for the republic, Kemalism remains the spine of Turkish politics.
Yet, while Ataturk promoted the ‘republican’ state, his reforms were not fully
democratic. Even though the Turkish Republic formed in 1923, the government did not
hold competitive elections until 1950. With Ataturk’s Republican People Party (RPP)
having single-party rule for 27 years, the Democratic Party (DP) came into power as a
 populist and civilationalist party. DP strengthened its position by bolstering its
Department of Censorship and imprisoning writers of opposition newspapers. DP
loosened Kemalist secularist laws, reopening mosques and legalizing the Arabic call to
prayer. By 1960, the Turkish military judged that DP was turning the republic into an
Islamist elected authoritarian state (“Timeline: A history of Turkish coups”). On May
27th, the military staged a coup d’etat and executed Prime Minister Adnan Menderes. As
the ‘guardian of Kemalism’ (“Turkey: Army will not get involved in Politics”), the
military amended the constitution, which reduced the executive branch’s power over the
judiciary. The amendments incorporated military powers into political influence and
reaffirmed the separation of religion and state; the 1960 coup balanced powers in the
federal government and gave greater civil liberties to minorities.

But the military involvement clauses prompted the 1971 coup, where the armed
forces blamed poor economic development on the lack of “strong and credible
government… inspired by Ataturk’s views” (“Timeline: A history of Turkish coups”).
Throughout the 1970s, political instability continued with 11 different Prime Ministers
and rising tensions between the socialist left and Islamist right. By 1980, the military
intervened to halt violent clashes involving the nationalist organization Grey Wolves,
socialist ‘Devrimci Vo’, the Kurdish separatist group PKK, and others. During martial
rule, thousands were tortured and executed as opponents to the state. Following the third
coup, conservativism strengthened in Turkish politics and surmounted in the 1997 ‘soft-
coup’. After years of growing Islamist parties, the military made recommendations to the
government, which PM Necmettin Erbakan accepted and resigned.

Throughout all post-Ottoman transitions, the agents of change emphasized state
accountability, secularism and decentralized executive power. While the military
maintained a Kemalist plan for the government, the frequency of their interventions
fragmented political compromise, bipartisanship, and respect for electoral process.
Currently, Turkey holds free, fair elections and there is diminished military power in the civilian constitutional amendments after the 1997 transition. Yet, the civilian visions for Turkish democracy mirror some Kemalist ideals that stem from the previous transitions. Modern Turkish democratization movements search for a modern Kemalism in the wake of past reforms.

Istanbul’s Pre-revolutionary Ultras

After the 1980 coup, Turkish firms emerged out of violent political factions. In a divided time of the Republic, soccer supporter groups represented solely the interests of their community. Istanbul’s three main clubs, Galatasaray SK, Fenerbahce SK, and Besiktas Jimnastik Kulubu (BJK), vehemently opposed each other’s team, firm, and neighborhood. “Istanbul teams were enmeshed in a gang-like feud, characterized by clandestine raids, lynchings and street battles” (Batuman, p.687). Supporters of all Istanbul clubs fought inside the Inonu Stadium for the ‘curva’ seating during a period known as the “Inonu War”. Additionally, not all firms of the same club agreed ideologically. Galatasaray’s two main firms were the conservative, nationalist UltrAslan and leftist Tek Yumruk, which meant ‘Single Fist’ (Kuhn). On the Asian side of Istanbul, Fenerbahce had various leftist firms, including Kill For You, UniFeb, and Genc Fenerbahceliler. While BJK has politically diverse groups now, Besiktas started with one anti-authority group named Carsi. Since the 1980s, Carsi, meaning ‘Marketplace’, has become arguably the most influential supporters group in Turkey. During the divided 1980s, Carsi developed the characteristics of a political party, where representatives were invited to parliament and held political rallies. Along with UltraAslan and several Fenerbahce firms, Carsi negotiated a truce between rival firms in the 1990s.

