Tampere University

Khaled Mesbah

FROM THE STANDS TO FRONTLINES

The Role of Football as a Tool of Expression and Resistance in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian Hirak

Faculty of Social Sciences
Master's Thesis
November 2024

ABSTRACT

Khaled Mesbah: From the Stands to Frontlines. The Role of Football as a Tool of Expression and Resistance in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian Hirak.
Master's Thesis
Tampere University
Peace, Mediation, and Conflict Research
November 2024

Football, the most popular and followed sport in the world, tends to surpass mere entertainment to become a significant tool of expression and resistance, impacting sociopolitical landscapes across various societies. North Africa has a rich history of resistance movements and uprisings. Within this multifaceted sociopolitical landscape, football plays a pivotal role in comprehending these events. Egypt and Algeria, in particular, have experienced significant uprisings, the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*. Although these uprisings differed in nature, both highlighted the confrontations between state authority and the population, particularly football supporters.

This thesis comparatively studies how football served as a tool of expression and resistance in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*, considering the contentious relationship between football supporters, primarily Ultras fan groups, and the state. It also explores how football supporters' activities in both countries served as an alternative power (resistant power), that challenged established political structure. In addition, it examines how the diverse disruptive techniques, violent and nonviolent, employed by football supporters during the two uprisings were integral to the larger collective action that challenged entrenched power structures and impacted political change. Therefore, by focusing on power relations and examining various methods of resistance, this thesis aims to contribute to peace and conflict studies and the existing literature on the intersection of football and politics.

The thesis is based on various primary and secondary sources of data, including two visual images (banners), two football songs, two documentaries, an interview from YouTube, as well as key scholarly books and additional secondary sources. It employs a theoretical framework that draws on Michel Foucault's biopolitics, omnipresence of power, and its inevitable relationship with resistance, alongside the dynamics of contentious politics. Furthermore, the thesis utilizes Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) to examine the discourse surrounding football in both countries, thereby addressing the research aims and analyzing the provided data.

The analysis reveals that football supporters, particularly Ultras groups, emerged as a resistant power challenging biopolitical control and entrenched power structures. In Egypt, the Ultras shifted from opposing police to broader regime defiance, while in Algeria, they further intensified resistance in already contentious football stadiums. Additionally, their diverse disruptive tactics, violent in Egypt and nonviolent in Algeria, were a crucial component of the broader collective action that impacted political change. Egyptian Ultras employed repertoires of confrontational tactics crystallized by clashes with the police, while Algerian supporters used chants and banners in line with the peaceful nature of the *Hirak*. The analysis further shows differences in state responses, as Egypt saw harsher measures culminated in the 2012 Port Said Massacre and the Ultras' dissolution, whereas in Algerian authorities suppressed but did not fully ban Ultras activities.

Keywords: Football, Ultras, 2011 Egyptian Revolution, Algerian *Hirak*, power, resistance, contentious politics

USE OF AI IN THESIS

The AI tools utilized in my thesis and their purposes are described below:

- **Grammarly**:
  Grammarly was utilized throughout the entire thesis in language editing and refinement, proofreading, and review.

- **ChatGPT**:
  I utilized ChatGPT in chapters 5 and 6 (first two analysis chapters) in translating sources. It helped translate *La Casa Del Mouradia* song from Algerian dialect to English, as well as *Liberta* song, and anecdotes from Egyptian dialect to English.

I acknowledge that I am fully responsible for the entire content of my thesis, including the parts generated by AI, and accept accountability for any violations of ethical standards in publications.

Table of Contents

1- Introduction

Football, often called the 'beautiful game', is the most followed and popular sport in the world. However, its significance transcends its status as a mere source of entertainment (Busse & Wildangel, 2023). Due to its extensive outreach, it evolved to play a significant role in the sociopolitical landscape in various societies. Across the globe, football serves as a tool for state propaganda, but it also emerges as a powerful medium for popular expression and resistance. Football stadiums have become venues where social tensions and political dissent are voiced, and even authorities are challenged. Furthermore, over time, football emerged as a tool for popular mobilization in large-scale social movements, contesting authority and shaping political landscapes.

North Africa stands as a region that encompasses a rich history of episodes of resistance movements and uprisings. Within this multifaceted sociopolitical landscape, football emerges as a central element in comprehending these events. Egypt and Algeria, in particular, have witnessed significant uprisings, the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*. The Egyptian Revolution was characterized by mass protests and direct confrontation with the state, culminating in the removal of President Hosni Mubarak after thirty years of rule. In contrast, the Algerian *Hirak*, a largely peaceful movement, led to the resignation of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika after two decades in power. Despite these differences, both uprisings faced unfortunate outcomes, with Egypt entering a turbulent transition period, characterized by violent confrontations and conflicts, and Algeria continuing to struggle with unresolved political challenges. Yet, in both cases, football played a notable role, with football supporters, particularly organized Ultras groups, displaying a pivotal role in mobilizing resistance and challenging state power, which underscores the contention between football supporters and the state in the respective countries.

The relationship between football and political expression, particularly as a tool of resistance, has been studied across different contexts. These studies examined the intersection of football and political dissent in various regions, often highlighting how football supporters challenge power structures. In the Arab world, studies have examined how football supporters, especially Ultras groups, such as in Jordan, engage in ideological resistance often connected with broader social and political struggles. These groups challenge entrenched power structures, whether familial or political, utilizing stadiums as platforms for asserting autonomy and voicing dissent (Tuastad,

2014). In North Africa, particularly Morocco, research has highlighted how football fandom reflects broader political frustrations, with supporters utilizing chants and displays to critique regimes (Boualam & Houari, 2023).

Similarly, beyond the Arab world, scholars have examined football's role in political expression within stadiums, like in Italy, emphasizing that stadiums are inherently political spaces due to the large gatherings of people, which make them vital spaces for public discourse (Guschwan, 2016). Moreover, scholars have highlighted the role of football supporters as active and significant actors in political expression and movements, challenging state power and participating directly in protests, such as in Turkey and Greece (Turan & Ozcetin, 2019; Zaimikis, 2018). These studies collectively highlight football's seismic potential as a tool for political expression, resistance, and challenging entrenched power structures.

Despite the valuable insights offered by these studies and approaches, there remains a gap in the literature that provides an opportunity to be examined further. While much attention is given to individual case studies of football supporters' involvement in political movements, comparative analyses that explore how football is used as a tool of resistance across different national contexts are relatively understudied. Moreover, there tends to be a lack of in-depth exploration of power relationships between football supporters and the state in addition to the varied modes of resistance, both violent and nonviolent, employed by football supporters. Therefore, this thesis seeks to bridge these gaps by answering the following main research question: *How has football served as a tool of expression and resistance in Egypt and Algeria during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian Hirak, considering the role of football supporters and their contentious relationship with the state.*

Guided by the overarching research question, this study aims to comparatively explore the role of football supporters in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*. It aims to offer new insights into how these fans, primarily Ultras groups, challenge state power in different political environments. Hence, the thesis addresses how the activities of football supporters in Egypt and Algeria served as an alternative power (resistant power), challenging established political structures. Additionally, it examines how the diverse disruptive techniques, both violent and nonviolent, employed by these supporters during the two uprisings were a crucial component

of the broader popular collective action that challenged power structures and influenced political change.

Therefore, this research contributes to the field of peace and conflict studies by examining how different modes of resistance, violent and nonviolent, emerging from cultural practices such as football, challenge entrenched power structures. By focusing on the role of football supporters as key actors in contentious political movements, this study offers new insights into the dynamics of social resistance. Furthermore, it highlights how football's diverse forms of resistance and expression present an angle to comprehend sociopolitical tensions, providing insights into the role of popular cultural practices in shaping and influencing the outcomes of political conflict.

The choice of Egypt and Algeria as case studies is not only driven by the gap in the literature but also by my personal experience with football culture. As a fan of the sport, I have long believed in the power of football to surpass its role as just a sport, especially in North Africa, where it serves as a medium for political expression. Having witnessed and lived the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and followed the political developments of the Arab Spring in the region closely, this topic resonates with me personally, as I have observed how football supporters played a pivotal role in challenging and contesting the regime. Additionally, I experienced the tensions that arose between Egypt and Algeria in 2009 following a FIFA World Cup qualification match, which fostered enmity between the two countries. Most of the research on football and politics combining Egypt and Algeria focuses on the conflict and rivalry between them. Although the main aim of the research is not to remedy this rivalry, I seek to move away from the top-down approach and emphasize more of a bottom-up one. Therefore, I aim to highlight the role of football in influencing the sociopolitical landscapes and exploring the power relations between supporters and the state in both countries.

This study rests on various sources of primary and secondary data collected through extensive desk research. The primary data includes two visual images: banners displayed by football supporters in Egypt and Algeria, both symbolizing political expression and resistance against state authority. The data also included two football chants/songs: *"Liberta"* and *"La Casa Del Mouradia"*, which include provocative lyrics that reflect the evolving political resistance of football supporters in both countries. Additionally, I incorporated an interview with Amr Ezz, an active Egyptian political activist and a witness on the revolution, discussing the role of Ultras in the revolution. Moreover,

I included two documentaries, *Egypt's Hardcore Football Fans – Ultras* and *How Algerian Football Fans Toppled a Dictator*, which provided rich insights into the actions of football supporters during key moments in both uprisings. In addition, the study utilized reputable secondary sources, significantly, Ronnie Close's book *Cairo's Ultras* (2019), and the works of Maher Mezahi and Mahfoud Amara on the relationship between football and politics in Algeria.

To answer the research question and analyze the aforementioned data, this thesis employs Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) as the primary methodology. Attributed to the prominent French philosopher Michel Foucault, FDA provides a lens to examine power relations. Then, it helps in examining the adversarial power relationship between football supporters and the state, particularly how the discourse surrounding football is used to both assert control and resistance. Coupled with the research methodology, I rest on an intersectional theoretical foundation of Michel Foucault's theory of power and resistance and biopolitics along with the concept of contentious politics. Such a framework further deepens the understanding of the contentious relationship between football supporters and the state in both Egypt and Algeria that culminated in their pivotal role in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*.

This thesis is structured into six chapters as follows. Chapter one provides a background on the topic. First, it presents an overview of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*, in addition to providing a historical and political context, where football was regarded as a tool of expression and resistance in both countries against colonial powers, to understand football's role in Egypt and Algeria. It also reviews, in detail, key relevant literature on football as a tool for political expression and resistance, highlighting the role of football supporters in shaping political outcomes.

Chapter two introduces the theoretical framework of the thesis, where I outline Michel Foucault's theory of power and resistance, the concepts of biopolitics and governmentality, and the concept of contentious politics and its components. It explores how these concepts were applied to understand the power relations between football supporters and state authorities in both Egypt and Algeria and to analyze football's influence during the two uprisings. In chapter three, the methodological framework of Foucauldian discourse analysis is discussed in detail along with its use, as well as the data sources, their selection, and how they were analyzed. In addition, the

chapter discusses the challenges faced in data collection and analysis and my positionality as a researcher.

Then, the analysis and discussion of the research findings include three chapters. Chapters five and six discuss the cases of Egypt and Algeria. In Egypt, I start by analyzing how football was instrumentalized by the Mubarak regime, coinciding with the rise of Ultras groups, whose relationship with the state became increasingly contentious during the 2011 uprising. The chapter then discusses the activities of these fan groups and their prominent role in key moments during the revolution. It concludes with an analysis of the Port Said Massacre in 2012, which marked the height of animosity between the Ultras and the state. Similarly in Algeria, I start with analyzing how football was used as a tool for political consolidation by the Bouteflika regime, and how stadiums have long acted as critical spaces for public dissent. The chapter then analyzes how Ultras groups further transformed football into a medium for resistance, culminating in their pivotal role during the *Hirak* in 2019, through examining their diverse tactics. Lastly, the chapter discusses the end of the *Hirak* and state repression that encompassed Algerian football supporters.

The final chapter brings the two cases closer, offering a comparative analysis of the role football supporters played in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*, focusing on their contentious relationship with the state. It examines how Mubarak and Bouteflika utilized football through a Foucauldian biopolitical lens while emphasizing stadiums as spaces for resistance. The chapter also compares the diverse tactics of Egyptian and Algerian Ultras, showing how they shaped and were influenced by the political dynamics, resting on the Foucauldian interplay between power and resistance, and the dynamics of contentious politics. Lastly, the chapter concludes by framing the outcomes of their involvement within the context of biopolitical control.

2- Background Chapter

This chapter lays the foundational context for the analysis of the role of football supporters in Egypt in 2011 and Algeria in 2019. It starts by providing an overview of the 25th of January 2011 Revolution in Egypt and the 2019 *Hirak* movement in Algeria, setting a framework to comprehend the involvement and influence of football supporters, particularly Ultras groups, within these remarkable events. Following this overview, the discussion transitions to highlight and examine the literature on the intersection of football and politics. This includes a historical overview of football as a vehicle for expression and resistance during the colonial era in both countries. By presenting specific instances and occurrences, this section elucidates the evolution of football to a significant platform of political and social dissent. The final section reviews relevant literature that tackles cases of football serving as a medium for expression and resistance beyond the geographic confines of Algeria and Egypt.

2.1 The 2011 Egyptian Revolution

The 25th of January 2011 Egyptian Revolution is regarded as a pivotal chapter within the broader context of the Arab Spring[1] uprisings, marking a significant phase in Egypt's long and rich political history. This mass civil resistance movement, characterized by nationwide protests against the Regime of Hosni Mubarak, culminated in the removal of the President, who had been in power for nearly three decades. Inspired by the eruption of the Tunisian Revolution in 2010, the 2011 uprising in Egypt was driven by a complex array of sociopolitical and economic factors that triggered the rise of the revolution.

Prior to the revolution, Egypt's political landscape was marked by acute skepticism and fueled by a disparity between rising aspirations and persistent hardships under the National Democratic Party (NDP) led by Hosni Mubarak. The regime was based on autocratic governance, backed by a constitutional amendment in 2005 designed to perpetuate Mubarak's family heritage in the Egyptian ruling system and pave the way for his son Gamal Mubarak as his successor to the presidency (Bakr, 2012). Human rights violations were rampant and underscored by police

[1] The Arab Spring refers to the series of uprisings and revolutions that unfolded across several Arab countries, starting in late 2010. Originating in Tunisia, the movement gained momentum following the ousting of Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, the former Tunisian president who ruled the country for 23 years. The Tunisian "Jasmine" revolution served as a catalyst that triggered a wave of protests and unrest across the Arab world, notably in Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, and Libya. The outcomes of these uprisings varied significantly, ranging from the fall of deep-rooted regimes to the violent suppression of dissent.

brutality, often justified by the legal instrument of the Emergency Law, which granted the president and security forces extensive powers allegedly to protect national security and maintain public order. The political scene was further flawed by election rigging in 2005 and 2010 which secured an unprecedented and overwhelming majority for the NDP (Bakr, 2012; Ismail, 2012).

Economically, policies and systems were designed to serve a narrow social base that led to the marginalization of vast areas and large sectors of the population, soaring living costs, and exacerbated unemployment, particularly among educated youth. Accordingly, this fostered high levels of corruption and disenchantment among the Egyptian population. On a social level, Egypt struggled with rapid population growth, with the predominant majority of the population congested on a mere 6% of the Egyptian territory (Bakr, 2012; Saidin, 2018). A demographic stratum of young, unemployed citizens with educational qualifications faced an ambiguous future, that fueled widespread discontent and prompted the emergence of opposition civil society movements such as the 6th of April and *Kifaya* (Enough) (Close, 2019). These movements highlighted the regime's inability to accommodate the aspirations of the youth and middle class, laying the groundwork for prevalent discontent.

The Tunisian uprising in late 2010, which ignited the Arab Spring, served as an inspiration for the Egyptian protestors and demonstrated a potential for grassroots mobilization to effect political change. However, it is argued that the catalyst for the Egyptian Revolution was the tragic death of Khaled Said, a young Egyptian male who was tortured and brutally killed by police forces in Alexandria. This incident sparked fury and galvanized public outrage and resulted in mobilizing widespread protests through social media platforms like the "*Kullina Khaled Said*" (We are all Khaled Said) Facebook group (Ismail, 2012). Accordingly, the 25th of January 2011 marked the inception of the Egyptian Revolution, with Egyptians taking to the streets demanding an end to Mubarak's rule, political reforms, and social justice. Chosen for its symbolic significance as National Police Day, the choice of January 25th reflected the public's uproar against police brutality as the state's repressive apparatus (Bakr, 2012).

Protests escalated, particularly on the "Friday of Rage" (January 28, 2011), in response to the violence that was directed against the initially peaceful demonstrations and reports of demonstrators being killed or seriously injured (Close, 2019). Millions of Egyptians from diverse backgrounds flooded the streets all over Egypt with Cairo's Tahrir Square emerging as the

epicenter of the revolution. Demonstrators displayed remarkable resilience against violent crackdowns, internet blackouts, and regime efforts to fragment the protest movement (Bakr, 2012). One of the manifestations was the resilience displayed on the 2nd of February 2011 in confronting and resisting the attacks of horse and camel riders in what is known as the "Battle of the Camel" which was allegedly orchestrated by the mobs of Mubarak's regime (Tuastad, 2014). This was further evident in defying the military-imposed curfew and resisting police tactics of using tear gas and water cannons to disperse the demonstrations. Furthermore, the protestors' perseverance was undiminished even after Mubarak's pledge not to run for the presidency, insisting on the demand for the complete removal of the regime (Bakr, 2012).

Eventually, the sustained public pressure for eighteen consecutive days resulted in the resignation of Mubarak on February 11, 2011, which was a momentous event that was celebrated all over Egypt signifying the triumph of the people's will under the resounding slogan of "*Al-Sha'ab Asqat al-nizam*" (the people have toppled the regime). However, this marked a series of uncertainty and a turbulent transition period, characterized by episodes of violent confrontations and instability under the rule of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF). Subsequently, in 2012, the election of President Mohamed Morsi from the Muslim Brotherhood faction added another layer of complexity to the political landscape in Egypt (Ismail, 2012; Close, 2019). Hence, despite Mubarak's departure, the quest for reform and stability persisted, leading to further conflicts and unrest.

2.2 The *Hirak* Movement in Algeria 2019

While the Arab Spring had a limited impact on Algeria, the country witnessed a significant political upheaval that emerged in February 2019, known as the Algerian *Hirak*. Millions of Algerians took to the streets in a peaceful, yet powerful movement demanding regime change and political reform, marking a significant chapter in the country's political history. The protests lasting until early 2020, were pivotal in leading to the resignation of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who had been in power for nearly two decades. Furthermore, the *Hirak* saw the arrest and subsequent trial of business oligarchs and senior political figures (Rachidi & Aballagh, 2023; Northey, 2021). The *Hirak* emerged in response to the announcement of Bouteflika's candidacy for a fifth presidential term, which triggered widespread resentment among Algerians and led to the emergence of

nationwide protests. However, a complex of underlying factors contributed to the emergence of these protests.