Within its maze-like neighborhood, Carsi is the nucleus of inclusive discussion and solidarity movements. The Ultras’ membership is open to all races, beliefs, religions, and ethnicities. One student named Deniz stated, “All kinds of people are in Carsi. Professors, doctors, street children…” (Batuman, p.689). Their mission embraces “values like anti-racism, anti-nationalism, anti-capitalism, anti-all-those-things, that took football from what it originally was: a simple game for all, regardless of the color of your skin,
the country you live in, or the amount of cash you have in your pocket” (Kuhn, p.162). When BJK star Pascal Nouma received racial abuse from opposing fans because of his French-Senegalese origin, Carsi displayed a banner stating, “We are all black”. When opponents taunted a BJK manager who’s father had been a janitor, Carsi made a banner declaring, “We are all janitors”. When astronomers decided that Pluto was no longer a planet, Carsi raised a banner announcing, “We are all Pluto” (Batuman, p.690). This dedication to group solidarity translates to their internal structure; Carsi boasts no hierarchy, no leaders, no elections, and no official meetings. However, an inner circle of ‘Big Brothers’ exists and coordinates outreach programs (visits to children hospitals, senior homes, and blood drives) and the gameday spectacles. Their inner circle has an Armenian public spokesman: Alen Markaryan. Appearing on television shows, at university talks, and more; Markaryan speaks on behalf of his supporters group and the neighborhood. With an Armenian figurehead in Turkey, Carsi has created a truly democratized association of civil society.

Their anti-politics stance makes Carsi political ideology a moving target that occasionally contradicts itself. Carsi member, Alaatin Cam stated, “As you live longer, you have to turn your back on things you used to believe in. You change your identity. Carsi isn’t fascist, so it doesn’t resist those changes” (Batuman, p.699). The Ultras have marched for environmentalist, Marxist, anarchist, gender equality, and ethnic equality causes. While Carsi maintains its platform as ‘apolitical’, the firm has become politically consolidated in liberal thought. Since the Ultras mirror the left-leaning voter demographics of the Besiktas neighborhood, Carsi is the microphone for the community’s beliefs in demonstrations. Yet, in Turkish politics, Carsi’s more open attitude towards Armenians, Kurds, and women opposes traditional Turkish political ideology. The firm’s diversity contradicts the Kemalist pillar of ‘nationalism’, where all citizens were nationalized Turks. In the past century, Kemalist nationalism flourished as an ideology; the state suppressed opposition parties, like Kurdish separatists, socialists, Greek Cypriots, and people that questioned the government. However, through inclusive

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8 Carsi has a conservative branch that vies for power, but this part does not gather the same ground force support in political rallies (Kuhn).
discussion and civic participation, Carsi became a stronghold for the Turkish state’s opponents. Civil society within Carsi and other Ultra groups reinforces society’s openness to a heterogenous Turkish identities.

The Lead Up to the Taksim Protests
As Besiktas supporters and the police clashed in the streets, tensions between PM Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party (AKP) and opposition parties heightened over commercial, religious, and political issues. In the months leading to the Gezi Park riots, both opponents to the AKP and Besiktas’ Ultras displayed deep frustration with Erdogan’s evolution into semi-authoritarian leadership. Over his eleven-year period in office and three successful elections, PM Erdogan became increasingly Islamist and controlling of legislation (Sozen, 2013; Bila; Dorsey, June 2013). Erdogan swept three elections and moved to establish a more one-party rule within parliament. Between 2011 and 2013, his government passed alcohol retail bans on university campuses, city streets, and from within 100 meters of a mosque or school. Additional Islamist policies banned advertising for alcohol and made the ‘morning after’ pill a prescription drug. With almost no limits on his executive power, Erdogan heavily influenced constitutional courts and the police force. Both institutions targeted opponents of the state and enacted censorship laws. Out of 179 states, Turkey’s “freedom of speech” ratio ranked 154th, with more incarcerated journalists than Iran and China combined (Dorsey, June 2013). The Department of Censorship monitored programs on TV, in newspapers, and online (Bila). Furthermore, Erdogan’s regime launched ongoing attacks on minority groups, by purging them from positions of power and imprisoning them in massive amounts (Sozen, 2013).

Months before the protests, Carsi Ultras witnessed Erdogan’s overbearing police tactics on the general community of Besiktas. On May 1st 2013, identified as ‘May Day’ or ‘Labor Day’, Besiktas erupted with violence between leftist labor advocates, Carsi, and mob police. Two weeks later, after BJK’s last league match, Ultras marched back to Besiktas by the thousands. The police judged that the supporters rallied too close to Erdogan’s office in Besiktas and the two sides clashed. Many fans left injured from the use of police teargas, riot batons, and tanks. Italian sociologists, Alessandro Dal Lago and
Rocco De Biasi noted, “The intensification of police control inside and outside the stadia led the Ultras to adopt a mode of military organization and a warlike attitude against the police. As a result, football hooliganism qua social problem has to be regarded as the legacy of such policing” (Dorsey, June 2013). Adamantly against the Erdogan administration, Carsi sided with the environmentalists when the Prime Minister threatened Gezi Park in Taksim Square.

In May 2013, PM Erdogan revealed city plans to replace Gezi Park with a commercial mall. Located in the sociopolitical center of Istanbul and Turkey, Gezi Park stood as the last green space in the city’s center. The city plans mirrored Erdogan’s neoliberal commercialism, which spent state funds on elite condominium projects, grand malls, and construction developments. Activists realized that the government treated public space as a commodity, and began occupying the park on May 28th. This occupation reinforced the presence of people in the public landscape. Two days later, on May 31st, police entered the park, burned tents, sprayed teargas, used water canons, and beat occupiers. Within hours, protestors of all backgrounds and Ultras stormed Taksim and Besiktas square, demanding the liberation of the park and of their government.

The Gezi Park Movement: The People’s demands for Progressive Politics

Following the police extradition of Gezi Park occupiers, protestors marched against the AKP and police. In solidarity with the occupiers and fellow aggravated citizens, men and women faced the full force of Turkish riot police, including teargas, pepper gas, water canons, tanks, rubber bullets, hand weapons and sonic canons. In this unexpected protest, Ultras acted spontaneously on social media, reaching out to other supporter group networks. Even though Istanbul’s numerous firms have vastly different political views (ranging from conservative nationalist to Marxist), Ultras united in a consolidated effort to reinforce the people’s power and end police brutality. Unlike Egypt’s rival, but ideologically similar firms, the three most involved groups were nationalist Ultraslan (Galatasaray), Vamos Bien (Fenerbahce) and leftist Carsi (BJK). Exchanging jerseys and strategies, these firms breached the intense rivalry between clubs because all supporters were needed to impact the riots (“Supporter groups on Istanbul’s three major teams join
forces for Gezi Park”). United on the front lines, Istanbul’s Ultras built courage among less-experienced protestors. They were crucial in the first few days of protest. An anonymous protestor said, “[The Ultras] were always in front when police used gas. They really helped those not used to facing such things. They protected them” (Jones). In Besiktas, supporters transported demonstrators in massive fan buses and trucks past teargas launchers, noise bombs, and water canons (Hobbs). In order to block police vehicle advances, Ultras helped build barricades using abandoned cars, fences, and various street items. After days of riots, Carsi members hijacked a bulldozer and broke police barriers to give protestors complete access from Besiktas to Taksim Square. Bagis Erten, sports reporter for NTV Spor, declared, “It was a critical moment. Supporters of all the big teams united for the first time against police violence. They were more experienced than the protestors, they fight them regularly. Their entry raised the protestor’s morale and they played a leading role” (Dorsey, June 2013). The riots spread around the country to Izmir, Trabzon, and the capital Ankara. In a physical and practical sense, the Ultras brought the gunpowder to the duel and crucially helped protestors occupy Taksim Square.

In a theoretical sense, Carsi and other groups applied the democratic ideals of participatory governance and equal rights to the protest’s mission. The strength of supporter groups’ civil society translated into the protestors’ ethnic, religious, and gender-inclusionary agenda. Gezi Park became a safe haven for free expression and open discussion of homosexuality, nationalism, capitalism, minority rights, and religion (Hobbs). By giving people free access to political discussion, the protestors re-imagined Turkey’s future. A member of the Tek Yumruk firm (Galatasaray) stated, “The important thing that I find about Gezi Park is that so many people who used to be opposed to one another are now talking openly about creating a new Turkey” (Hobbs). The occupation taught the democratic principles of citizenship and equal political rights. While the riots started as an opposition to Erdogan’s semi-authoritarian rule, issues of Kurdish, Armenian, Alevi, LGBTQ, and women’s rights emerged from these discussions. People decorated Taksim Square with protest posters, rainbow flags, and humorous messages.
Protestors blasted Erdogan’s TV censorship of the riots. In order to make democratized political change, the occupiers reached out to the authorities with a Taksim Solidarity Press Release. Protestors demanded that Gezi would remain a park, governors and the chief of police should be removed from office, teargas should be banned, all detained protestors freed, bans on freedom of speech should be lifted, and peaceful demonstrations should be allowed. Moreover, the leaders of the movement outlined whom they represented:

“The wish for peace, and resistance to the war politics being played in our country and in the region; the sensitivities of Alevi citizens; the rightful demands of the victims of urban transformation projects; the voices raised against the conservative male politics that control women’s bodies; the resistance to the coercion against universities, judicial branch, and artists; the demands of all workers, starting with the employees of Turkish Airlines, against the appropriation of their rights; the struggle against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; and the demands for the clearing of the way for citizen’s right of access to education and healthcare” (Taksim Solidarity Press Release).