President Bouteflika's controversial decision to seek a fifth presidential term was perceived as unconstitutional and symbolized broader systemic issues troubling Algerian governance. Furthermore, it emphasized a political landscape characterized by political stagnation, lack of transparency, and a disconnection from the citizens' needs (Northey, 2021; Balla, 2019). However, the *Hirak* emerged due to an accumulation of dissatisfaction with the regime in Algeria. Since gaining independence from France in 1962, Algeria has struggled with a political reality dominated by the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) single-party system, bolstered by the military and political elites. This power structure has curbed political freedoms and fostered rampant corruption and economic policies that favored a narrow social base while failing to address the Algerian population's aspirations. Such popular dissatisfaction was notably evident in the 1988 riots and the subsequent Black Decade (Algerian Civil War) that marked a period of extreme violence and failed to address the underlying grievances, leading many Algerians to abandon political life (Rachidi & Aballagh, 2023; Northey, 2021).

Bouteflika's decision to defy constitutional limits on presidential terms, exacerbated by his deteriorating health condition and privileged access to healthcare abroad, was regarded as humiliating to Algerians already struggling with inadequate healthcare services (Perego, 2023). The Algerian *Hirak*, further, served as an expression of frustration with corruption and the entrenched elite privilege. The ruling class in Algeria was exemplified by familial monopoly and consolidation of power, underscored by the ambiguous role of Bouteflika's brother, Said, particularly amidst the poor health conditions of the latter. Moreover, the political landscape in Algeria was characterized by an extensive military intervention, which made the role of the military come under scrutiny, with demonstrators asserting Algeria's identity as a civil and not a military state (Northey, 2021). Accordingly, these factors led to grievances among Algerians, particularly resonating with the cynicism felt by the youth, which ultimately led to the emergence of nationwide protests.

The *Hirak* protests were unprecedented in both their scale and significance, particularly considering the de facto prohibition of public gatherings in Algeria since 2001, following the protests in the Kabyle region against the killing of eighteen-year-old unarmed Massinissa

Guermah[2] (Mezahi, 2022). The initial protests were evident in the city of Kherrata on 16 February 2019. Despite initial skepticism due to the national trauma of the Black Decade and civil war, which left many Algerians apolitical, millions took to the streets of Algiers and other cities in Algeria for a year starting from 22 February 2019 (Rachidi & Aballagh, 2023). In response to the protests, the regime invoked memories of the violent Black Decade and Civil War of the 1990s, with threats implying that violence would return without the regime and the president. However, the continued peaceful nature of the protests served as a significant counternarrative, challenged the government's discourse, and demonstrated the resilience of the Algerian people.

Throughout 2019, Algerians gathered every Friday in public spaces, progressively demanding changes that were eventually met, including the resignation of Bouteflika and the dismissal of cabinet ministers. In addition, the success of the demands led to the cancellation of the contested elections and the arrest of business oligarchs and politicians, such as former Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia on corruption charges (Northey, 2021). However, despite the election of Abdelmajid Tebboune as president in December 2019, with a significantly low voter turnout due to popular opposition, protests continued peacefully (Boubekeur, 2020). What brought uniqueness to the protests was the expression through slogans, songs, and artwork, which labeled the *Hirak* as nonviolent and peaceful. Furthermore, the pivotal role played by youth in reclaiming public spaces with bold political messages and slogans in an organized manner exemplified Algerian unity, making the *Hirak* a significant episode in Algerian history.

Despite the peaceful nature of the protests, repression increased towards the end of 2019, with clashes between police forces and protestors resulting in civilian injuries and arrests, mostly among the youth and former revolutionary and opposition figures. Justifications for these crackdowns ranged from threatening national unity to offending national institutions, such as the military. However, such tactics seem to have failed to deter Algerians as the protests continued until March 2020, when they were transferred online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following a period of relatively low fervor, the Algerian authorities intensified their efforts to suppress peaceful dissent. This escalation involved the imposition of further restrictions on protests and a crackdown on the

[2] In 2001, a young Kabyle student named Massinissa Guermah was detained by security forces in the Kabyle region. Tragically, Guermah died, reportedly, due to injuries inflicted by the security forces. This incident sparked widespread discontent and protests in the Kabyle region. These protests persisted for months, met with repressive and violent police crackdowns that resulted in numerous arrests, casualties, and deaths.

freedom of expression, targeting not just protestors but also individuals even expressing dissenting opinions on the internet (Rachidi & Aballagh, 2023).

2.3 Football Revolutionary Protagonists

After providing an overview of both the 2011 Revolution in Egypt and the 2019 *Hirak* in Algeria, it becomes evident that while there were differences in terms of the duration, peacefulness, and consequences of casualties in the protests, there were also significant similarities. These similarities include underlying reasons for the eruption of protests, the resilience and defiance demonstrated by protestors during the events, and even subsequent unfortunate outcomes. One particularly noteworthy similarity is the pivotal role played by football supporters in both historic events.

In Egypt, Ultras groups emerged as vocal protagonists throughout the Egyptian revolution (Dorsey, 2020). Ultras are commonly perceived as organized, committed, and passionate groups of football fans known for their fervent support of their teams/clubs (Woltering, 2013). They are renowned for their organizational skills, sense of camaraderie and unity, and youth composition. Employing choreographed displays and vocal chants in football stadiums, these groups transcended mere team allegiance to convey provocative political messages, thus Ultras have emerged as challenging entities to state authority since their inception in the early 2000s in Egypt, and in North Africa in general (Dorsey 2020). Leveraging their experience in confrontations with security forces during football matches, Ultras members demonstrated resilience on the streets, often being at the forefront of the protests and acting as protective shields for the demonstrators, such as during the infamous “Battle of the Camel”.

Similarly, in Algeria, football assumed a pivotal imprint in the Algerian *Hirak*. Chants slogans, and banners resonating from football stadiums were regarded as the fuel of the protests. That has been evident in, for instance, the song *“La Casa Del Mouradia”* which implied deep and provocative lyrics that critiqued Bouteflika’s regime as a group of robbers (Mezahi, 2022a). The involvement and participation of football supporters not only contributed to the success and resilience of the protests but also underscored the contentious relationship between football supporters and state authorities.

Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize that football’s role as a vehicle for expression and resistance is not a modern phenomenon. The following sections explore existing research on the

intersection between football and politics. First, they provide a historical overview of football as a vehicle for expression and resistance during the colonial era in Egypt and Algeria. Following this, the literature review will examine the broader utilization of football as a platform for expression and resistance beyond the confines of both countries.

2.4 Football and Politics

2.4.1 The Game of Resistance: Football's Role in Anticolonial Struggles in Egypt and Algeria

North Africa holds a significant history of colonialism, notably by France and Britain. One of the elements to comprehend and analyze the region's history of resistance and uprisings, particularly in Egypt and Algeria, is the exploration of sports, especially football. Football was introduced to the region during the late 19th and 20th centuries as part of the broader colonial enterprise (Busse & Wildangel, 2023). Football was utilized as a means of imposing Western values and discipline. However, football quickly evolved into a vehicle for expressions of resistance against European control, whether by the British in Egypt or the French in Algeria (Darby, 2002).

In Egypt, football was introduced by the British at the end of the 19th century and served as a means of education and instilling discipline and respect for colonial authority (El-Zatmah, 2011). Initially, this strategy was centralized and confined to the central area of Cairo. Alongside implementing mandatory physical education curricula in schools, the British colonial regime established private institutions that were primarily elite-based for Europeans and upper-class Egyptians (Gibril, 2018). While football was initially practiced within military camps, it quickly gained popularity and spread to the streets, becoming accessible to local Egyptians from various social classes (Ferraro, 2019).

Faced with discrimination, Egyptians established their own clubs to provide opportunities for students and promote health and nationalism, which marked the beginning of football's role in resisting British rule (Gibril, 2018). The establishment of *Al-Ahly* (translated as "the national") in 1907 was significant in fostering nationalistic sentiment and contributing to the anticolonial struggle. *Al-Ahly* was the first club to admit, primarily if not exclusively, Egyptians as members and facilitated communication with the revolutionary figures. It was established by a group of Egyptian elites with political connections, led by revolutionary figures such as Omar Lotfi, who was president of the student union at the time. Furthermore, *Al-Ahly's* leadership included prominent revolutionary figures of the 1919 revolt such as Saad Zaghloul (Elhoudaiby, 2022). *Al-*

Ahly's significance as a focal point for the anticolonial struggle was further strengthened by the election of Mitchel Ince, a British national, as its first president due to his close ties with British authorities (Ferraro, 2019). Alongside *Al-Ahly,* other clubs were established around the same time, including *Zamalek* (formerly Al-Mukhtalat or "the mixed" due to its membership of both Europeans and Egyptians), *Al-Masry* (translated as "the Egyptian"), and other clubs that paved the way for Egyptianizing football that gave rise to more resistance toward the British colonial rule (Gibril, 2018; Elhoudaiby, 2022).

There have been a series of incidents that gave rise to nationalistic sentiment in Egypt. Throughout the early 20th century, football stadiums and clubs emerged as vital spaces for expressing resistance to British colonial rule. A pivotal moment occurred with the Egyptian team's successful participation in the 1928 Olympics, which highlighted the potential capabilities of Egyptians as being equal to their colonial counterparts. In addition, this event fostered the formation of a consolidated national identity that was echoed in the football arenas. *Al-Ahly* supporters seized upon football victories over British teams as opportunities to protest against British authority, utilizing public spaces to amplify their voices (Gibril, 2018; Ferraro, 2019).

Al-Ahly and other clubs also became platforms for organizing and launching large-scale protests uniting people across social classes against British colonial rule. A significant moment occurred after the arrest and exile of nationalist leader Saad Zaghloul, who advocated for independence. This event served as a catalyst for the inception of the 1919 revolt, a widespread uprising that was characterized by the participation of Egyptians from various social strata to protest against British colonialism. The revolt eventually paved the way for Britain to declare Egypt's nominal independence in 1922 and draft the 1923 constitution (Elhoudaiby, 2022; Close, 2019). The significance of football as a tool for resistance was further highlighted in 1943 when *Al-Ahly* supporters protested against the King and British occupation following the suspension of their club by the Egyptian Football Association. The decision came after *Al-Ahly* members traveled to Palestine to support the Palestinian resistance against Zionists and the British (Elhoudaiby, 2022). These incidents underscore how football served as a potent medium for expressing discontent and resistance throughout Egyptian modern history.

In Algeria, football similarly emerged as a pivotal instrument asserting resistance, fostering nationalistic sentiment, and contesting French colonial rule. Introduced as part of France's broader

agenda to disseminate Western values, football became a double-edged weapon. One of the vital factors that facilitated the rapid spread of the development of football in North Africa, and Algeria in specific, was the geographic proximity to Europe. Henceforth, such a factor was considered a tool for French rule to further the aim of assimilating the predominantly Muslim Algerian population into French citizenry and establishing a centralized state system (Darby, 2002; Everett, 2023). This was evident in employing strategies such as talent acquisition of Algerian homegrown athletes to represent the French homeland national team and domestic clubs, controlling the local sports institutions and restricting such activities among the Algerian population, in addition to mandating the inclusion of foreign players in local clubs to maintain a higher position (Darby, 2002).

Football, however, quickly became a vehicle for resistance and the assertion of Algerian national identity in opposition to the concept of French Algeria. The establishment of the *Mouloudia Club d'Alger* (MCA) in 1921, named in commemoration of the birth of Prophet Muhammad, marked a deliberate act of protest against colonial rule (Everett, 2022; Amara & Bouandel, 2018). This sparked a wave that contributed to the creation of several clubs that sought to distinguish their identity from European counterparts, such as *Club Sportif Constantine* (CSC) and *Union Sportive de la Médina d'Alger* (USMA). Thus, football symbolized the rise of political consciousness rooted in a distinct Algerian identity (Amara & Bouandel, 2018).

These clubs served as hubs for the formation of nationalist movements and raising awareness among Algerians about their identity as Muslims. Beyond their names, the emblems and colors of these clubs, incorporating elements such as the crescent and the five-angled star, in addition to the white, red, and green of the Algerian flag, further reinforced their identity (Amara & Bouandel, 2018). Nationalist leaders pursued the support of these teams to strengthen the nationalist drive for independence. Consequently, the colonial power sought to impose restrictions on these clubs, perceiving them as a threat to their colonial enterprise in Algeria. Some clubs were banned, while others were obliged to include European players in a bid to weaken the nationalist fervor. However, challenging these measures, the clubs retained a distinct Muslim identity, and their activities were perceived as integral to the struggle for independence. Football stadiums became arenas not just for sports but for political expression and anticolonial rallying. A notable instance occurred in 1945 during a match between the Algerian team *l'USM de Ain Temouchent* and the European team of

the city of Benisaf. Algerian supporters seized the occasion to articulate calls for independence, utilizing chants and songs that included lyrics advocating liberation from French colonial rule. Thus, football stadiums emerged as sites of resistance and truth-telling in Algeria, where expressions through chants and choreographed fan displays served as powerful vehicles for dissent and national assertion (Mezahi, 2022a; Amara & Bouandel, 2018).

Football further evolved into a powerful tool for spreading nationalist messages and mobilizing opposition against colonial rule in Algeria. This was particularly manifested in the strategic use of football by the National Liberation Front, *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN), which positioned itself at the forefront of the struggle against French colonialism. Winning a match against foreign teams symbolized the strength of the Algerian identity and the cause for independence, even in friendly matches. Additionally, the FLN, located in Tunisia at that time, formed an independent Algerian national football team, urging Algerian professionals playing in France to return and join the revolutionary cause. Players who had the opportunity to represent France in the 1958 World Cup declined in favor of joining the FLN team (Dine, 2017; Amara & Bouandel, 2018).

Through football, the FLN aimed to promote the Algerian independence cause and garner international support, recognizing the transitional dimension and global exposure of the sport (Dine, 2017). These football matches and stadiums became rallying points, symbolizing the collective aspiration for independence. The Algerian War of Independence, a direct outcome of such mobilizations, ultimately paved the way for the country's independence from French rule in 1962 (Everett, 2023; Amara & Bouandel, 2018). The role of football in this historic struggle highlights its significance not just as a sport but as a tool for expression and resistance. The enduring power of football did not diminish and persisted even after independence. This was vividly demonstrated, most recently, in the role of football supporters during the Algerian *Hirak* in 2019, which will be further deliberated at a later stage.

An overview of the history of sport in Egypt and Algeria reveals that football has consistently served as a powerful political instrument in both countries from its inception. The significant role that football played during the colonial era in fostering expressions of resistance and national identity has evolved through history. Reflecting on such a historical overview of football's role during the colonial era in both countries sets the stage for further exploration and analysis of the significant role played by football supporters, notably the Ultras groups in more recent political

transformation. The active participation of football supporters in pivotal events such as the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak* highlights the significance of football as a tool of expression and resistance. Furthermore, these events also shed light on the complex and often contentious relationship between these passionate supporter groups and the state.

2.4.2 Football as a Platform for Expression and Resistance in Different Contexts.

Around the world, football has emerged as a significant platform for voicing dissent, challenging authorities, and mobilizing collective action. Although its impact can differ depending on cultural and political contexts, there are notable cases that illustrate how football supporters have engaged in sociopolitical struggles. The following paragraphs explore specific examples both within and beyond the Arab world that highlight these dynamics.

In the Arab world, Dag Tuastad (2014) discussed how the ideological resistance among football supporters is intertwined with youth rebellion against patriarchal power that carries significant political implications. Tuastad argues that this connection reflects a rejection of entrenched power structures, both within households, where youth often feel constrained by elder authority, and in the public sphere, where dictatorial regimes have long wielded power. He contends that football serves as a key arena for youth to assert their autonomy, thereby challenging not only familial but also political authority. To illustrate this argument, Tuastad provides examples such as the involvement of Ultras in the Egyptian revolution and nationalist supporters in Jordan. In Jordan, football matches between teams like *Wihdat* and *Faisali* have historically been arenas for the expression of political tensions, particularly between Palestinian and Jordanian identities. However, Tuastad notes the shift with Palestinian symbolism diminishing and Jordanian nationalism rising that echoed in public discourse beyond the stadiums and challenging the monarchy. Thus, he argues that football, once a space for communal expression, mirrors and exacerbates political divisions. Tuastad critically demonstrates that while in Egypt, Ultras played a role in the revolution and call for a change, in Jordan, *Faisali* supporters act as a barrier to transition, illustrating the complex interplay between football fandom and political allegiance. These examples underscore the seismic potential of football in breaking political taboos to demonstrate how these fan groups are more than just indicators of political sentiment as they have the potential to actively shape political dynamics in their respective countries.

Moving from Jordan to Morocco, a different yet equally significant dynamic occurs within the stadiums. Mohamed Boualam and Setta El Houari (2023) address the paradox of declining political interest among Moroccan youth alongside the expansion of political expression within football stadiums, manifested through choreographed visual displays, chants, and songs. Through thematic analysis of various Moroccan Ultras groups, they aim to illustrate the political issues the groups are vocal about, extending beyond mere club support. They highlight incidents reflecting the frustration of predominantly young supporters and chants critical of the Moroccan regime and its beneficiaries, such as the widely embraced song "Oppressed in My Country" by Ultras Eagles associated with Raja Club Athletic in Casablanca, sung at collective protests nationwide. This activism, regarded as public protest, positions these groups in contentious relationships with the state and security apparatus. They argue that the vocality of these groups, viewed through a socio-political lens, constitutes a strategic form of political participation beyond traditional avenues. Furthermore, they note that multidimensional grievances are articulated directly during football matches, demonstrating rational and organized political action. Consequently, Boualam and El Houari assert that Moroccan Ultras articulate demands that should be considered by policymakers and officials.

Beyond the scope of the Arab world, football has been evident as a tool of expression and resistance in other geographic regions. Matthew Guschwan's (2016) exploration of political expression within the stadium settings, particularly in Italy, challenges the perception of sport as apolitical. He emphasizes the inherently political nature of stadiums, as they attract large crowds into confined spaces, asserting that politics will remain intertwined with sports as long as this dynamic persists. Guschwan advocates for a broad understanding of politics, encompassing anything impacting communal life rather than solely electoral politics. He views stadiums as crucial platforms for ordinary citizens to voice their opinions, essential components of the public sphere. Throughout his analysis, Gushcwan explores how stadiums serve as arenas for dissent, citing Italy's rich history of political expression in these settings. He illustrates this through examples of Ultras groups like *Brigate Autonome Livornesi* (Autonomous Brigade of Livorno) that is associated with the A.S. Livorno, known for their left-wing orientation and anti-Berlusconi (former Prime Minister of Italy), demonstrating the fusion of football and politics. He also delves into the distrust of the state among these fan groups, who often direct their rivalries against common enemies such as the police and the state itself, a phenomenon observed and resonating in various

countries such as Morocco, and the subject matter of this research: Egypt and Algeria. Additionally, Guschwan examines instances of direct political action taken by football supporters, such as their involvement in the Egyptian Revolution in 2011 and the Gezi Park protests in Turkey in 2013, demonstrating how fandom can be utilized to challenge state authority directly. Hence, this last point makes the transition to the following paragraphs.