Influenced by different kinds of civil society, the protestors wanted a democratized state that was accountable for its citizen’s political rights. Strong civil society shaped this progressive mindset towards Turkey’s diverse demographics. Furthermore, the protestors advocated for a modern version of Kemalist democracy or progressive Kemalism. They pushed for other Kemalist arrows but turned against ‘nationalism’. By demanding both the separation of religion and state and a more Western style of governance, the protestors decried Erdogan’s Islamist control over executive and legislative power. They called for a balance of powers with checks on one-party rule. However, their progressive Kemalism did not satisfy Ataturk’s affirmation of single-identity ‘nationalism’. Ataturk instituted policies of ‘homogeneity’ in order to preserve the independence of the new Turkish Republic. Yet, the oppression of diverse groups like the Alevis, Kurds, and Armenians did not satisfy the preconditions for an inclusive democratic republic. The Turkish state’s suppression of opposition groups continued, even in the face of public

9 On the first night of the demonstrations, CNN Turk showed a documentary on penguins instead of the breaking news. Many blasted the media for silencing the protest and falling prey to state pressure. Ultras made it their revolutionary symbol. Similar to the previous joke iterations, Carsi printed shirts saying, “We are all penguins” (Kates).
protest. However, the Gezi Park riots were the first time where regular citizens joined with opposition groups in a democratization movement. Around Turkey, state officials witnessed a democratization movement transform into a progressive re-imagining of Turkish politics.

Prime Minister Erdogan’s Reforms and Democratic Investigations
Following weeks of protest, city officials negotiated with protest leaders and Ultra members. Erdogan promised constitutional changes that would assist impoverished minority communities. On September 30th 2013, Erdogan introduced a ‘liberalization package of reforms’. These reforms focused repealing policies influenced by Kemalist notions of homogeneity. It lifted the headscarf ban on women serving in public office (except when in uniform). The reforms abolished the ‘nationalist student pledge’, which forced all primary school children, regardless of ethnicity, to say they are “honest, hard-working Turks” (Letsk, September 2013). Erdogan suggested lowering the election threshold for political parties to enter parliament from 10% to 5% of votes. This change would allow smaller and minority parties to enter government, giving political accessibility to Kurdish parties. But the reforms failed to address other pressing subjects, like the ban on Kurdish instruction in public schools, Alevi cultural rights, and the anti-terrorist laws that criminalize Kurdish politicians in the PKK. In reference to Erdogan’s lifting of the ban on letters ‘q,’ ‘w,’ and ‘x’ in Kurdish village names, Professor Koray Caliskan stated, “[Erdogan’s] package is completely cosmetic. [He] gave more freedom to three letters than he did to 10 million Kurds in Turkey. What about more local autonomy that Kurds have been waiting for?” (Letsk, September 2013). Evidently, the reforms represented a small step towards democratization and expansive citizenship rights.

Questions over the legitimacy of Erdogan’s administration surfaced following an independent investigation of the government. On December 27th 2013, a high-profile corruption scandal identified the head of a state-owned bank, the sons of cabinet ministers, and leading businessmen as perpetrators of corruption crimes. Following the arrests, Erdogan removed half of his cabinet, senior police officers, and judicial officials...
(Letsch, December 2013). Thousands protested and called for Erdogan’s resignation after the forced removal of officials. During a December match, Fenerbahce supporters chanted against the state’s interference in the investigation. The Ultras called their Prime Minister a thief and then raised a banner saying, “Everywhere is bribery, everywhere is corruption” (“Fenerbahce turns league game into anti-gov’t rally”). Sezgin Tanrikulu, deputy head of the People’s Republican Party (CHP) said, “I have never come across such blatant government meddling with judiciary before. This is highly worrying. The little trust that people had left in the Turkish justice system is now gone” (Letsch, December 2013). As of now, the military remains neutral in the investigation. Many liberal citizens hope that the continuing investigation will perpetrate instigators of police brutality and undemocratic practices.

Conclusion
After years of Islamism and growing authoritarianism, Turkey’s soccer firms applied the democratic principles in civil society to the Gezi Park democratization movement. Ultras’ open membership and free expression epitomized the citizenship values of the occupation. Not only did Carsi and other firms provide the street-fighting knowledge to defend public landscapes, these supporter groups united together and with other interest groups to protest Erdogan’s centralized power. They advocated for equal membership in the realm of Turkish politics. The Gezi Park protestors promoted *progressive Kemalism*, which affirmed political secularism and equal citizenship for Turkey’s diverse population. During these protests, Turkey transitioned from a delegative democracy, where legislative/judicial oversight of the executive branch did not exist, to an imperfect democracy. Within Turkey’s strong civil society came a strong democratization movement that continues to grow and change.
5. Conclusions when Comparing Cases

No state in the Middle East is close to a perfect democracy. Even Turkey, a model for the Islamic world’s democracies, suffers from violations of basic freedoms and internal discord. Following the Arab Spring and Gezi Park protests, Egypt and Turkey continue to struggle with this ‘third wave of democratization’. The countries continually face bureaucratic obstacles, opposing demands, and military/executive intervention in judiciary processes. But, the success of political transitions varies across each state’s situational context. The numerous complexities in Egypt’s revolution make comparing with Turkey’s demonstrations without excessive qualifications. Both cases involved multi-dimensional motives, different actors, and historical conditions that influenced the movements. However, one can apply democratic and sociological theories to the two case studies at a high level of abstraction. The analysis of each case’s theoretical implications allows for a comparative study of Egypt and Turkey.

In both countries, the populace engaged in a social movement to decentralize the state’s executive power. Protestors confronted authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes, which were not limited by judicial or legislative oversight. While the goals of the movements differed respectively, both demanded greater public participation in government and the democratic values of citizenship. The guiding forces behind these revolutions were associative connections in civil society. Michael Walzer said, “The civility that makes democratic politics possible can only be learned in the associational networks; the roughly equal and widely dispersed capabilities that sustain the networks have to be fostered by the democratic state” (Walzer, p.302). Protestors learned principles of democracy in civil society groups, which taught respect for political multiplicity, social trust, and openness to diversity. Young Egyptian revolutionaries deposed a 30-year authoritarian by using their civil society’s network and communication apparatuses. Turkish protestors united many different interest groups that felt collectively suppressed by the AKP administration. But the outcomes of each case differed significantly. Egypt’s SCAF intervention in Morsi’s deposition, rewriting of the constitution, and the suspension of parliament has divided the country. On the other hand, Turkey will hold
elections in 2015 and makes small steps to equal citizenship for minorities. This leads to the question of why did Egypt democratize to a lesser degree than Turkey?

After analyzing both cases, I affirm that stronger civil society leads to stronger democratization movements. The outcomes of Egyptian and Turkish movements stem from the country’s different placement on the spectrum of democratized governments and different levels of civil society. Following a century of military coups, exchanges of power, and the project of establishing a republic, the Turkish state has undergone a slow modernization and democratization process since its independence. While opposition groups and outspoken media sources experience suppressive policies, Turkish citizens maintain the right to participate in associative networks and political multiplicity. Turkey’s stronger civil and political society meant that vastly different groups of people joined together to articulate a strong message of democratization. Environmentalists, conservatives, Islamists, socialists, and many others openly discussed their mission as protesters and made compromises to satisfy different interests. This open interaction socially embedded the democratization movement, which pressured politicians to change policies or risk an election loss. Turkey's political and societal stability enabled the adaptation of a political ideology into modern circumstance; the protestors established progressive Kemalist practice into their movement. In Egypt’s revolution, Egyptians engaged in the first fair elections with any resemblance of democracy, since their 1956 independence. However, the post-Mubarak transitional period lacked the transparency and accountability requested by the revolutionaries. Balanced legislative and judicial branches were non-existent in the checking of the SCAF’s control over federal operations. Unlike Turkey’s recent history of fair, free, and frequent elections, Egyptian citizens could not hold the state responsible for undemocratic actions. Furthermore, under Mubarak, Egyptian civil society consisted of religious institutions and eventually soccer supporter groups. While Egypt’s infant civil society coordinated an enormous occupation, diverse interest groups did not unite in pressuring both military and Morsi for democratization. The young revolutionaries lacked the capabilities to influence policy-making. Egyptians did not trust Morsi’s confidence in parliament and violently turned against their elected leader. The purpose of democracy is not to represent one interest, but
multiple voices that often conflict with each other. Strong civil society creates greater communication between alternative interests in the forms of open discussion, political participation, and coordination of wide-scale protests.