2.4.3 Football in Direct Political Action

Omer Turan and Burak Ozcetin (2019) provide a nuanced examination of the role played by the Çarşı fan group of Beşiktaş football club in the Gezi Park protests of June 2013 which is regarded as one of the largest social movements in Turkish political history. Drawing on theories of contentious politics, the authors argue that Çarşı's involvement in the protests can be understood through their accumulated contentious experiences in dealing with disputes, particularly clashes with official authorities such as the police. Situating Çarşı within the context of the neighborhood of Beşiktaş, a focal point of police violence during the protests, highlights the significance of their experience in shaping their activism. Turan and Ozcetin emphasize that Çarşı's actions were guided more by ethical concerns and a culture of resistance fostered by fan clubs, rather than rigid ideological affiliations. They underscore the role of fan culture in linking football to broader sociopolitical contexts and facilitating framing processes within social movements. The participation of Çarşı members in the Gezi Park protests characterized by chants, songs, social media engagement, and a repertoire of resistance, left a lasting impact on the urban protest landscape.

Extending the strand of the direct political participation of football supporters, Yiannis Zaimakis (2018) explores the intersection between politics and football in Greece, tracing the evolution of political activism within football fandom from its inception in the late 1970s to contemporary mass protests against austerity policies by the Greek government in 2010-2012, such as the participation the fans of Panathinaikos club. Zaimakis scrutinizes the ideological conflicts between fascist and anti-fascist fans, highlighting how organized fans navigate and re-interpret their identities amidst political circumstances. Particularly significant, is the convergence of football and politics in Greece, where the economic crisis has led to the "footballization" of politics. Football fans, disillusioned with the traditional political system, have become vocal constituencies of resistance, directly protesting against austerity measures and state surveillance. By highlighting incidents and

analyzing the role of organized football Ultras groups in the protests, Zaimakis underscores the fluidity and heterogeneity of the political stances of football fans, which echo the fragmentation of political life and challenge the established boundaries in Greece. Moreover, he adds that the protests by football supporters against policies and the state in Greece serve as compelling examples of how football fandom has become intertwined with broader political struggles, embodying a pivotal form of grassroots resistance within Greek society.

In conclusion, examining football's multifaceted role as a platform for expression and resistance across diverse geographical and sociopolitical contexts underscores its profound impact beyond the realm of sport. From the anticolonial struggles in Egypt and Algeria to the contemporary protests in Turkey and Greece, football stadiums have emerged as hubs of political expression, where societal grievances are vocalized, and collective action is mobilized. The case studies from Egypt and Algeria illuminate how football served as a catalyst for nationalistic sentiment and resistance against colonial rule. These historical examples highlight the pivotal role of football in shaping nationalist, and further, revolutionary movements and catalyzing significant historical events, such as the 2011 revolution in Egypt and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*.

Furthermore, beyond Egypt and Algeria, the intertwining of football and politics, evident in Morocco and Italy demonstrates the resistant power of football. Moroccan Ultras groups utilize football stadiums as platforms to voice political grievances, challenge the status quo, and engage in direct political action. Similarly, Italian fan groups like *Brigate Autonome Livornesi* advocate for left-wing causes and mobilize against established power structures, in addition to the cases of direct political participation in Turkey and Greece. These examples highlight the transformative potential of fan culture in shaping broader sociopolitical dynamics, challenging entrenched power structures. The complex interplay between football and politics reveals the dynamic nature of societal discourse and activism, in addition to showcasing football as a tool of resistance to challenging existing power structures.

Therefore, the background information, coupled with the reviewed literature, will enable a thorough analysis and assist in answering the research question: "*How has football served as a tool of expression and resistance in Egypt and Algeria during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian Hirak, considering the role of football supporters and their contentious relationship with the state?"*

3- Theoretical Framework

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework that underpins this research. As discussed earlier, this thesis explores how football has served as a vehicle for expression and resistance in Egypt and Algeria. Specifically, I intend to conduct an analysis of the role of football supporters in the uprisings and highlight their adversarial interactions with the state. Accordingly, the primary concepts guiding this research are power, resistance, and contention. In the following sections, I elaborate on the relevant theories and concepts supporting this analysis. The theoretical framework rests on Michel Foucault's theories of power in addition to the interpretation of the concept of contentious politics.

3.1 Michel Foucault's Theory of Power

Michel Foucault's work on power is significant. His contribution lies in shifting the classical understanding of power from hierarchical domination and top-down control to a multidirectional and pervasive force. Foucault challenges the notion that power is wielded solely through domination and coercion by powerful entities over less powerful ones. Instead, he posits that power is omnipresent, immanent, dispersed, and pervasive, coming from everywhere. Foucault asserts that power is not embedded in a specific agency or structural system (Lynch, 2010; Foucault, 1978). In contrast, he asserts that power is a byproduct of a broad system of relationships, interactions, and activities that establish a bottom-up system of power through what he describes as a multiplicity of force relations, highlighting a positive interpretation of power (Foucault, 1982).

3.1.1 Biopolitics

Building on the omnipresent nature of power, Foucauldian theorization of power describes how power permeates societal and cultural institutions, highlighting the concept of biopolitics or biopower. Biopolitics, as described by Foucault, represents the power that takes hold of human life. This form of power is dispersed throughout society rather than concentrated in a single individual or government body, further emphasizing its omnipresence (Taylor, 2014). Biopolitics serves as a critical framework for exploring how modern states regulate populations and individual bodies through diverse power mechanisms. It centers on the regulation of life itself, encompassing the practices and techniques used by states to manage human life processes to optimize the health, productivity, and longevity of populations. Foucault elaborates on this concept with his idea of governmentality (Foucault, 1991).

The Foucauldian concept of governmentality extends beyond traditional notions of government to include a wide array of practices and strategies through which populations are managed and governed. Foucault articulates that governmentality is characterized by the emergence of population as a central concern of government, necessitating new forms of power that work through societal norms and practices to produce compliant and self-regulating citizens (Foucault, 1991). This concept underscores the diffusion of power and its presence in everyday practices, demonstrating how power operates not merely through direct coercion but through the subtle shaping of desires, habits, and beliefs (Lynch 2010; Khan & MacEachen, 2021).

Foucault emphasizes biopower as *"working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it"* (Foucault, 1978, p.136). Accordingly, biopolitics is intrinsically linked to levels of disciplinary and regulatory methods concerned with the optimal control and regulation of individual bodies, primarily through institutions like prisons, schools, and the military. These methods rely on surveillance and normalization to produce docile bodies (Foucault, 1978; Taylor 2014). By employing a wide range of techniques, these apparatuses make the subject governable, fostering individuals who adhere to norms and regulations in accordance with broader state goals.

Biopolitics is instrumental in this research as it is employed to analyze how governments in Egypt and Algeria politicized football and imposed restrictions on Ultras football groups. It highlights the biopolitical dynamics, where the management of populations intersects with efforts to maintain order and authority. By examining the interaction between football supporters and the state, the study explores how biopolitical control was both challenged and reinforced through football. The regimes of Mubarak and Bouteflika attempted to control, regulate, and delimit the activities of these groups, yet, these top-down power efforts often failed, as evidenced by the significant role football supporters played in toppling these regimes in the 2011 and 2019 uprisings. These instances illustrate how biopolitical power is contested and negotiated, with football acting as a channel for resistance against state control and power under the notion of the inevitable relationship between power and resistance, explored in the following sub-section.

3.1.2 Inevitable Relationship Between Power and Resistance

A crucial aspect of Foucault's analysis of power is his interpretation of the existential relationships between power and resistance. Foucault famously stated, "*Where there is power, there is*

resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). Foucault is interested in the process of resistance to power rather than viewing power solely as an oppressive tool. He views resistance as an internal and fundamental component of power dynamics and emphasizes that relations of power are conditioned by the freedom of the subjects (Foucault, 1982). Therefore, Foucault considers various sources of social legitimacy and examines power relationships in a circuitous form, emphasizing power and resistance (Khan & MacEachen, 2021).

The Foucauldian interpretation of power and resistance aligns with the main aim and objectives of this thesis: to examine how football has served as a tool of expression and resistance against governments in Egypt and Algeria. In addition, it serves to discuss how these governments, respectively, politicized football. Therefore, I intend to employ the strand of omnipresent, bottom-up interpretation of power, and its existential relationship with resistance to analyze the resistant power vested in football during the uprisings in both countries. This assists in exploring football as a tool of expression through the activities of football supporters, particularly Ultras groups. Football stadiums embraced a vital role in the sociopolitical landscapes in both countries, serving as venues for popular expression and discontent that transcended to street protests in the 2011 Revolution in Egypt and the 2019 *Hirak* in Algeria. Employing Foucault's theories paves the way to examine the emergence and development of the resistant power vested in football-related activities. Accordingly, the analysis utilizes the notion of the omnipresence of power to focus on the bottom-up approach to power and the crucial role played by football supporters during these uprisings. Therefore, the explanation of Foucault's interpretation of power and resistance, along with its intended application in this study, validates the choice of this theoretical framework.

Foucault's theory of power has been widely applied across various social disciplines. Although it has not been extensively used in studying football as a tool of expression and resistance, Foucault's concepts have been evident in several studies. Busse & Wildangel (2023) have incorporated the Foucauldian understanding of power as their primary theoretical framework to study the interplay between power and resistance by emphasizing the notion that "there are no relations of power without resistance". They examined the role of football in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, highlighting the repressive and emancipatory power of football along with the interaction of local and global dynamics. They explored how governments in the MENA region

instrumentalize and politicize football vis-a-vis the emancipatory power of football and its use as a tool of expression and resistance.

Similarly, Seippel et al. (2018) used the notion of the omnipresence of power: "Power is everywhere". Building on this premise, they explored how our daily experiences are then filled with potential conflicts, whether visible or hidden, arising from various power dynamics. Thus, sports also inherently encompass potential conflicts and issues. They presented cases of contested issues in sports related to gender, sexuality, doping, extreme wages, boxing/violence, and failed talent development. They utilized the Foucauldian interpretation of power as a foundational concept for examining how sports-related issues may evolve within political contexts and how the politicization of football might manifest. In addition, they employed the omnipresence of power as a fundamental aspect to underscore their theoretical framework, rooted in social movements theory and political mobilization.

Expanding on Foucault's omnipresence of power, Seippel et al. outlined a three-dimensional theoretical framework incorporating political opportunities, cultural framing, and the mobilization of actors. This interplay between Foucault's concept of omnipresent power and social movements theory paves the way for the second pillar of the theoretical framework: contentious politics, as discussed in the subsequent section. This interconnectedness ensures the coherence and comprehensiveness of the theoretical framework.

I apply Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) as the primary methodological approach, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. FDA, a strand of discourse focusing on power relationships in societies, is attributed to Michel Foucault. Thus, based on FDA, the primary and secondary data sources, and the theoretical framework, Foucault's theory of power helps analyze how football has acted as a tool of expression and resistance during the 2011 Egyptian revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*.

3.2 Contentious Politics

Contentious politics involves the use of disruptive techniques to challenge authority, promote social change, or contest the status quo, seeking to understand the dynamics and outcomes of collective political action. This concept is closely studied and linked to social movement theories developed by prominent scholars such as Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, and Doug McAdam, who have provided comprehensive explanations of contentious political phenomena. Sidney Tarrow

describes social movements as sustained challenges to powerholders, referring to elites and authorities (Tarrow, 2008). In addition, Charles Tilly views social movements as a series of contentious performances, displays, and campaigns through which ordinary individuals make collective claims about others (Tilly, 2006).

Contentious politics implies interactions where actors (individuals or groups) assert demands affecting others' interests, with governments perceived as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties. This concept highlights three features of socio-political life: contention, collective action, and politics (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam comprehensively define contentious politics as "*episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants*" (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001, p.5). Therefore, contentious politics implies a collective political struggle involving confrontation between social groups (movements) and authorities, which closely studies revolutions and resistance movements.

Key components of contentious politics include the political opportunity structure, mobilizing structures, and repertoires of contention. Political opportunities refer to the broader environment in which contentious actions occur. Changes in the political opportunity structure can either facilitate or constrain the emergence and success of contentious movements, encompassing factors such as the relative openness of the political system, availability of institutional channels for participation and the presence of allies, and degree of repression or tolerance by state authorities (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). Tarrow argues that movements arise due to new or expanded opportunities. Therefore, once collective action is launched, the confrontation between a group and its adversaries creates possibilities for others (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001).

Mobilizing structures and repertoires of contention refer to the strategies and tactics of protests and resistance available to contentious actors. These structures and tactics can range from peaceful demonstrations and strikes to more confrontational actions like riots and revolutions. Charles Tilly highlights that variations in repertoires occur due to the regime's willingness to permit or forbid certain performances and the changes in political opportunity structure that encourage some actions and discourage others (Tilly, 2006; Seippel, 2018). Tilly elaborates that contentious performances change due to accumulating experiences and opportunities, emphasizing that

repertoires and performances are learned and grounded ways of making claims (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015; Tilly, 2006).

Contentious politics has been evident in studying the relationship between football and politics in the context of resistance movements and uprisings in North Africa. Suzan Gibril (2015) utilized contentious politics to address the role of Ultras groups in the 2011 Revolution in Egypt. Gibril, first, highlighted the Egyptian political system and the security forces as significant powerful agents of the state. Then, Gibril moved to study the dynamics of Ultras groups in terms of their identification and mobilization techniques, in addition to examining their tactics in dealing with the security forces. Gibril relied on theories of collective action, collective identity, and mobilizations to examine how non-political football supporters engaged in politically contentious actions against Egyptian authorities, protests, and social movements.

Similarly, Burak Özçetin and Ömer Turan (2023) conducted a comparative analysis of the role played by football supporters in social movements in Egypt and Turkey. They discussed the repertoires of actions and resistance of Ultras groups as vital agents of contentious politics by drawing on a social movement theory. Furthermore, Jessica Northey (2021) analyzed the Algerian *Hirak* movement, highlighting the role of football fans in mobilization and resistance from stadiums to streets. Although not a detailed study of the role of football, Northey emphasized football fans' contribution to civil society activism and the political opportunity structure changes that facilitated the Algerian *Hirak*'s emergence.

While these studies have explored the role of football supporters in contentious politics, my utilization of the concept differs by emphasizing specifically the comparative degree of violence and nonviolence in the disruptive techniques employed by football supporters in both Egypt and Algeria. I examine their diverse repertoires of contention, both inside stadiums and in broader public spaces, which carried sociopolitical meanings and directly impacted the uprisings. This analytical approach attempts to provide a deeper understanding of their contention with security forces and state authorities.

Additionally, contentious politics further serves as a key theoretical concept in analyzing football supporters' engagement and participation in the 2011 Egyptian revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*. Addressing the political opportunity structures in Egypt and Algeria during these periods provides an analytical perspective that connects football supporters to the broader public and

political landscape to achieve a common goal. Accordingly, this highlights how football supporters were integral participants in the overall Egyptian and Algerian population during 2011 and 2019, and how they uniquely influenced the events in the Egyptian Revolution and the *Hirak* movement.

Considering the description of contentious politics, and based on my understanding of the concept, it intersects with the Foucauldian theory of power. Contentious politics provides valuable insights into the dynamics of power and how it is contested, resistance and change, and how political systems respond to challenges. Henceforth, it aligns with the Foucauldian theoretical strand, particularly regarding the omnipresence of power, multiplicity of social legitimacy forces, and the relationship between power and resistance. Accordingly, this intersection fits Foucauldian discourse analysis as the main methodological approach. Contentious politics provides a lens to study how football has been a tool of expression and resistance in Egypt and Algeria. I plan to utilize this framework to examine the contentious relationship between football supporters (Ultras groups) and the state, particularly the security apparatus. Lastly, in addition to the overarching research question, this theoretical intersection assists in answering the following two research sub-questions:

Sub-question 1: How did football supporters' activities in both countries serve as a source of alternative power (resistant power) that challenged established political structures?

Sub-question 2: How did the diverse disruptive techniques, both violent and nonviolent, employed by football supporters during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian Hirak contribute to broader popular collective action and influence political change?

4- Methodology Chapter

This chapter outlines the methodological approach employed in this research. It highlights, in detail, the selection of data and how it was further analyzed and examined. In addition, it justifies the reasons for choosing specific data sources. Moreover, in this chapter, I briefly discuss the challenges that have been encountered during data collection and analysis. Lastly, I address my positionality, potential biases, and strategies to mitigate them.

4.1 Research Methodology/Approach

The thesis employs the qualitative Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA). Given the aim to explore the resistant power of football in Algeria and Egypt during the 2019 Algerian *Hirak* and the 2011 Egyptian Revolution as well as the contentious relationship between the supporters and the state, I believe that the FDA is a suitable approach.

Discourse analysis encompasses a cluster of qualitative approaches for studying and analyzing language; talk and text in various settings and examining their role in social life (Given, 2008). It is significant to note that the term Foucauldian discourse analysis could be somewhat of a misnomer as Michel Foucault did not develop a specific method for conducting discourse analysis. Rather than prescribing a single way of doing discourse analysis, Foucault's theoretical ground offers a set of understandings that guide both framing and conducting research. Therefore, it is essential to highlight that there is no set of consistent and/or rigid procedures for conducting Foucauldian-inspired analysis (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Given, 2008). Instead, the approach is characterized by its adaptability to various research contexts, allowing for a nuanced examination of the intersections between language, power, and social practices.

4.1.2 Description of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Foucauldian discourse analysis is a strand of qualitative discourse analysis that highlights power and power relationships. FDA conceptualizes discourse as the rules and systems that constitute bodies of knowledge across different historical timeframes, instead of just treating discourse as specific instances of language or text. FDA posits that discourse constructs reality rather than merely reflecting it, treating discourse as a form of social action (Wiggins, 2017; Given, 2008). FDA signifies the rules and external conditions that govern the use of discourse rather than the formal meaning and internal structure of the language and practices. In addition, this approach

considers various sources of knowledge and social legitimacy, which helps in critically examining power relationships in a circuitous form (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008).

Referring to the Foucauldian theorization of power, FDA acknowledges that individuals have varying access to sources of power and knowledge rather than viewing power as solely possessed by a single entity (Khan & MacEachen, 2021). Accordingly, not all discourses are afforded equal presence or authority. Thus, FDA illuminates the effects of power exercised from numerous points within a given context, highlighting the emergence of resistant power (Given, 2008). It demonstrates the connection between discourse and subjectivity, emphasizing that the how we and others talk impacts our experiences and self-understanding in everyday life (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Wiggins, 2017). Therefore, FDA is deeply concerned with the interplay of power, knowledge, and discourse, and their effects on people's daily lives. FDA treats discourse as a "set of statements" underscoring their constructive role in constituting objects and subjects (Given, 2008, p.219).

Given its focus on broad social and cultural issues, FDA draws on various sources, including textual, visual, and spoken interactions. In terms of visual sources, FDA provides a strong foundation for the interpretation of images, such as banners and symbols that contribute to the construction of power relations. This particularly applies to how these visual sources create and sustain power dynamics by positioning individuals or groups (subjects' positions) within particular narratives of authority or resistance (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). FDA is then concerned with the implications of discourse subjective experiences, exploring how discourses evolve, how our understanding of knowledge changes over time, and the subsequent effects on people's self-understanding (Wiggins 2017; Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). Hence, this angle emphasizes the basis of the inherent power relationships in society as expressed through practices, behaviors, and language.

Furthermore, FDA is employed to interpret and comprehend how language is used by the governments to subordinate or marginalize segments of society, in addition to conceptualizing the discourse of resistance by the people toward such power and cultural mainstream (Given, 2008). In addition, it employs genealogical and archaeological methods to understand how historical and social contexts influence the institutionalization of such sources of power through practices and language (Powers, 2007; Khan & MacEachen, 2021). Accordingly, FDA offers a critical lens for

analyzing how power is operationalized through discourse. By examining these dynamics, FDA offers insights into the mechanisms of power and resistance, contributing to a deeper understanding of social structures and their impact on individual and collective experiences.

4.1.3 How FDA Helps Answer Research Question

Foucauldian discourse analysis is instrumental in conducting the analysis and answering the main research question and sub-questions, primarily due to its focus on the interplay of power and discourse. The main research question "*How has football served as a tool of expression and resistance in Egypt and Algeria during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian Hirak, considering the role of football supporters and their contentious relationship with the state?"* is inherently tied to understanding the dynamics of power and resistance. By employing FDA, this research critically examines how football-related activities and practices, in a comparative manner, served as a medium for popular expression and resistance against state authority. Furthermore, FDA encompasses the ability to analyze the discourse of power and resistance by emphasizing the multiplicity of sources of legitimacy and the circuitous form of power within a broader sociopolitical context. This lens helps uncover how fan groups used football as a platform for political expression and how their actions were framed and responded to by the state.

FDA's applicability to various forms of discourse, including textual, visual, and spoken interactions, is particularly advantageous for my research. I employ various primary and secondary sources of data, ranging from written texts to visual images, which are presented and discussed in later sections. This flexibility ensures a comprehensive examination of the comparative discourse surrounding football as a tool of resistance and expression. Additionally, FDA's focus on power dynamics and resistance aligns well with Michel Foucault's theory of power and the concept of contentious politics, as discussed in the theoretical framework. This methodological and theoretical combination facilitates an analysis of the research questions, providing a deeper understanding of the role of football in sociopolitical landscapes and movements in Egypt and Algeria. The following section on the steps and techniques of applying Foucauldian discourse analysis reflects how it was instrumental in conducting the analysis.

4.1.4 Foucauldian Discourse Analysis Techniques/Steps

Given the theoretical grounding in FDA, the methodology involves key steps to systematically collect and analyze data (Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Given 2008):

1- **Identifying discourse samples:** The cornerstone of FDA is identifying discourse samples, or the "corpus of statements", organized systematically and regularly. Selection criteria include how these samples problematize the topic, how discourses evolve over time, and test power relations. Once this step is fulfilled, data collection follows, involving relevant sources, which as addressed, may include interview transcripts, newspaper articles, observations, documents, or visual images. The combination of data needs to be justified in terms of its choice, how they were collected, and how they are employed in the analysis, as demonstrated in the following section. The corpus of statements in my study, as discussed in the following section, includes a variety of discourse samples. This comprises visual images (banners), football songs and chants, which are regarded as public statements by football supporters (Ultras), as well as governments' discourse around football in both countries. This enabled analyzing how football stadiums became contested spaces for political expression in Egypt and Algeria, clarifying football's influence in both the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*.

2- **Problematization and analysis:** This step involves the problematization and analysis of the corpus of statements. It refers to examining events over time where objects and practices become problematic, thus making them visible and knowable. This allows the analyst to adopt a critical position regarding how problems are formed and to show how they constitute objects and specific practices. I analyzed how football supporters, primarily Ultras groups, became problematized by the state, examining how their presence in stadiums and streets shifted from being viewed as mere fans to a challenge to state authority.

3- **Examining power relations and subject positions:** This step involves the rules and conditions that led to the formulation of the discourse and statements. It examines the rules that delimit what can be said, written, or practiced and the rules that order these statements. This analysis highlights the power relations and subject positions within the discourse, revealing how power operates and is contested within the given context. In my analysis, I

focused on how the state, in Egypt and Algeria, imposed restrictions and attempted to delimit football supporters, while also examining how supporters positioned themselves as subjects of resistance, contesting the state's authority through various acts of defiance.

4- **The identification of material and discursive practices:** This step involves addressing how discourses enable both material and discursive actions. I followed this by analyzing how football supporters in both countries employed their various and diverse activities not only as mere expressions of dissent but as discursive practices that influenced collective action. This involved examining their engagement in physical acts of resistance such as in organized protests and, as demonstrated specifically in the Egyptian case, confronting security forces. Thus, I attempted to emphasize how football supporters, primarily Ultras, through their words and actions contested state authority and presented an alternative lens for interpreting power dynamics.

4.2 Data

In my study, I relied on a combination of primary and secondary sources of data. All data was collected through extensive desk research from various sources online. The primary data analyzed include visual images, songs, an interview, and documentaries. All the data were collected for their relevance to the research question, in line with the aforementioned techniques and steps of Foucauldian discourse analysis.

4.2.1 Primary Sources

4.2.1.1 Visual Images

- A.C.A.B "All Cops Are Bastards: a key image was taken from a YouTube video on a fan channel, featuring Ultras Ahlawy members displaying the A.C.A.B banner during a match on March 31, 2010. This banner was selected and analyzed as it symbolizes the Ultras' resistance against the Egyptian police, perceived as enforcers of Mubarak's regime. The banner also highlights the Ultras' early defiance before the January 25th Revolution.
- *Bordj Bou Arreridj* Banner: This banner, displayed by football fans during the *Hirak* protests on April 12, 2019, was accessed via Facebook. It depicted a match between the people and the regime. It symbolizes the people's desire to score against the regime, metaphorically indicating their demand for justice and change, which reflects the

shifting power dynamics. The banner provided an essential visual representation of nonviolent football-related resistance during the *Hirak*. In addition, displayed shortly after Bouteflika's departure, it signified the influence of football culture on the resilience of the *Hirak* protests. Accordingly, it was selected and analyzed.

4.2.1.2 Auditory elements: Songs (Football Chants)

- *"Liberta"* (Freedom) Song by Ultras Ahlawy: It was accessed via YouTube: Ultras Ahlawy's official channel. The song was released in September 2011 after the revolution. It was selected and analyzed according to the following points. It illustrated the evolution of Ultras', specifically Ahlawy, resistance. Its lyrics reflect a shift in their defiance from just the police to the state as a whole, which was crucial for understanding the transition in their contentious relationship with the state.
- *"La Casa Del Mouradia"* (The Mouradia Palace) Song by USMA Club's *Ouled El Bahdja*: Produced in April 2018, and accessed through *Ouled El Bahdja's* official YouTube channel, this song was widely sung throughout the *Hirak* protests. Its lyrics criticize Bouteflika's regime and were analyzed to understand how football supporters employed nonviolent methods to challenge state power. Furthermore, its release date adds to its selection. It denotes football as a tool of expression and resistance before the emergence of the *Hirak*.

4.2.1.3 Interview:

Amr Ezz talks about preparations for the January revolution, the role of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Ultras, and the unification of political movements in the Square (translated from Arabic): Originally conducted on June 26, 2011, and was accessed via YouTube on the official channel of Ahmed Mansour, a prominent Egyptian broadcaster, journalist, producer and TV presenter, who works for Al Jazeera Media Network. This interview featured Amr Ezz, one of the founders of the April 6 social movement in Egypt, an active participant and witness on the Egyptian revolution. Ezz provided prominent insights into the preparation for the revolution and the vital role played by Ultras groups, Ahlawy and White Knights, particularly during key events like the Friday of Rage. These insights were analyzed to highlight the Ultras' disruptive techniques that were employed as a counterpower.

4.2.1.4 Documentaries

- *Egypt's Hardcore Football Fans – Ultras*: This 47-minute documentary was originally made in 2014 to chronicle the story of the Ultras Ahlawy and White Knights in Egypt. It was accessed through YouTube (Al Jazeera English Channel) where it premiered in 2021. This documentary was pivotal in understanding the Ultras' involvement in both key events of the revolution and the post-revolution resistance narrative, such as the events of Mohamed Mahmoud Street in November 2011. In addition, it addressed the Port Said Massacre in February 2012. It included interviews with families of Ultras members who lost their lives during this period, and notable sports analysts and journalists in Egypt. The insights gained from the documentary were streamlined in analyzing how Ultras groups challenged the entrenched power structure in Egypt, in addition to the consequences of their involvement that culminated in the Port Said incident, which was the cutoff date of the analysis of the Egyptian case.
- *How Algerian Football Fans Topple A Dictator*: This, approximately, 10-minute documentary was produced by Maher Mezahi, an independent Algerian football journalist who covers and researches North Africa extensively. The documentary focuses on the solidarity shown by the fans of the two biggest clubs in Algeria, USM Alger and MC Alger, in boycotting the Derby of Algiers in March 2019 and joining the *Hirak* protests. It was accessed via YouTube and includes interviews with fans of both clubs, which offered insights into the use of nonviolent methods of resistance by football supporters that challenged the Algerian regime.

4.2.2 Secondary Sources

In addition to the aforementioned sources, I also used secondary sources such as books, journal articles, and news analyses. These were also collected based on their relevance to the research question. They provided an analytical foundation to contextualize the role of football supporters in both Egypt and Algeria. In addition, these sources offered a deeper understanding of how football was politicized under the regimes of Hosni Mubarak and Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and how football fandom, primarily Ultras groups, emerged as agents of expression and resistance. Notably, the key books discussed in the following paragraphs were instrumental in gathering factual information and incidents which were then analyzed through the selected theoretical and methodological approach.

For Egypt, I relied on a key secondary source: Ronnie Close's book *Cairo's Ultras* (2019). Close's work is extensively cited in analyzing the Egyptian case because it delves into the intricate relationship between Ultras groups and the state (Mubarak regime onwards). His observations and interviews with former Ultras members provide crucial insights into the confrontations between these fan groups and the police, which helps in understanding the rise of the Ultras as political actors. Close's in-depth examination of the Ultras' during the Egyptian Revolution offers a rich analysis of how their tactics, primarily confrontational actions, evolved during the revolution, in addition to highlighting the continuation of resistance that culminated in the Port Said unfortunate incident. Therefore, this book formed the pillar of the analysis of the case of Egypt.

For Algeria, the work of Maher Mezahi and Mahfoud Amara is pivotal to understanding the role of football supporters in the country's sociopolitical landscape. In addition to the mentioned documentary, Mezahi's work, significantly his chapter *A Study of Football Chants as Political Expression in Algerian Hirak* (2022), provides key insights into how football-related activities, especially chants and banners, played a role in sustaining the momentum of the *Hirak*. In addition, his work offered valuable insights into assessing the contentious relationship between football supporters and the state through such cultural nonviolent means of resistance. Mezahi's works on the cultural and political significance of Algerian football chants were pivotal in exploring other secondary sources that helped analyze the Algerian case.

Mahfoud Amara's works (2 journal articles, 1 news analysis article, and 1 book chapter), on the other hand, were instrumental in analyzing how Bouteflika's regime sought to co-opt football for political purposes. Through his articles, Amara offered rich examples, resting on the government's policies and strategies in addition to highlighting anecdotes from speeches by Bouteflika, that helped in analyzing this aspect. Henceforth, his work was essential in analyzing the power and resistance dynamics through the lens of football.

In both Egypt and Algeria, the timelines selected for analysis play a crucial role in exploring the evolving dynamics of football as a tool of expression and resistance. The data collected and analyzed for the Egyptian cases focused on the period from 2005 to 2012, highlighting the golden years of Egyptian football coinciding with the Mubarak regime's strategic use of the sport. This timeline also signifies the growing antagonism between the state and football supporters, which culminated in the January 25 Revolution and the aftermath of the Porst Said Massacre. For Algeria,

the data analysis spanned from 2009 to 2020, covering incidents where Bouteflika's attempts to consolidate power through football peaked. In addition, it emphasizes the phenomenon of how Algerian football stadiums served as hubs of expression and resistance, highlighting examples, underscored by the rise of Ultras influence, the football influence on the *Hirak*, and the subsequent state repression.

That chronological scope supports the FDA genealogical approach, specifically listed in step 3, by examining how football-related discourse and power relations evolved over time. Through analyzing such a discourse, I attempted to uncover the layers of interaction between football, power, and resistance. This also served to highlight the contentious relationship between football supporters and the state that was evident in the two prominent events in 2011 and 2019 respectively.

These comprehensive data sources coupled with the analysis steps of FDA facilitated the exploration of the research question. Through these analytical steps, I attempted to understand and analyze how football served as a vehicle for political expression and resistance in both countries. This methodology, coupled with Foucault's theorization of power and resistance and contentious politics, provided a solid foundation for addressing the main research question and sub-questions.

4.3 Challenges in Data Collection and Analysis

While collecting and analyzing the data, I encountered several challenges. A significant difficulty was finding original, firsthand posts and data from social media accounts of Ultras in Egypt, such as Facebook and Twitter. These groups have been dissolved, making it challenging to access their original content. As a result, most of the data I gathered and analyzed concerning these groups were from secondary sources of data. However, these second-hand sources helped to fill the gaps through the rich information and insights that were provided, as discussed in the data section.

Furthermore, I found more comprehensive sources on the details of the formation of Ultras groups, their activism, and incidents of fan violence and conflict with the state and security forces in Egypt than in Algeria. Although the sources I tackled acknowledge violent confrontations and conflicts between Ultras and regime security forces in Algeria, these sources often lack the detailed information necessary for in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, this discrepancy was useful and addressed by adopting a comparative approach that elaborates and analyzes the similarities and differences in the role of football supporters in the Egyptian and Algerian contexts.

4.4 Positionality and Ethical Considerations

Since discourse is never neutral and value-free (Given, 2008), I acknowledge that there are certain aspects that lead to bias in my research such as geographic and cultural factors, given my Middle Eastern and North African origin. Being from the region where the Arab Spring and subsequent political developments occurred, I have a personal connection to the political and social struggles, especially, in Egypt. As mentioned in the introduction, my familiarity with football culture, and my belief in its potential as a vehicle for political expression, coupled with experiencing the tension that occurred between Egypt and Algeria in 2009, were vital factors in the selection of these two cases. While this connection may provide a deeper understating of the significance of the sport in both countries, it is still worth noting that my positionality as Egyptian needs to be taken into consideration.

A potential bias in this research might be evident in the inclination to side with football supporters. However, I am not affiliated with any football clubs either in Egypt or Algeria. Henceforth, my goal is not to establish a mere causality between the state's instrumentalization of football and the violent confrontations between football supporters and the state, or to romanticize the role of football supporters. Additionally, I acknowledge the sensitivity regarding the subject matter, particularly due to the tensions that arose between Egypt and Algeria in 2009 following the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualification match, which led to enmity between the two countries.

To mitigate such potential biases and limitations, I aimed to maintain a critically reflexive approach throughout the analysis process. This involved ensuring that my analysis remained grounded in the methodological and theoretical frameworks, instead of resting on personal beliefs and experiences. By following this critical lens, I attempted to avoid romanticizing the role of football supporters or oversimplifying the relationship between the state's instrumentalization of football and the resulting confrontations. In addition, when addressing the political tensions between Egypt and Algeria in 2009, I attempted to remain neutral in my analysis. Instead of focusing on or invoking the emotional or nationalistic aspect of the event, I examined how both governments politicized the match to foster nationalism and control public sentiment. In doing so, I rested on the theoretical foundation of biopolitics and governmentality to ensure that my analysis remained objective.

Regarding the ethical considerations in data collection and analysis, as mentioned, I collected the data through desk research from reputable online research engines and platforms. Most of the data had open access, though some was accessed via the Tuni E-Library. Furthermore, I used books that provided limited access to certain chapters or number of pages via Google Books, however, the allowed number of pages was sufficient to access the relevant information needed for the analysis. Moreover, to ensure the protection of the intellectual property of the data I collected, I commit to proper citation and referencing. Lastly, I ensured an accurate and professional translation of various sources from Arabic and French into English. This was done to avoid linguistic erroneousness that could affect the readability and the clarity of the argumentative flow of the research.

After presenting the methodological framework, the following chapters present an in-depth analysis of how football influenced and contributed to the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*, addressing the contentious relationship between the state and football supporters. The first analysis chapter examines the Egyptian case, followed by the Algerian case in the second chapter. Both chapters explore how both governments of Mubarak and Bouteflika sought to co-opt football for political purposes. Then, the chapters examine how football Ultras groups presented an alternative narrative through their diverse acts of political expression and resistance, highlighting their prominent influence in both uprisings. The final chapter provides a comparative analysis of both cases, drawing on Foucauldian theories of power and resistance, and the dynamics of contentious politics to discuss the key findings of how football supporters challenged state power in their respective countries.

5- Egypt: Revolution in Red and White

This chapter examines how football supporters contributed to the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. It examines how football supporters' activities served as a source of resistant power challenging political structures, as well as how their disruptive techniques employed during the revolution were essential to the broader collective action that influenced political change. It also examines the contentious relationship between football supporters and the state, particularly the security apparatus (the police). To achieve this, the chapter begins with an overview and analysis of the importance of football in Egypt, its connection to politics, and how it has been instrumentalized by the Mubarak regime coinciding with the rise of Ultras groups. Following this, it highlights the activities of Ultras football groups to analyze their relationship with the state and their active participation in the 2011 uprising. Finally, the chapter explores the peak of enmity between Ultras groups and the state by examining the tragic incident of the Port Said Massacre in 2012.