Finally, soccer played a crucial role in both Egypt and Turkey’s democratizations. The supporter groups establish ‘thin trust’ and bolster an individual’s commitment to the community’s greater good. As opponents to police and media authorities, firms are civil society groups whose anti-political beliefs make them hotspots for social activism. In both countries, Ultras applied strong organizational skills, street-fighting knowledge, and messages of solidarity to aid the movements. They provided the muscle to the revolutions and transformed their anti-political stance into an almost nationalist position; they fought for the betterment of their country. In this ‘reclamation’ of political power, the Ultras occupied public space, by taking their battles from the stadium to the streets. By using the world’s most popular sport as a platform, Ultras connected with thousands of members to communicate their democratic principles. These connections built a web of networks to spread information in uncontrolled avenues by the state. Soccer supporter groups still remain pivotal actors in their country’s democratization. From the terraces to the front lines, Egypt and Turkey’s Ultras strengthened their country’s civil society and sparked revolutionary action.
Glossary

AKP: A Turkish political party called the Justice and Development Party. Headed by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the AKP has been in power since August 2002 as Istanbul’s leading center-right socially conservative party.

Al-Ahly: Egypt’s most popular soccer team based in Cairo. Al-Ahly has won 126 official trophies (107 domestic and 19 international) more than any other club in the world.

Al-Ahlawy: Al-Ahly’s most popular supporter group. Founded in 2007, Al-Ahlawy is notorious for strong community connections, pyrotechnic stadium displays, and conflicts with the police.

Besiktas JK: Located on the European side of Istanbul, Besiktas JK is Turkey’s third most popular soccer team. Besiktas JK play in Inonu Stadium and wear the colors are black and white. BJK represent the neighborhood of Besiktas and are also known as the ‘Black Eagles’.

Carsi: Besiktas JK’s primary supporter group that has very close ties with their neighborhood and members. While Carisi members use the anarchist ‘A’ symbol in their name, this support group has no political affiliation to any group. Carisi states that it is an apolitical organization and that it focuses on social issues concerning its members.

Curva: Another term for the terraces of a stadium. Behind the goals, these sections attract the most fervent of supporters and act as a symbol of working-class pride. The terraces have historically had the cheapest seats in most stadiums.

EFA: Egyptian Football Association, the main governing body of Egyptian football/soccer affairs.

Fenerbahce SK: Located on the Asian side of Istanbul, Fenerbahce SK is Turkey’s richest and second most popular club.

Firms: Also known as soccer supporter groups or Ultra groups.

Galatasaray SK: Turkey’s most popular soccer club from Istanbul. The soccer club originated from the prestigious French-speaking Galatasaray high-school.

Islamism: Also known as political Islam, Islamism dictates that Islam should guide social, personal, and political life. Some conservative Islamists believe in the everyday and judicial application of Sharia law. See Kalacioglu, 2005 for more information.

Kemalism: Inspired by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Kemalism is the driving political ideology behind the establishment of the Turkish republic. There are six arrows/pillars to Kemalism: republicanism, populism, nationalism, secularism, statism, and reformism.

SCAF: Supreme Council of Armed Forces is a governing body of elite military officers that acted as commanders of the Egyptian Armed Forces and as Egypt’s interim government from 2011-2014.

Supporter Groups: Also termed as firms or Ultras, soccer supporter groups operate as highly-organized associations that gather to ensure the promotion of their club’s team. In some examples, soccer supporter groups have a political or anti-political leaning that dictates the identity of supporter group and neighborhood.

Ultras: Members of a Mediterranean soccer firm or supporter group. The term ‘Ultras’ comes from Sampdoria, Italy in 1969, but earlier supporter groups can be found in Hungary and Brazil (Kuhn).
Ultra White Knights: Zamalek SC’s main supporter group that rivals Al-Ahlawy. Ultra White Knights contributed significantly to Egypt’s 2011 revolution and are also known for clashes with police and tifo demonstrations.

Zamalek SC: Egypt’s second most popular soccer team from Cairo that had a strong rivalry with Al-Ahly.
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