5.1 Football, Power, and Politics: The Role of Football Under Mubarak's Regime

Football has long held a central place in Egyptian society, with its popularity extending from streets to stadiums (Jerzak, 2022). As historically intertwined with nationalism and resistance since its inception, football's political significance in Egypt is profound. Under Hosni Mubarak, football became a significant political instrument, utilized to reinforce the regime's legitimacy and manipulate public perceptions (Al-Arian, 2022). Egypt's golden years of football (2005 to 2010), highlighted by the national team's three consecutive African Cup of Nations (AFCON) victories, provided an ideal opportunity for the regime to harness football's unifying power (Tuastad 2022; Gibril, 2018). Seizing this widespread enthusiasm for football, the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) capitalized on the public's enthusiasm, using football to secure electoral support, even distributing tickets as part of the vote-buying scheme. This period also saw a state orientation towards fostering a moderate fan culture, encouraging spectators from families and newer generations to attend matches (Jerzak, 2022; Azzam, 2023). These efforts aimed at distracting the public from Egypt's complex socio-economic challenges and embedding football into the daily lives of Egyptians illustrate Foucault's concept of biopower, where the state extends its influence into everyday cultural practices (Taylor, 2014; Foucault, 1991).

Gamal Mubarak, Hosni Mubarak's son, who served as the Deputy General and the Secretary of the Policy Committee of the NDP, played a central role in this strategy. His involvement in the

national team's celebrations and chanting with the players, particularly during the 2010 AFCON, was perceived as a strategic move aimed at aligning the regime and Mubarak's guidance with the successes of the national team (Gibril, 2018). This aimed to foster Gamal's image as the man of the people and position him as a potential presidential successor, harnessing the hereditary agenda (Jerzak, 2022). In this way, the regime used football to create a unique form of governmentality, where the ruler and the public shared a common passion, providing an alternative avenue to mainstream politics for fostering unity and compliance (Gibril, 2018; Foucault, 1991).

The regime's strategic use of football peaked during the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifier against Algeria held in Sudan, in November 2009, which the Egyptian media described as the most important match in Egyptian football history (Al-Arian, 2022). Following Egypt's defeat, Gamal Mubarak's actions and statements were particularly telling. He refused to leave Sudan and insisted on accompanying the Egyptian team back to ensure a safe departure amidst the violent clashes between Egyptian and Algerian fans after the final whistle. These actions coupled with his subsequent statement that support for the national team was 'critical' were perceived as strategic moves to reinforce alignment with national interests, and divert attention from domestic policy failure (Jerzak, 2022; Close, 2019).

The Mubarak regime's strategic use of football resonates with Foucault's theory of biopolitics, where governments employ cultural practices to manage populations and maintain power. In this case, by turning football into a symbol of unity and pride, the state sought to manipulate societal norms and divert public attention and scrutiny from pressing issues, thereby maintaining order and stability. Yet, while the regime sought to co-opt football for political control, a counternarrative was emerging in football stadiums. The rise of the Ultras football fan groups in the mid-2000s signaled a shift in the dynamics of power and resistance within Egyptian society (El-Zatmah 2012). These organized, anti-authoritarian groups transformed stadiums into contested spaces of dissent, challenging the regime's dominance. By adopting collective and resistant codes, the Ultras disrupted the regime's compliance narrative and contributed to the broader forces that eventually ousted Mubarak. Their emergence marks the intersection of Foucault's theories on power and resistance with contentious politics, which will be discussed in the following sections.

5.2 The Ultras Before the 2011 Revolution

The Ultras, known for their fervent, dedicated, and highly organized support, became significant symbols of youth culture and resistance and defiance within the football scene. The two most prominent groups and arch-rivals in Egypt, Ultras Ahlawy (UA07) of *Al-Ahly* Club and Ultras White Knights (UWK) of *Zamalek* Club, famous for their red and white colors respectively, were both founded in 2007. Comprising members from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and inspired by international Ultras counterparts from Italy and Latin America, these groups developed a distinct reputation for their anti-authoritarian attitudes and opposition to the commercialization of sports. Their collective activities, chants, banners, choreographed displays, and the use of pyrotechnics, created an atmosphere of passionate, but often violent and confrontational, support inside and outside stadiums (Close, 2019; El-Zatmah, 2012).

The state initially viewed the Ultras' activities, such as their use of provocative banners and chants that often led to violent clashes, particularly between the fierce rivals, *Al-Ahly* and *Zamalek*, as a threat to its efforts to control football and use it for political stability. One early example was UA07's banner in April 2007, which referred to *Al-Ahly's* significant victory over *Zamalek*, which was viewed as a display of defiance and heightened tensions in the stands (Close, 2019). Despite claiming to be apolitical, the Ultras were increasingly engaged in politically charged confrontations. Their culture of resistance, particularly against the police, marked the beginning of a more politicized opposition to state power, even before the 2011 Revolution (Gibril, 2015).

This tension escalated as the Ultras began to defy state authority through broader social and political actions that transcended mere fandom. For instance, UWK displayed solidarity with Palestine during the 2008-2009 Israeli aggression on Gaza by raising banners and the Palestinian flag, an act seen as defiance against Mubarak's regime, which had prohibited such demonstrations due to fear of damaging relations with Western sponsors (Close, 2019; Tuastad, 2014). This positioned the Ultras at odds with the state, highlighting their growing role in broader sociopolitical issues and illustrating the concept of contentious politics, where collective actions challenge the existing power structures (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001).

Although these fan groups were inherently anti-authoritarian, there was no clear evidence of them chanting or displaying direct expressions against the state until they were met with violent police repression, which catalyzed their politicization. The regime's aggressive attempts to neutralize the

Ultras through arrests, harassment, and surveillance, had an adverse effect, reinforcing their collective opposition to state repression. The police have routinely infiltrated matches, employing undercover informants and hired thugs[3] to monitor and disrupt the Ultras' activities. They even faced torture in infamous police stations. These coercive tactics, justified by claims of protecting public safety from the thugs who were sometimes employed by the regime to serve their purposes, deepened the animosity between the Ultras and the police, who were seen as enforcers of state control (Gibril, 2015; Close, 2019). Such actions exemplify Foucault's biopolitics, where the state attempted to extend its control over the Ultras football groups through various mechanisms, in addition to employing punitive and disciplinary measures to suppress the Ultras' rising resistant power (Foucault, 1978; Taylor 2014).

However, these strategies backfired. The Ultras became more politicized, increasingly adopting antagonism towards Mubarak's regime, and viewing themselves as a resistance force against the state's repressive security apparatus. This was translated into their adoption of collective slogans to identify themselves with resistance against the police as a fundamental element of groups' activism and to express their resentment (Close, 2019).

[3] "Thugs" refer to individuals, often associated with criminal records and activities, who were hired by the state to intimidate and suppress people, such as in protests. They were frequently employed to disrupt gatherings and reinforce state authority through violence and fear (Ismail, 2012).

Figure 1. Ultras Ahlawy displaying the banner "A.C.A.B" (All Cops Are Bastards) during a match in 2010. Source (Source: sokaelahlawy (2010, March 31) [Video])

A powerful example of this defiance is the display of a banner with the acronym "A.C.A.B" (All Cops Are Bastards). This banner summarized and reflected the Ultras' collective resistance, which symbolizes a challenge to state power, particularly the coercive power embodied by the police (Close, 2019). Despite the police's efforts, this banner reaffirms Foucault's conclusion about resistance as an inevitable counterbalancing force to power. The act of displaying this banner is regarded as an exercise in claiming a space for dissent, where the stadium becomes a venue for resistance against state authority and biopolitical control. Furthermore, this banner is not just about opposing the police but also about asserting an alternative narrative to the state's discourse and power, which is related to the Foucauldian omnipresent and multidirectional nature of power, meaning that Ultras groups created an alternative resistant power (Foucault, 1978; Lynch, 2010).

State repression, far from neutralizing the Ultras, solidified their role as key actors in the growing opposition to Mubarak's regime. The aggressive tactics employed by the police catalyzed the Ultras' transformation from passionate supporters into political activists (Al Jazeera English, 2021). This evolution exemplifies Foucault's biopolitics, where the state's efforts to control and suppress dissent gave rise to new forms of resistance. The stadiums, once seen as zones for mere fandom for moderate fan culture, became contested spaces where the Ultras could openly challenge state authority, with chants and banners targeting the police, and soon align with wider societal grievance.

5.3 The Lead-Up to Revolution: Ultras as Pioneers of Resistance

As Egypt neared the 2011 Revolution, the Ultras' long-standing confrontations with the police naturally aligned them with the wider social movements calling for political change. Groups like *kefaya* and the 6th of April, which had been gaining momentum since the mid-2000s coinciding with the rise of UA07 and UWK, recognized the Ultras as valuable allies. The Ultras' organizational skills, developed through years of coordinated support for their football teams, proved essential in these movements. Their history with the police and willingness to stand up to authority made them integral to the growing opposition against the Mubarak regime (El-Zatmah, 2012).

A clear example of this alignment was the Ultras' active participation in the "*Kullina Khaled Saeed*" Facebook group, which mobilized protest after the brutal killing of Khaled Saeed at the hands of the police. This tragedy became a symbol of police violence and state oppression, issues with which the Ultras were intimately familiar. The Ultras' participation in this movement demonstrated their gradual shift from football fandom to political activism. This change signaled a significant shift in the political opportunity structure that aligned them with broader societal grievances driving the uprising (Gibril, 2015; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015).

While both UA07 and UWK publicly denied political involvement in social media, their actions in stadiums and on the streets indicated a preparation for direct action. A key example was an anonymous video on January 20, 2011, that reassured protesters that Ultras would protect them from police brutality. This video, showing prior clashes with the police, contradicted their apolitical claims. This reflected a strategic ambiguity, which aimed at keeping authorities uncertain about their intentions while preparing for the protests (Ahmed Mansour, 2021; Gibril, 2015). This ambiguity reflects Foucault's concepts of power and resistance, where their actions were proactive measures to challenge state control (Foucault, 1978). Moreover, this strategy is a form of subtle resistance that aligns with contentious politics by disrupting the state's power dynamics (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001).

In addition to their antagonism towards the police, the significance of January 25, National Police Day, further galvanized the Ultras' participation against the regime that oppressed them (Gibril, 2015). In fact, signs of their revolutionary inclinations surfaced before the protests. On January 23, UA07 defied a nine-month ban on banners, leading to clashes with the police at a match. Chants of "Tunisia! Tunisia!" referencing the Jasmine Revolution further hinted at their involvement in the upcoming protests (Close, 2019). These defiant acts turned stadiums into arenas of political contestation, illustrating both Foucauldian power-resistance dynamics and the mechanisms of contentious politics through collective grievances driving public action (Foucault, 1978; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015).

Thus, as the revolution approached, the Ultras became pivotal participants, contributing beyond mere presence by using their organizational skills to defend and support protesters. Their actions illustrate their intersection of contentious politics and Foucault's theories showing how sports fandom transformed into a prominent resistant force capable of challenging entrenched power

structures. Their involvement played a key role in enabling the broader movement that would ultimately lead to significant political transformation in Egypt.

5.4 Stadiums to Streets: Ultras' Impact on the Egyptian Revolution

"*The Ultras have played a more significant role in the Egyptian Revolution than political groups on the ground*", stated Alaa Abdelfattah, a well-known Egyptian activist and blogger (Close, 2019, p.26). Amr Ezz also noted, "*The Ultras' unique organizational capabilities surpassed the largest political factions…Their critical role was essential in securing access to Tahrir Square*" (Ahmed Mansour, 2021, 32:58). These statements from famous bloggers, journalists, and activists, who were actively involved throughout the revolution, highlight the pivotal role that the Ultras played during the uprising. From the onset of the January 25 protests, UA07 and UWK erased their previous ambiguity and decisively joined the demonstrations. Remarkably, their fierce rivalry was put aside, as unity against state repression preceded club loyalty. While the protests began peacefully, violent clashes erupted between protesters and the police forces, resulting in the first Ultras casualties in Alexandria and Suez (Close, 2019; Al-Jazeera English, 2021). This initial involvement set the tone for the Ultras' role throughout the revolution.

5.4.1 Ultras' Repertoire of Confrontational Disruptive Actions

Over the 18 days, they employed tactics such as quick attacks followed by rapid retreats, enduring tear gas exposure, rotating frontline fighters, and identifying and warning of violent attacks. These tactics were critical during key confrontations like the Friday of Rage and the Battle of the Camel (Close, 2019; Tuastad, 2022). Alongside these direct actions, the Ultras also engaged in symbolic acts of dissent, such as graffiti of revolutionary and antiregime slogans, and displaying red cards to the regime, blending football culture with political activism (Hassan, 2015; Jerzak, 2022). However, their ability to adapt and respond with organized tactics was crucial in maintaining the frontline defense of Tahrir Square, acting as a counterforce to institutional power. Without their efforts, the protest could have weakened, risking the failure of the movement that ultimately led to Mubarak's downfall (Ahmed Mansour, 2021; Tuastad, 2022).

5.4.2 Friday of Rage: Igniting the Revolution

The Friday of Anger marked the actual start of the revolution, as large-scale protests erupted, demanding the removal of Mubarak's regime (Ahmed Mansour, 2021). In preparing for the demonstrations, Ultras members led organized smaller groups to Tahrir Square, navigating

separately to avoid detection upon arrival, exemplifying their organized skills in mobilization (Close, 2019). A pivotal moment occurred on the Qasr El-Nile Bridge, where the Ultras members, dispersed among the frontlines, clashed with police forces who attempted to block the demonstrators' path to Tahrir Square. The Ultras broke through police lines, enabling the massive crowds to cross the bridge and secure Tahrir Square as the heart of the revolution. Once there, they took part in protecting key entry points, such as Mohamed Mahmoud and Qasr al-Aini streets, exemplifying their disciplined organization and strategic defense (El-Zatmah, 2012; Ahmed Mansour, 2021).

That day saw intense clashes, primarily with security forces who eventually retreated due to the overwhelming numbers of protesters, significantly shifting the power dynamics (Gibril, 2015). The regime deployed thugs to disperse the crowds, yet that was met with determined resistance from the Ultras and their fellow protesters. In a symbolic act of resistance, the Ultras utilized their banned pyrotechnics which resulted in the burning of a police truck that was driven by thugs and loaded with weapons intended to attack the protesters, highlighting their capability to face the state's aggressive measures (Al Jazeera English, 2021).

5.4.3 The Battle of the Camel: The Tipping Point

The Ultras' involvement peaked during the Battle of the Camel on February 2, 2011, which marked a critical incident in the revolution. The day prior, Mubarak delivered a speech offering concessions and declaring not to run for another presidential term, which encouraged pro-Mubarak processions that could have weakened the revolutionary spirit. The violent ambush that occurred the next day by horse and camel riders holding swords and knives, organized by the regime's mobs and paid thugs, aimed to disperse the week-long sit-in. Instead, it recharged the public momentum and solidified the demand for an immediate removal of the regime (Close, 2019; Gibril, 2015).

The Ultras, significantly Ahlawy group, displayed a prominent performance in repelling the regime's hired muscles. Anecdotal evidence, as highlighted from sources like Amr Ezz's interview and Ronnie Close's book, suggests that the Ultras have coordinated with civil society groups at key moments of large-scale protests and defending Tahrir Square. However, there tends to be limited solid proof of organized collaboration, particularly in the context of direct confrontations, such as with the regime's thugs. This leaves the Ultras at the forefront during these critical moments. They utilized their coordination and managed to target and beat mobs and undercover

cops, especially from rooftops surrounding the Square in a daylong battle of stones and Molotov cocktails and even live ammunition fired at protestors (Close, 2019; Tuastad, 2014). Although the clashes resulted in multiple casualties, this event intensified public outrage and significantly shifted the power dynamics against the regime.

The Ultras' involvement during the revolution and their actions in key clashes demonstrated how their football fan skills transformed into effective revolutionary tactics, contesting and challenging state power. This embodies Foucault's conception of power as multidirectional and pervasive, highlighting the inevitable presence of resistance wherever there is power (Foucault, 1978; Khan & MacEachen, 2021). Furthermore, their involvement highlights how changes in political opportunities and their diverse crystallized tactics significantly shifted the power dynamics in Egypt during the revolution (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001).

5.4.4 Post-Eighteen Days Euphoria

After Mubarak's fall, the initial euphoria quickly transitioned into intense unrest and confrontation under the interim rule of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF). The Ultras, UA07 and UWK, returned to stadiums with a heightened political charge. Their chants and banners not only commemorated the revolution and honored their martyrs, but also openly criticized the government and the security forces. Their A.C.A.B banners remained a prominent feature at matches, reflecting their ongoing disdain for the weakened police forces (Hassan, 2015).

As the political landscape grew more turbulent, the Ultras embraced the notion of "*al-thawra mostamerra*" (the revolution continues). This reflected their alignment with broader public dissatisfaction with the slow pace of genuine reform and the remaining elements of the old regime, which was perceived as efforts to reinstate the previous order through chaos. This period of intense conflict extended beyond stadiums, especially when security forces used excessive force and conducted mass arrests of Ultras members, which were tactics not seen since before the revolution. Such complexities led the Ultras, UA07 and UWK, to publicly announce their participation in protests and sit-ins during that period, marking a significant shift in their discourse and from their previous obscure involvement (Hassan, 2015; Close, 2019). Their participation was particularly evident during the clashes of Mohamed Mahmoud Street in November 2011, which erupted after the violent dispersion of a sit-in by people injured during the revolution and the forceful evacuation

of Tahrir Square. The Ultras acted as defenders, drawing on their usual tactics throughout the 18 days (Gibril, 2015; Al Jazeera English, 2021).

A notable example of the Ultras' ongoing resistance was the song "Liberta" or *"Horreya"* (Freedom) by UA07 which was produced in September 2011 and was widely chanted in stadiums and protest sites. Its bold lyrics reflected themes of resistance and challenge oppressive power structures, central to Foucauldian and contentious politics frameworks (UltrasAhlawy07Media, 2011):

"We told the tyrant long ago, freedom is coming, it is a must. Oh government, you'll know tomorrow, by the hands of the people, you will be purified. And tonight, the verse is flipped. Oh, foolish regime, understand my demand. Freedom. Freedom. Freedom."

The lyrics directly address the "tyrant", symbolizing the oppressive power structure that was led by Mubarak, while highlighting the inherent right to freedom as a form of resistance. This shift from antagonism against the police to the entire regime reflects the Ultras' broader commitment to freedom and change even after Mubarak's departure. The line "by the hands of the people, you will be purified" exemplifies the active resistance which corresponds to Foucault's concept of the inevitable association between power and resistance (Foucault, 1978). The inclusion of "the people's hands" emphasizes collectivism, crucial for mass mobilization, reflecting how the Ultras were part of a shared identity driving collective action, central to contentious politics (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001). The repeated call for "freedom" highlights the biopolitical battle for autonomy against the state's attempts to manage and suppress dissent (Taylor, 2014; Foucault, 1982). Finally, the line "And tonight the verse is flipped" underscores the shifting power dynamics, consistent with the Foucauldian view that power is relational and omnipresent (Foucault, 1978).

This period marked a significant shift in the Ultras' role from passionate football supporters to key players in Egypt's struggle for systemic change. Their repertoire of contentious actions, ranging from confrontations with security forces to symbolic resistance through chants like UA07's "Liberta", highlighted their persistent challenge to entrenched power structures (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). Initially, their antagonism was directed primarily at the police, but over time their resistance evolved to target the regime in its entirety, illustrating the expansion of their influence.

The Ultras' transition from football dissent to broader political resistance reflects the power dynamics articulated in Foucauldian theory, where resistance inevitably emerges in response to systemic biopolitical control. However, their growing resistant power culminated in one of the most tragic incidents in football history, further exposing their contentious relationship with the state. The Port Said Massacre, which will be discussed in the next section, marked a significant turning point in the animosity between the state and these groups of football supporters, ultimately to their current state of dissolution.

5.5 The Port Said Massacre: Retribution and Resistance

The Port Said Massacre, which occurred on February 1, 2012, is regarded as one of the darkest incidents in Egypt's history and a critical moment in the contentious relationship between the Ultras and the state. This incident not only deepened the animosity between the state and these football supporters but also highlighted the role of the Ultras as key political actors in the revolution and the subsequent period of unrest that Egypt witnessed. It also emphasized the violent measures the state was prepared to employ in its effort to regain control. The massacre occurred during a match between *Al-Ahly* and *Al-Masry* in Port Said. What began as a routine game quickly escalated into a deadly confrontation when *Al-Masry* fans stormed the pitch, armed with weapons, and targeted *Al-Ahly* supporters. The police, who were present in large numbers, failed to intervene and reportedly closed the exits to prevent escape (Tuastad, 2022; Close, 2019).

The incident resulted in over 70 deaths, mostly *Al-Ahly* supporters, and multiple injuries. The massacre was widely perceived as a retaliatory act by the state or remnants of Mubarak's regime, especially the police, aimed at punishing the Ultras for their role in the revolution, significantly the Battle of the Camel, and for their ongoing defiance against state authority. Ultras Ahlawy viewed it as an orchestrated attack meant to weaken their organized opposition. While some attributed the violence to extreme fandom, testimonies from *Al-Masry's* Ultras Green Eagles denying involvement increased suspicions of state arrangement (Gibril, 2015). The apparent complicity, or, at best, negligence of the police in preventing violence and ensuring the safety of the fans pointed to a deliberate attempt to weaken or even dismantle the Ultras as an emerging resistance force (Tuastad, 2022). This incident reflects Foucault's concept of biopolitical control, where the state exercises power over life and death. The massacre can be viewed as a brutal

assertion of state power over those who challenged and resisted its system (Taylor, 2014; Foucault, 1991).

The Port Said Massacre signaled a significant escalation in the Ultras' contentious politics. It reinforced their collective antagonism and intensified their commitment to challenging the state. Their response through public demonstrations, memorials, and continued defiance demonstrated their ability to adapt tactics to the evolving political landscape, turning grief into renewed resistance. The incident highlighted the shifting political opportunity structure in post-revolutionary Egypt, galvanizing the Ultras and other revolutionary groups rather than deterring them (Al Jazeera English, 2021). The aftermath saw increased polarization and hardened opposition to the SCAF, contributing to continued unrest and power transition to the former president Mohamed Morsi (Close, 2019; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015).

Therefore, the Port Said Massacre serves as a severe reminder of the violent repression faced by those who challenged the state and underscores the efforts of the regime and its remnants to maintain control and suppress dissent. However, the tragedy also solidified the Ultras' role as martyrs and symbols of resistance for many Egyptians (Al Jazeera English, 2021). Further intertwining their legacy with the revolutionary struggle. The memory of Port Said became an appeal for the Ultras, further reinforcing their role as key actors in Egypt's ongoing struggle for justice and systemic change, yet it was a step that culminated in their dissolution (Close, 2019).

Cairo's Court of Urgent Matters declared Ultras groups illegal and initiated a legal crackdown. The Egyptian parliament passed Sports Law No. 71 in May 2015, banning sports fans' associations and criminalizing Ultras' groups. Security forces conducted arrest campaigns, detaining members on terrorism or riot-inciting charges (Mohie, 2015). This constant harassment and imprisonment threat pressured the groups. In a dramatic turn of events, both major Ultras groups in Cairo, UA07 and UWK announced their disbandment (Talaat, 2018).

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated how Ultras football supporters, who initially emerged as defiant groups within Egypt's football scene, evolved into crucial political actors during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. Through an exploration of their antagonistic relationship with the state, especially the police, the chapter analyzed how the Ultras gradually challenged political control and biopolitical

mechanisms embedded in football by the Mubarak regime, thus becoming active agents of resistance. Their organizational skills and history of confrontations with state authority made them pivotal in the revolution's success, as evidenced by their role in key events like the Friday of Rage and the Battle of the Camel. The Port Said Massacre further underscored the Ultras' position as a resistant force against state repression. The analysis confirmed that their disruptive techniques, primarily confrontational, and organizational strength, not only contributed to collective action, but also disrupted the political structures they opposed. The chapter illustrated the crucial role of Ultras as an inevitable resistance to power and a catalyst for political change in Egypt. Therefore, this effectively addressed the main research question and sub-questions.

As large crowds from diverse backgrounds demanded freedom and change during the Arab Spring, North African football stadiums transformed into crucial arenas of expression and resistance. This shift intensified the politicized nature of Ultras groups, exemplifying how football became a powerful tool for protest movements. This phenomenon, however, was not confined to Egypt alone. As the focus shifts to Algeria, another prominent manifestation of football's role in political mobilization will be encountered. The Algerian *Hirak* movement, which emerged in 2019, presents an intriguing case study of how football culture and fan activism intersected with broader societal demands for change. While sharing some similarities with the Egyptian context, the Algerian experience also exhibits unique characteristics that require thorough examination. The following chapter will explore the Algerian *Hirak*, investigating the role of football and Ultras groups in this significant movement.

6- Algeria: The Match Against Authority

This chapter examines the role of football supporters in the 2019 Algerian *Hirak* and their contentious relationship with the state. It begins by discussing how the Bouteflika regime initially harnessed football as a tool for political consolidation, promoting national unity while distracting from socioeconomic issues. It then highlights how football stadiums, traditionally seen as venues for expression, became crucial spaces where public discontent against the regime. Following this, the chapter explores the rise of the Ultras, whose chants and organized displays transformed football culture into a powerful medium for political expression. Then, the chapter examines the pivotal role these supporters played during the *Hirak* movement, sustaining protest momentum and challenging entrenched power structures, through analyzing acts of solidarity, an Ultras song, and a banner. Finally, the chapter analyzes the end of the *Hirak* coupled with the state repression and the resilience of Algerian football supporters.

6.1 Football in Bouteflika's Political Strategy

Similar to Egypt, football has long held a central position in Algerian society, serving as a powerful symbol of national identity, particularly during the struggle for independence. Under Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who came to power in 1999, football was further instrumentalized as a political tool to restore stability and normalcy following the Black Decade. Recognizing football's unifying potential, Bouteflika sought to harness it as both a distraction from socio-economic realities and a symbol of national reconciliation to consolidate power (Spitz, 2023; Amara, 2022)

As a part of this broader strategy, Bouteflika's regime embraced the privatization and professionalization of football, aligning with the government's shift towards a market-oriented economy. The state offered tax incentives to businesses investing in football, leading to the co-optation of influential figures in the sport (Amara, 2012). Prominent clubs like *Union Sportive de la Médina d'Alger* (USMA), and *Moloudia Club d'Alger* (MCA) came under the control of regime-affiliated oligarchs and corporations. These clubs were transformed into platforms for promoting government policies and bolstering the regime's reputation. Bouteflika's image was prominently displayed in stadiums, particularly during elections periods, thereby creating a direct association between the national passion for football and his leadership (Amara, 2020; Benderra, 2023).

Much like Mubarak's regime, a golden opportunity for Bouteflika's regime arrived in 2009 with the success of the Algerian national team in the FIFA World Cup qualifiers after their crucial

victory over Egypt. The win not only secured Algeria's place in the World Cup but also offered Bouteflika a platform to boost national pride. The government employed a large-scale operation to fly thousands of Algerian fans to Sudan for the decisive match, using both military and civilian aircraft (Al-Arian, 2022; Amara & Bouandel, 2022). After the victory, state-run media broadcasted patriotic songs and national celebrations, reinforcing the notion that under Bouteflika's leadership, Algeria has achieved stability and success on the international stage (Amara, 2022). In addition, leading up to the match, Bouteflika delivered a speech in which he claimed that Algeria had the potential to host two FIFA World Cups and described football as the haven for the country's youth. However, he also acknowledged the rising violence at football matches, reflecting the youth's growing frustration with socio-economic realities, which coincided with the rise of the Algerian Ultras (Amara, 2012).

Bouteflika's strategic use of football reflected the broader efforts to consolidate power, especially with his achievements falling short of the high expectations during the first decade of his presidency, and his constitutional amendment to secure a third presidential term in 2008 (Amara, 2012). This approach was replicated in 2014 when Algeria qualified for the World Cup. The regime propagated a prevalent discourse that Algeria's stability during the Arab Spring was due to Bouteflika's leadership, suggesting that under his guidance, the national team's successes embodied the country's supposed stability. Despite Bouteflika's absence from the public scene due to his deteriorated health conditions, his government used the football team's success to distract the public from pressing issues like internal socioeconomic issues and rampant corruption (Amara & Bouandel, 2018).

The Algerian government's strategies of the co-optation of football for political legitimacy and as a means of distraction underscores Foucault's biopolitics where the state extends its influence into the everyday lives of its citizens through seemingly non-political means. By embedding Bouteflika's image in football culture and manipulating public sentiment through the sport, the regime exemplified how power can permeate cultural practices, demonstrating the concept of biopolitics (Taylor 2014; Foucault, 1991). However, this strategy proved to have always been a temporary solution. Despite the regime's attempts, football emerged as a tool of dissent and resisted the regime's assumed biopolitical control. Algerian football stadiums, known as places for voicing dissent and challenging authority, continued to be arenas where public discontent and

resistance against state policies were openly expressed. As the following sections will discuss, this dynamic interplay of power and resistance described in Foucault's theories became increasingly evident with the rise of the Algerian Ultras fan groups. Their activities significantly contributed to the *Hirak* movement and the departure of Bouteflika, illustrating how football, far from being a mere tool of political control, evolved into a powerful medium of resistance and expression.

6.2 Football Stadiums: Arenas of Resistance and the Rise of Ultras

Historically, football stadiums in Algeria have been more than just venues for sport. They have served as vital spaces for political expression and resistance, reflecting the country's broader sociopolitical struggles. Even before the rise of Ultras, stadiums were key arenas where marginalized voices could contest state power. For instance, during the 1977 Algeria Cup final between JS Kabylie (a club from the Amazigh-dominant Kabylie region) and NA Hussein Dey, supporters of JS Kabylie used the platform to protest the then President Houari Boumediene's nationwide Arabization policies, which marginalized their Amazigh identity. Their chants of "*Imizighen*" (We are Berbers) spread across the stadium, symbolizing how football became a medium of resistance, challenging the state and its imposed policies (Boubaker, 2020).

This tradition of stadium dissent continued in October 1988, when protests against economic hardships led to a violent government crackdown and resulted in multiple deaths. The aftermath of these protests marked a political turning point, and football stadiums became persistent hubs for youth activism and resistance. For instance, fans, primarily, of MC Alger, famously chanted "*Bab El Oued Chouhada*" (The Martyrs of Bab El Oued), honoring the protesters killed by security forces in Bab El Oued, a historic neighborhood in Algiers. This chant persisted in stadiums long after the 1988 events, strengthening the idea of stadiums as sites of public dissent and symbolic of collective resistance and contentious actions (Boubaker, 2020; Benderra, 2023).

Under Bouteflika's rule, traditional civil society organizations were weakened and highly controlled by the state (Spitz, 2023). As mentioned, despite the state efforts to co-opt football for political consolidation, stadiums remained one of the few uncensored public spaces in Algeria, where the public could express discontent with the regime. Over time, the Algerian Ultras, emerging in the 2000s, further solidified these spaces to intensify organized, vocal, and creative resistance to the state. Therefore, it was not surprising that opposition to Bouteflika's fifth term naturally emerged in stadiums (Rachidi & Aballagh, 2023; Northey, 2021).

6.2.1 The Age of Ultras and the Art of Resistance

The rise of Algerian Ultras groups reflected a new phase in Algerian football's intersection with politics. Like their Egyptian counterparts, these groups adopted an anti-authoritarian stance, using songs, chants, and banners to critique state policies, besides their mere support for their teams. The rise of the Ultras coincided with a period of increasing public discontent in Algeria due to sociopolitical and economic challenges under President Bouteflika (Mezahi, 2022a). Recognizing the growing discontent and the Ultras' influence, considering their violent clashes with police forces, the state sought to extend biopolitical control over football fandom. This included deploying political police loyalists within the Algerian Football Federation and attempting to co-opt Ultras by placing top clubs under regime-aligned businessmen (Benderra, 2023; Foucault, 1991). However, these measures failed to control the Ultras, as stadiums remained sites of confrontations between fans and police, which demonstrated the resistance that authorities struggled to suppress (Balla, 2019).

The Ultras' defiance against these tactics embodies Foucault's notion of the inevitable relationship between power and resistance (Foucault, 1978). This resistance took on a unique form among North African Ultras, particularly in their collaboration with musical groups. Prime examples are the groups affiliated with USMA and MCA clubs, especially USMA's *Ouled El Bahdja* (Mezahi, 2022b). Their songs often addressed broader socioeconomic issues and political grievances, blending football enthusiasm with a pointed cultural critique of the Bouteflika regime. This made their activism resonate with the wider Algerian public and positioned them as not just football fans but politically aware citizens pushing for change, which situated them in a conflictual and contentious situation with the regime (Benderra, 2023; McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001).

The Ultras' defiance was evident throughout the last decade, particularly towards the end of President Bouteflika's fourth term. From 2016 to 2019, there was a peak in politically charged football songs and chants. Rich in sociopolitical commentary, these chants became a pivotal aspect of football culture, reflecting deep-rooted issues within the Algerian context (Balla, 2019). For instance, with Bouteflika's health deteriorating after a stroke in 2013, his public appearances faded. Ultras groups, like the Ultras Dey Boys of *NA Hussein Dey,* released a pointed critique through a song that included the line, "*The president in a wheelchair, he's a puppet holding to power*" (Mezahi, 2022b; Correia, 2019).

The expressive sentiment was further demonstrated through the song "*Y'en a marre*" (We are Fed Up) by Moh Milano, a musician and supporter of UMSA club, sparked by a high-profile cocaine seizure scandal, which criticized the pervasive corruption and the president's absence from leadership (Mezahi, 2022b). These chants voiced grievances rooted in marginalization and oppression, reflecting the Ultras' broader acts of resistance (Balla, 2019). By 2019, Ultras groups were at the forefront of opposition to Bouteflika's fifth-term announcement, laying the groundwork for the *Hirak* movement.

The rise of Algerian Ultras and their sustained defiance against Bouteflika's regime illustrates the powerful role of football as a tool of resistance and political expression. From early protests against cultural marginalization to more recent struggles over political corruption, Ultras groups used creative and organized forms of resistance to contest state power. Their actions exemplify Foucault's conception of the omnipresence of power, as through these expressive chants Ultras rose as an alternative force of resistance against the mainstream narrative (Lynch, 2010; Foucault, 1978). Their actions also coincide with the dynamics of contentious politics, through displaying a variety of repertoires of contention that allowed Ultras to turn popular discontent into organized resistance (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). This was further evident in their pivotal role in the Algerian *Hirak*, discussed in the following sections.

6.3 The Role of Football in the *Hirak*: Resistance and Contention Through Repertoire of Arts

In February 2019, Algeria witnessed a massive uprising, widely referred to as the second wave of the Arab Spring (Rachid & Aballagh, 2023). The *Hirak* movement, characterized by its peaceful nature, mobilized millions who took to the streets every Friday for over a year. They called for the complete removal of President Bouteflika's regime under the notion of *"tatnahaw ga'a, bi silmiya"* (get out, everyone, peacefully) (Boubaker, 2020). Football supporters played a central role in this movement, utilizing stadiums as spaces of mobilization and contributing politically charged symbols that resonated with the wider Algerian society (Mezahi, 2022a).

From the onset of the *Hirak* movement, the influence of football culture was evident. On February 22, 2019, youth groups marched through Algiers, chanting *"There's no president, there's only a photo,"* referring to the popular football chant *"Y'en a marre"* that criticized the political elite's dependence on an incapacitated president (Mezahi, 2022a). As the protests gained momentum, football supporters, particularly from clubs like MCA, took on an increasingly central role. On

March 1, they organized a rally in Algiers, creatively using football symbols, such as displaying red cards, to symbolize the public's dismissal of Bouteflika's rule (FANS TV, 2019). The peaceful nature of the *Hirak* protests provided a political opportunity for football supporters to employ their rich repertoire of nonviolent acts of resistance and expression such as acts of solidarity, chants, and banners. Despite knowing violent confrontational tactics, football influence aligned with the movement's peaceful approach through such symbolic acts to challenge entrenched power structures (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015).

6.3.1 Derby of Algiers and the Unified Boycott: A Symbol of Resistance

The Derby of Algiers, a fiercely contested and significant match between MCA and USMA, was scheduled for March 15th but rescheduled by the government to the 14th, an attempt seen as a distraction from the ongoing protests. Despite their rivalry, fans of both clubs united in boycotting the match, understanding the government's tactic and prioritizing the national interest over fervent support, in addition to resisting such an intended state control (Correia, 2019; COPA90, 2019).

In the lead-up to the match, an anonymous flyer with the MCA logo circulated, calling for boycotting the derby and mobilizing for the protests, encapsulating the public sentiment that Algeria comes first (Correia, 2019). Notably, an MCA fan stated: *"Let them play by themselves…They can bring the cops to cheer them on"* (COPA90, 2019, 2:58). This illustrated how fans viewed the government's attempts to use football as a pacifying tool. On the derby day, the usually energetic stadium was surprisingly empty, with even those who attended chanting anti-regime slogans rather than supporting their teams, aligning themselves openly with the *Hirak*. Fans emphasized that Algeria's interest transcended club rivalries, reaffirming their role as agents of resistance. Significantly, an USMA fan, known for provocative slogans, explained *"Our lyrics are bullets",* underscoring the transformative power of football culture in such highly contentious political action (COPA90, 2019, 4:38). The following day, these fans participated in the Friday protests, bringing their energy into the demonstrations (Correia, 2019).

The Derby boycott symbolizes the power of collective action, as an integral part of contentious politics. The solidarity shown by MCA and USMA supporters exemplified how football can be an organizing force capable of challenging entrenched power structures through collective nonviolent forms of resistance (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). Building on this momentum, football's influence expanded beyond stadiums, as supporters played a critical role in the *Hirak* through chants, songs,

and choreographed displays and banners. Although formal Ultras groups did not officially participate, football fans gathered organically in public spaces, extending football culture into the streets, and energizing the movement further (Mezahi, 2022a).

6.3.2 *La Casa Del Mouradia*: From Football Chant to *Hirak* Anthem

One of the most iconic expressions of football culture in the *Hirak* was the chant "*La Casa Del Mouradia*" (The Mouradia Palace), created by USMA's *Ouled El Bahdja*. This song is inspired by the popular Netflix series *La Casa De Papel*, which tells the story of a group of robbers attempting a heist in the Royal Mint of Spain. The song projected the Bouteflika regime as a corrupt "gang of thieves," resonating with Algerians' frustrations (Mezahi, 2022b; Boubaker, 2020). Released in 2018, before Bouteflika announced his fifth term on February 10, 2019, the song's lyrics offered sharp political critique (Ouled El Bahdja, 2018):

"It is dawn, and I cannot sleep. I am consuming (drugs) and slowly getting high. What are the reasons? Who's to blame? (for our problems). We are tired of this life"

These lines capture the pervasive anxiety and disillusionment among Algerian youth, confronting systemic issues of marginalization. By questioning the root causes of societal suffering, the song actively challenges entrenched power dynamics, highlighting an act of resistance to state power (Foucault, 1978; Taylor, 2014). The verses that follow reflect key phases of Bouteflika's presidency, highlighting both the manipulation of power and the growing public disillusionment:

"In the first (term), we were fooled with the Black Decade. In the second it became clear that this was La Casa Del Mouradia. In the third, the country has suffered because of personal interests. In the fourth, the puppet died, and our issues persisted. And the fifth is following on, it's been set up between them"

These verses open by recalling Bouteflika's unopposed election, exploiting the trauma of the Black Decade to promise national reconciliation. As the narrative progresses to the second term, the lyrics underscore the regime's consolidation of power, evident in the appointment of officials from inner circles. The third verse addresses the constitutional amendments that extended Bouteflika's rule, fostering corruption and benefiting the regime's oligarchs. By the fourth term, the song portrays Bouteflika as a "puppet," manipulated by those around him due to his declining health. The final

verse reflects the anticipated fifth term as another ineffective extension of a regime that has yielded a cycle of stagnation and unproductive rule.

Foucault's concept of power and resistance is embodied throughout these lyrics, as the song critiques the regime's use of Bouteflika's image to maintain authority while exposing its corruption and manipulation. In the lyrics, the use of pronouns like "we" and "our" versus "them" illustrates the distinction that USMA fans draw between themselves and the regime. This reflects Foucauldian omnipresence of power and its inevitable relationship with resistance. By integrating themselves into the broader Algerian populace, football supporters construct themselves as a counterpower to the state, which is inherent in the dynamics of resistance (Lynch 2010; Foucault, 1978). The song's connection to a story of resistance against corrupt entities further reinforces how football chants, a part of the repertoire of contention, become powerful tools in contesting biopolitical control, fostering political dissent, and amplifying collective grievance (Taylor, 2014; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). Sung across protests in 2019 and 2020, even after Bouteflika's resignation on April 2, 2019, *La Casa Del Mouradia* became an anthem for the *Hirak*.

6.3.3 Visual Football Resistance: Playing Extra Time

Football culture continued to evolve in protests, extending beyond chants to impactful banners commonly used in stadiums (Allouche, 2019; Mezahi, 2022a). One of the most striking examples was a banner displayed in *Bordj Bou Arreridj*, known as the capital of the *Hirak*, seen in Figure 2.

*Figure 2: Banner displayed in Bordj Bou Arreridj on April 12, 2019. The scoreboard shows "People 1, Gang 0" during "overtime" (written above). (Source: Facebook Page [*Berbère Télévision*]).*

The banner captures a football match between two players in Algerian flag colors and a team symbolized by "the gang", represented by the pirate flag. The scoreboard, marked "overtime", highlights the crucial nature of the moment that suggests that the match, reflecting a symbolic struggle between the people and the regime, is nearing its end. One Algerian player is shown taking a shot at "the gang," who are collectively guarding the goalpost. The second Algerian player's thought bubble reveals that a 2-0 victory will bring justice, indicating that 1 was Bouteflika's departure.

Displayed shortly after Bouteflika's resignation, this banner encapsulates the resilient spirit of the Algerian protesters and their commitment to comprehensive political change, beyond the president's mere resignation. In addition, the banner significantly hung by ordinary football fans inspired by the Ultras culture, demonstrates how deeply the football culture had organically spread though the *Hirak*, which reflects the widespread influence of football in Algerian society (Allouche, 2019; Mezahi, 2022a). The representation of the people on the verge of scoring against the regime symbolizes their ongoing efforts to dismantle the entrenched political elite, often referred to as the "gang" in the *Hirak*'s discourse.

From a Foucauldian perspective, the banner serves as an act of resistance, challenging the control of the Algerian regime. The imagery of the people scoring a goal against the regime underscores the omnipresent power dynamics, which reflects the reclamation of agency by the Algerian population (Lynch, 2010; Foucault, 1978). Furthermore, this visual representation resonates with the dynamics of contentious politics, where the struggle for power and legitimacy is at the heart of the movement. The anticipated second goal during overtime symbolizes the protestors' determination and sustained mobilization, even after Bouteflika's resignation (Tarrow, 2008). Therefore, the imagery conveys that the match is not over; the people remain committed to achieving full regime change and social justice, offering a rich repertoire of contention (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015).

6.3.4 Beyond Bouteflika: The Game Continues

Football supporters continued to play a vital role in maintaining the *Hirak* momentum, ensuring the priority for broader systemic change. The ongoing chants, for instance, of *"La Casa Del Mouradia"* symbolized this enduring resistance. The movement achieved several key victories, including cabinet dismissals, election cancellations and postponement, and the arrest of regime figures and inner-circle businessmen. Notably, Ali Haddad, the former owner of USMA, the club behind the protest anthem, was among the arrested regime-affiliated businessmen (Correia, 2019).

As the protests evolved, the military's role in governance, particularly that of General Ahmed Gaid Salah, the former Chief of Staff of the Algerian army, became a central focus. Football-related slogans and banners targeted his influence, with satirical demands for his retirement reflecting the public's rejection of military rule. Inspired by the song *Qoloulou* (Tell Him) by USMA's Mouh Milano, chants like "Tell Gaid to get a medical card, the people are awake, we have removed Bouteflika" displayed the people's desire for a complete regime change (Balla, 2019). Banners emphasizing the people as the true source of power further highlighted this discourse (Benderra, 2023).

This cultural resistance, using familiar football references, deeply embedded in Algerian society demonstrated how the *Hirak* movement harnessed football culture to resist the military's attempt to reconsolidate power. Moreover, these actions reinforced the effectiveness of collective resistance in challenging established power, aligning with both contentious politics and the Foucauldian omnipresent nature of power and its inevitable relationship with resistance (Foucault 1978; Tilly, 2006).

6.4 The End of the *Hirak*: State Repression, Adaptation, and the Resilience of Football Culture

Despite the peaceful nature of the *Hirak* movement, by the end of 2019 and the contested election of Abdelmajid Tebboune as president, the Algerian state began employing more aggressive tactics to suppress the protests. Protesters faced increasing repression, including arrests, intimidation, and the restriction of public gatherings, with the regime framing these actions as necessary to preserve national unity. These repressive measures coupled with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 ultimately brought an end to the mass gatherings that had sustained the *Hirak*'s momentum (Northey, 2021). Protest activity shifted online, transforming the movement from the streets into digital platforms (Benderra, 2023). The Facebook group *Ekteb* (Write), for example,

acted as a "*Hirak* diary," documenting and reflecting on the movement's goals and preserving its spirit in the face of repression. Football supporters, whose role in the movement had been influential, were widely commemorated within these digital spaces, emphasizing their enduring impact on the *Hirak* (Ekteb, 2021).

Although stadiums were closed due to COVID-19 measures, the spirit of dissent persisted. Football chants and slogans, which had played a key role in energizing the *Hirak*, continued to circulate widely online. Groups such as those affiliated with USMA and MCA remained productive, creating provocative chants aimed at the regime and the sociopolitical conditions. These songs, shared across social media, reminded the public of the ongoing struggle and continued to inspire the younger generation to demand justice and reform (Mezahi, 2022b).

Even after lifting COVID-19 restrictions, the spirit of political dissent returned with the supporters in their usual terraces. Politically charged songs resurfaced, reflecting the sentiments of the *Hirak* movement, extending the contentious relationship between football supporters and the state. The Algerian state introduced new measures aimed at controlling access to stadiums, including a centralized online ticketing platform managed by the police. This system restricted the number of tickets available, limiting the ability of large groups of supporters to congregate and express dissent in a coordinated manner (El-Bouah, 2022). These actions reflected how the state attempted to extend its biopolitical control. In an attempt to fragment the organized presence of football supporters, the state sought to curb large-scale resistance (Foucault, 1991; Spitz, 2023).

Despite these restrictive attempts, the influence of football supporters remains significant. Their chants, songs, and online activism sustain the spirit of resistance, even in limited numbers in stadiums. In the face of the pandemic and state repression, football culture continues to serve as a vital medium for political expression. This demonstrates the persistence and adaptability of collective resistance in Algeria, highlighting the contentious relationship between football supporters and the state.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the prominent role of football supporters, particularly the Ultras, in the 2019 Algerian *Hirak* movement and their contentious relationship with the state. Beginning with the Bouteflika regime's instrumentalization of football as a tool for political consolidation, the chapter

illustrated how stadiums transitioned from spaces of distraction to arenas of resistance and expression. The rise of Ultras groups in the 2000s further transformed football culture, with their chants, banners, and organized defiance challenging the state's authority. As the *Hirak* movement gained momentum, football supporters, drawing from a long tradition of using stadiums as platforms for dissent, played a critical role in sustaining the protests and amplifying collective grievances against the regime. Through acts of solidarity, creative resistance like the song *"La Casa Del Mouradia"*, banners, and symbolic gestures such as the Algiers derby boycott, the Ultras demonstrated how their organized efforts contributed to the broader struggle for political change. The analysis of the activities of football supporters during the *Hirak* movement revealed how they emerged as a resistant force against entrenched political structures. Additionally, their involvement was crucial in shaping collective actions that impacted Algeria's political landscape. Hence, this provided an answer to the research question and its sub-questions.

7- Football's Role Between Egypt and Algeria: Power, Resistance and Political Change

The final chapter provides a comparative analysis of the role football supporters played in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*, addressing their contentious relationship with the state. Drawing on conclusions and findings from both cases, the chapter begins with discussing how both Mubarak and Bouteflika's regimes utilized football, aligning with Foucauldian biopolitics. The chapter then demonstrates the role of football stadiums in both countries as spaces of defiance and resistance, highlighting the Foucauldian interplay between power and resistance. Following this, the chapter draws on a comparative analysis of the intersection of contentious politics and the Ultras' football culture. This includes the various tactics employed by Egyptian and Algerian Ultras, highlighting how both groups influenced the political environment in their respective countries. The chapter concludes by examining the consequences of their involvement, framing these outcomes within the context of Foucauldian biopolitical control.

7.1 Football as a Tool for Political Consolidation: Foucauldian Biopolitics and Governmentality

In both Egypt and Algeria, football, while a sport and a source of mass entertainment, was strategically employed by the regimes to strengthen political legitimacy and distract from socioeconomic issues. Hosni Mubarak and Abdelaziz Bouteflika's regimes recognized the unifying power of football using it as a vehicle to promote national unity and distract the public from the regimes' poor performances. The manipulation and control of football to reinforce state power is interpreted through the Foucauldian lens of biopolitics and governmentality. In this context, the state manages and regulates the population to maintain power and order through the utilization of alternative means to mainstream power sources (Taylor, 2014; Foucault, 1991).

Both regimes sought to harness football's mass appeal to foster a sense of national unity that was closely tied to the regime's achievements. That was evident by framing the respective national team victories as triumphs of the state, such as capitalizing on the Egyptian national team's success in AFCON by the Mubarak regime, which was also crucial in harnessing the hereditary agenda for Gamal Mubarak. This was also highlighted by Bouteflika's seizure of the Algerian national team's victories in international competitions, as illustrated in qualifying for the FIFA World Cup, projecting an image of stability following the Black Decade. In both cases, football was used to temper public dissatisfaction.

Both regimes also aimed at controlling fandom and regulating fan culture. That was manifested by the Egyptian state plan of promoting a moderate fan culture, encouraging young families and newer generations to attend matches, while also countering the rising influence of Ultras through coercive police measures. In Algeria, Bouteflika's approach involved more direct intervention in the sport, including the privatization and professionalization of football clubs, aligning them with regime-affiliated oligarchs that brought major clubs, such as USMA and MCA, under an ownership linked with the state. This strategy was also perceived, besides employing police loyalists in the Algerian Football Federation, as countering Algerian Ultras' influence and tackling their heightened temper.

In both cases, the state's manipulation of football reflects Foucault's concepts of biopolitics and governmentality, where the population is governed not just through mainstream means, but also through permeating alternative cultural practices and controlling emotions. However, these efforts were ultimately contested and resisted, as football supporters, especially Ultras groups, transformed stadiums into spaces of resistance, challenging power structures that sought to control them. It is worth noting that the degree to which football supporters in both countries were willing to use violent means of action differed, as will be highlighted in a later section, emphasizing various approaches to resistance and expression in the two contexts.

7.2 Football Stadiums: Foucauldian Interplay of Power and Resistance

Football stadiums in both Egypt and Algeria evolved into critical spaces for political expression and resistance, reflecting a counternarrative to state power. However, the dynamics of resistance within these venues varied between the two countries, influenced by their historical and cultural contexts. In Egypt, this phenomenon emerged with the rise of Ultras groups, who transformed stadiums into vital spaces for contesting the state's power and defying its control. Initially, the Ultras' defiance was focused on confrontations with police, seen as the enforcer of state control. Their resistance was expressed through collective chants and slogans, such as the display of the A.C.A.B banner, which later evolved into broader antagonism toward the Mubarak regime, culminating in their prominent role in the 2011 Revolution. The shift in building this antagonism to the state as a whole was further underscored in their activities such as UA07's *"Liberta"*. For Egyptian Ultras, stadiums became one of the few spaces where they could openly express discontent and resist state control, especially in a political environment where other avenues for

dissent were tightly controlled. This shift aligned with Foucault's notion that power is omnipresent, with resistance emerging as a natural counter to the exertion of power.

However, Algeria's football stadiums had long been venues of resistance and political expression. Even before the rise of Ultras groups, stadiums were spaces where sociopolitical grievances were voiced, as evidenced by the 1977 Algeria Cup Final and the October 1988 examples. Under Bouteflika, this tradition of resistance persisted, particularly as other spaces for political expression were restricted. The Ultras groups, with their rich repertoire of chants and visual displays, further used football culture to critique the regime's policies and amplify public dissatisfaction. That was viewed in their songs that presented this direct resistance to state power such as the powerful *"La Casa Del Mouradia"* by *Ouled El Bahdja* who are affiliated with USMA club. Hence, football supporters' resistance, empowered by the Ultras culture, was more generally aimed at the regime itself, using stadiums to express their disenchantment with Algeria's sociopolitical reality. This broader discontent naturally led to the involvement of Algerian football supporters in the *Hirak* protests, highlighted by their powerful chants of dissent.

In both contexts, football supporters utilized stadiums as counter spaces to challenge state control. This phenomenon reflects the Foucauldian conclusion regarding the inevitable interplay between power and resistance. It also emphasizes the omnipresent nature of power as football supporters rose as a counterpower challenging entrenched structures (Lynch, 2010; Foucault, 1978).

7.3 Ultras' Role in 2011 and 2019: The Intersection Between Football Culture and Contentious Politics

Ultras groups in both Egypt and Algeria employed a variety of repertoires of contention within the shifting political opportunity environments in influencing highly contentious political movements in 2011 and 2019 (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). Nevertheless, their methods and focus differed significantly. In Egypt, the Ultras, primarily UA07 and UWK, adopted a confrontational style that had been strengthened and crystallized through years of clashes with the police. This approach played a central role in the Egyptian Revolution and positioned them as valuable allies with established social movements. This came in line with the heightened violence during the days of the revolution, especially due to the violent response from the security forces and the deployment of the regime's thugs. Crucial events, such as the Friday of Rage and the Battle of the Camel, underscored their pivotal influence. In addition, their organizational capabilities helped in taking

part in leading protests and acting as defenders of the protesters, notably in Tahrir Square. Their involvement, putting their fierce rivalry aside, was instrumental in maintaining the momentum of the uprising that led to the ousting of Mubarak.

In contrast, in Algeria, the influence of football culture extended beyond formal Ultras groups and permeated the broader public. While no formal Ultras groups were seen leading the *Hirak*, their activities were pivotal in energizing the movement. Starting with their acts of solidarity, as seen in USMA and MCA fans boycotting the derby, their nonviolent resistance, expressed through chants, songs, and banners, aligned with the peaceful nature of the *Hirak*. The political opportunity structure, influenced by the peaceful nature of the protests, provided a platform for football supporters to employ their repertoire of nonviolent acts of resistance, despite possessing the knowhow for more confrontational tactics (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015; Tilly, 2006). The Ultras' influence was particularly evident in the songs, notably *"La Casa Del Mouradia"*, that were widely chanted by the Algerian public during the protests. Additionally, the banner displayed in *Bordj Bou Arreiridj* by ordinary football fans, which depicted a match between the regime and the people, further emphasized the prominent influence of football culture, inspired by the Ultras, on the *Hirak*. This influence also contributed to momentous victories for the Algerian population such as the departure of Bouteflika and the dismissal of high-profile regime representatives.

In both Egypt and Algeria, football supporters, primarily Ultras, managed to leverage moments of political instability to advocate for broader systemic change. Their disruptive techniques, ranging from street confrontations to symbolic acts of defiance, were integral in influencing political change, highlighting the dynamic nature of contentious politics.

7.4 Impact and Consequences: A Biopolitical Match

The impact of football supporters on the outcomes of the uprising in Egypt and Algeria was profound but differed in nature. In Egypt, the involvement of UA07 and UWK in key battles like the Friday of Rage and the Battle of Camel played a critical role in weakening the regime's power, ultimately contributing to Mubarak's downfall. However, this involvement also came at a high cost, as seen in the tragic events of the Port Said Massacre, where the Ultras, specifically Ahlawy, faced severe retribution for their role in the revolution. This incident depicted the peak animosity between the Egyptian Ultras and the state, which culminated later in their dissolution.

In Algeria, the consequences were different but no less significant. While there was no singular tragic incident similar to the Port Said Massacre, the Algerian regime responded by attempts that aimed to suppress the Ultras' activities. This included restricting access to stadiums and monitoring football-related gatherings through ticket platforms managed by the police, seeking to curb the influence of football fans. However, unlike Egypt, such a response can be interpreted through the absence of violent tactics from Algerian Ultras that provided the state with no excuse to impose a complete ban on these groups. Regardless of these efforts, football supporters in Algeria remained resilient, continuing their acts of resistance online and through public displays in stadiums in smaller and more controlled settings.

From a Foucauldian perspective, these state reactions reflect biopolitical strategies of control, in terms of regulating public spaces, such as stadiums, as a part of a broader effort to manage and discipline populations (Taylor 2014; Foucault, 1991). The violent repression in Egypt, evidenced by the Port Said Massacre, and the more subtle forms of regulation in Algeria, such as limiting access to stadiums, illustrate how the state exerts power over life, bodies, and public spaces (Taylor, 2014). In both cases, the resistance of football supporters underscores the omnipresent and relational nature of power, where resistance remains an inherent counterpart to biopolitical control (Lynch, 2010; Foucault, 1978).

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of football supporters, particularly Ultras groups, reveals their crucial role in challenging entrenched power structures, evidently in the Egyptian Revolution and the Algerian *Hirak*. While both Mubarak and Bouteflika's regimes sought to use football for political gains, stadiums became spaces of resistance and defiance. In Egypt, Ultras employed confrontational tactics, significantly impacting the revolution in crucial events, while in Algeria, supporters embraced nonviolent forms of resistance that aligned with the *Hirak*'s peaceful nature of protests. The consequences, ranging from violent repression in Egypt to more subtle control in Algeria, reflect the ongoing tension between state power and football supporters. Through the theoretical intersection of the Foucauldian conception of power and resistance and the dynamics of contentious politics, these cases highlight how football supporters, through employing diverse disruptive techniques, emerged as a resistant power against entrenched structures. Therefore, the analysis and findings of both cases provided a valid answer to the research question and its sub-questions.

7. Conclusion

Football, as the most popular sport in the world, plays a powerful role in political expression, resistance, and even large-scale social movements. In regions like North Africa, where political unrest and resistance movements have shaped recent history, football emerges as a vital medium for political expression and comprehending sociopolitical realities. Football stadiums have become pivotal spaces where sociopolitical struggles and frustrations are amplified, authorities are challenged, and even mobilization for change arises. Egypt and Algeria have experienced significant uprisings, the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak*, that culminated in the end of the longstanding rule of both Hosni Mubarak and Abdelaziz Bouteflika. In both cases, football supporters have had considerable influence in mobilizing resistance and challenging state power. Thus, this thesis explored how football served as a tool of expression and resistance in both uprisings, focusing on the role of football supporters, primarily Ultras groups, and their contentious relationship with the state.

The data analyzed in this study consisted of a diversity of primary and secondary sources that included visual banners, football songs, documentaries, and an interview that was accessed via YouTube, in addition to reputable secondary sources. This combination of sources was examined by utilizing Foucauldian discourse analysis that enabled analyzing the discourse around football in Egypt and Algeria, highlighting power relationships between the state and football supporters. Furthermore, the analysis rested on the theoretical framework that consisted of Foucauldian interplay between power and resistance and the concepts of biopolitics and governmentality, in addition to the dynamics of contentious politics.

The analysis revealed that football supporters in both Egypt and Algeria played pivotal roles in shaping political expression and emerged as an alternative resistant power to the state power, but through distinct dynamics. In both cases, Mubarak and Bouteflika's regimes sought to exert control over football supporters by employing biopolitical techniques, aligning with Foucault's biopolitics and governmentality. They aimed to govern not just by mainstream means, but also by manipulating alternative sources of power and cultural practices such as football, attempting to pacify potential dissent. However, this strategy was contested as football stadiums were transformed into sites of dissent. In Egypt, that was evident with the rise of Ultras in the 2000s. Nevertheless, in Algeria, stadiums had long been contentious spaces, with the intensity of

expression and resistance increased with the emergence of Ultras, who brought diverse techniques of political expression.

The relationship between Ultras and the state also evolved differently in the two cases. In Egypt, the Ultras' antagonism was initially directed at the police forces, only later developing into a broader opposition to the whole regime during and after the revolution. That was highlighted by analyzing the A.C.A.B banner and the lyrics of UA07's "*Liberta*", produced after the 18-day uprising, reflecting this shift. In contrast, Algerian football supporters had long expressed their resistance against the entire regime, as exemplified by the "*La Casa Del Mouradia*" song, released before the emergence of the *Hirak* and then widely sung during the protests.

Moreover, the comparative analysis highlighted key differences in the methods of resistance, or repertoire of contention, during the two uprisings that were influenced by the different political opportunity structures. In Egypt, the Ultras, amidst the violent atmosphere that characterized the protests, employed their confrontational techniques that were crystallized in years of confronting the police to resist the forces employed by the regime, such as their role, significantly Ultras Ahlawy, in the Battle of the Camel that was crucial in the departure of Mubarak. On the other hand, In Algeria, football supporters, particularly associated with Algiers biggest rivals, USMA and MCA, influenced the Algerian *Hirak* with more nonviolent techniques. That was highlighted in acts of solidarity such as boycotting the derby, using chants, and choreographed displays that were pivotal to challenge the Algerian regime and sustain the movement.

The findings also showed that in Algeria the influence of football culture extended beyond organized Ultras groups to include ordinary football supporters, as evident in the *Bordj Bou Arreridj* banner displayed by non-Ultras during the *Hirak* protests. Yet, in Egypt, football's influence on the revolution was largely Ultras-based, with Ahlawy and White Knights leading the charge. These discrepancies in football's strategies and influence were reflected in the different responses of the state in both countries. In Egypt, the state enacted harsher repressive biopolitical measures as evident in the tragic events of the 2012 Port Said Massacre that exemplified the peak enmity between Ultras supporters and the state, which culminated in the Ultras dissolution. In contrast, the Algerian regime sought to suppress but did not entirely ban Ultras' activities.

The comparative analysis and findings, thus, proved that football supporters' activities served as an alternative source of resistant power. Additionally, as demonstrated, the diverse disruptive

violent and nonviolent techniques employed by football supporters during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and the 2019 Algerian *Hirak* were a crucial component of the broader popular collective action that challenged power structures and influenced political change. Therefore, the examination provided an answer to the main research question and sub-questions.

Previous studies have emphasized the role of football as a medium for political expression and resistance, yet this thesis aimed to add more depth by focusing on the power dynamics between football supporters and the state through a Foucauldian lens. Through such a theoretical strand, it emphasized football's role as both a medium for expression and a tool of state control. In addition, by comparing the cases of football supporters in Egypt and Algeria, this study extended the understanding of how these groups adapted their strategies to local political conditions, employing either violent or nonviolent techniques of defiance. Accordingly, the findings of the thesis highlight its contribution to peace and conflict studies, by highlighting the different forms of resistance used to challenge entrenched power structures. This was, specifically, underscored by how the diverse violent and nonviolent forms of resistance reflected broader sociopolitical tensions and provided insights into how social movements confront longstanding regimes.

While this study offered an analysis of football supporters' role in political resistance, it is worth acknowledging that it opens pathways for future research. One avenue would be to extend the comparative analysis to other cases and countries around the world where football plays a politically significant role. This would help to further explore power dynamics and sociopolitical tensions, utilizing a bottom-up approach through the lens of sports. Additionally, in Egypt, future research could focus on non-Ultras football supporters, as most of the existing studies concentrate on organized Ultras groups. Understanding how ordinary football fans engage with political movements would offer a more comprehensive view of football's role in Egyptian society. In contrast, in Algeria, Ultras groups remain understudied. Future research could explore these groups in greater depth. Lastly, a comparative examination of the long-term impacts of football supporters' involvement in the uprisings in both countries could offer more valuable insights into the sustainability of their influence and the evolving dynamics of their relationship with the state.

8. List of References

- Ahmed Mansour. (2021, July 5). *(1) عمرو عز يتحدث عن الاستعداد لثورة يناير ودور الإخوان والألتراس وتوحد الحركات السياسية في الميدان [Amr Ezz talks about preparations for the January revolution, the role of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Ultras, and the unification of political movements in the Square]* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj7pg--_Cag
- Al Jazeera English. (2021, March 17). *Egypt's hardcore football fans - Ultras | Al Jazeera World*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFdmdbWnzdw
- Al-Arian, A. (2022). Beyond Soft Power: Football as a form of Regime Legitimation. In Al-Arian A. (Ed.) *Football in the Middle East: State, Society, and the Beautiful Game*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197659670.001.0001
- Amara, M. (2020, August 3). *Football and politics: when Algeria won the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations*. The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/football-and-politics-when-algeria-won-the-2019-africa-cup-of-nations-141158
- Amara, M. (2022). Football in Algeria from the "Black Decade" to the Hirak. *Middle East Report*, 304. https://merip.org/2022/11/football-in-algeria-from-the-black-decade-to-the-Hirak/
- Amara, M., & Bouandel, Y. (2018). Algeria. In J.-M. De Waele, S. Gibril, E. Gloriozova, & R. Spaaij (Eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Football and Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham
- Amara, M., & Bouandel, Y. (2022). Algeria and the FIFA World Cup: between political legitimization and regional rivalry. *Soccer and Society*, *23*(7), 735–746. https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2022.2108241
- Arribas-Ayllon, M., & Walkerdine, V. (2008). Foucauldian discourse analysis. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research in psychology*, *2*, 91-108.
- Azzam, R. (2023, June 8). *Football in Egypt: Where People Find Solace*. السفير العربي (The Arab Ambassador). https://assafirarabi.com/en/52967/2023/06/08/football-in-egypt-where-people-find-solace/#note1https://assafirarabi.com/en/52967/2023/06/08/football-in-egypt-where-people-find-solace/#note1
- Bakr, N. (2012). The Egyptian revolution. In S. Calleya, & M. Wohlfeld (Eds.), *Change and Opportunities in the Emerging Mediterranean* (pp. 57-81). Msida: Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies.

https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/bitstream/123456789/39509/1/The_Egyptian_revolution_2012.pdf

- Balla, N. (2019). Shouting for a new Algeria: Slogans as foundations of a political project?. *Arab Reform Initiative*, *11*.
- Benderra, O. (2023, June 20). *From Anti-Colonial Struggle to Mobilizing for Freedom: The Algerian Football of the People*. السفير العربي (The Arab Ambassador). https://assafirarabi.com/en/53211/2023/06/20/from-anti-colonial-struggle-to-mobilizing-for-freedom-the-algerian-football-of-the-people/
- Berbère Télévision. (2019). *Impressionnante foule de manifestants à Bordj Bou Arreridj. [Impressive crowd of protesters in Bordj Bou Arreridj]* [Facebook]. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10155821442866572&set=a.1015154728273157 2&__tn__=%2CO*F
- Boubaker, H. B. (2020). Hirak, paroles et musiques: Petite histoire sélective des chants contestataires algériens de la colonisation à aujourd'hui**.** [Hirak, Words and Music: A Brief Selective History of Algerian Protest Songs from Colonization to Today]. *Mouvements*, (2), 43-52. https://shs.cairn.info/revue-mouvements-2020-2-page-43?lang=fr#s1n4
- Boubekeur, A. (2020). Demonstration effects: How the Hirak protest movement is reshaping Algerian politics. In *Policy File*. European Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24717
- Busse, J., & Wildangel, R. (2023). The Rebellious Game: The Power of Football in the Middle East and North Africa between the Global and the Local. *The International Spectator, 58(2)*, 75–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2023.2182021
- Close, R. (2019). *Cairo's Ultras: Resistance and Revolution in Egypt's Football Culture* (1st ed.). The American University in Cairo Press.
- COPA90. (2019, May 15). *How Algerian Football Fans Helped Topple A Dictator*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lj-unztOgzQ
- Correia, M. (2019, May 15). *The Soccer Fans That Toppled a Government*. The Nation. https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/algeria-bouteflika-fans-protests/
- Darby, P. (2002). Football Diffusion and Colonial Doctrine in Africa. In *Africa, football and fifa: Politics, colonialism and resistance*. Taylor & Francis Group.

- Dorsey, J. M. (2020). Sports and Politics, the turbulent world of Middle East Soccer. In Sadiki, L (Ed.). *Routledge Handbook of Middle East Politics* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315170688
- Ekteb. (2021, April 2). *Les Stades: incubateurs de révolutions? [Stadiums: incubators of revolutions?]*. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/ekteb.dz/posts/pfbid02CjFnEbphHwDqAxQ7vQNu3CxgVnLKJMT262VU88aE5drzy4fou83WAF8Wpx6XeKofl?__cft__
- El-Bouah, M. (2022, October 17). بالفيديو: شعارات الحراك الجزائري مازالت تُرفع في مدرجات الملاعب [With video: Algerian Hirak slogans are still being raised in the stadium stands]. *Le 360 Arabe*. https://ar.le360.ma/monde/197552/
- Elhoudaiby, I. (2022). The Political Game, A Genealogy of the Egyptian League. In Al-Arian (Ed.) *Football in the Middle East: State, Society, and the Beautiful Game*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197659670.001.0001
- El-Zatmah, S. (2012). From Terso into Ultras: the 2011 Egyptian revolution and the radicalization of the soccer's Ultra-Fans. *Soccer & Society*, *13*(5-6), 801–813. https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2013.766030 (Article)
- El-Zatmah, S. E. (2011). *Āhā Gūn!: A Social and Cultural History of Soccer in Egypt*. University of California, Los Angeles. https://www.proquest.com/openview/7071f2b1010f5d8294e69972c0b5a6c0/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750
- Everett, S. (2023). Algeria and France: Historical & Experiential Layers of a Footballing Relationship. *Asian Journal of Sport History & Culture*, *1*(3), 250–270. https://doi.org/10.1080/27690148.2023.2196660
- FANS TV. (2019, March 1). *Alger le 1 mars 2019 [Algiers, March 1, 2019]*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6x-Y4pCFjdY
- Ferraro, C. (2019). The bulldog, the pharaoh, and the football: British imperialism and Egypt's national sport and identity, 1882–1934. In *Sports in African History, Politics, and Identity Formation* (pp. 181-195). Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. 1). Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. *Critical inquiry*, *8*(4), 777-795. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/448181

- Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In The Foucault effect - studies in governmentality (pp. 87–104).
- Gibril, S. (2015). Contentious politics and bottom-up mobilization in revolutionary Egypt: The case of Egyptian football supporters in Cairo. In *Contentious Politics in the Middle East: Popular Resistance and Marginalized Activism Beyond the Arab Uprisings* (pp. 305-329). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Gibril, S. (2018). Egypt. In J.-M. De Waele, S. Gibril, E. Gloriozova, & R. Spaaij (Eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Football and Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Given, L. M. (2008). Discourse analysis. In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (Vol. 0, pp. 218-220). SAGE Publications, Inc., https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909
- Given, L. M. (2008). Foucauldian discourse analysis. In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (Vol. 0, pp. 356-357). SAGE Publications, Inc., https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909
- Guschwan, M. (2016). Fan politics: dissent and control at the stadium. *Soccer and Society*, *17*(3), 388–402. https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2015.1082763
- https://shs.cairn.info/revue-mouvements-2020-2-page-43?lang=fr#s1n4
- Ismail, S. (2012). The Egyptian Revolution against the Police. *Social Research*, *79*(2), 435–462. https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2012.0031
- Jerzak, C. T. (2022). Football Fandom in Egypt. In *Routledge Handbook of Sport in the Middle East* (1st ed., Vol. 1, pp. 196–207). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003032915-22 (Book chapter)
- Kendall, G., & Wickham, G. (1999). 'my head is spinning; doesn't history have to be more orderly than this?'. In *Using Foucault's Methods* (pp. 21-56). SAGE Publications Ltd, https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857020239
- Khan, T. H., & MacEachen, E. (2021). Foucauldian Discourse Analysis: Moving Beyond a Social Constructionist Analytic. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *20*. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211018009

- Lynch, R. (2010). Foucault's theory of power. In D. Taylor (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (Key Concepts, pp. 13-26). Acumen Publishing. doi:10.1017/UPO9781844654734.002
- McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Dynamics of Contention* (1st ed., pp. xxi–xxi). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511805431
- Mezahi, M. (2022b, June 17). *Protest on the Pitch.* Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung. https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/46714/protest-on-the-pitch
- Mezahi, M. (2022a). A Study of Football Chants as Political Expression in Algerian Hirak. In Al-Arian (Ed.) *Football in the Middle East: State, Society, and the Beautiful Game*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197659670.001.0001
- Mohamed Boualam, & Setta El Houari. (2023). Football "Supporterisme" as political expression in the age of youth's political disinterest. *The Australasian Review of African Studies*, *44*(1), 84–102. https://doi.org/10.22160/22035184/ARAS-2023-44-1/84-102
- Mohie, M. (2015, May 16). Court bans Ultras and labels them terrorists. *Mada Masr*. https://www.madamasr.com/en/2015/05/16/news/u/court-bans-ultras-and-labels-them-terrorists/
- Northey, J. (2022). The Algerian Hirak: Citizenship, non-violence, and the new movement for democracy. In *The Condition of Democracy* (1st ed., Vol. 1, pp. 17–32). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003158387-3
- Ouled EL Bahdja. (2018, April 14). *Ouled El Bahdja | La Casa Del Mouradia*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHZviPhZQxs
- Özçetin, B., & Turan, Ö. (2023). Football Fans, Social Movements and Contentious Politics: Cairo and Istanbul. In *The Political Football Stadium: Identity Discourses and Power Struggles* (pp. 201-221). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Perego, E. M. (2023). Dark Humor and "Humor Talk" in Algeria's Hirak. *Middle East Critique*. https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2023.2298128
- Powers, P. (2007). The philosophical foundations of Foucaultian discourse analysis. *Critical approaches to discourse analysis across disciplines*, *1*(2), 18-34. https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/journals/cadaad/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Volume-1_Powers.pdf

- Rachidi, I., & Aballagh, A. (2023). Algeria's Hirak: fading prospects for democratisation? *The Journal of North African Studies*, *28*(6), 1515–1537. https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2023.2207230
- Saidin, M. I. S. (2018). Rethinking the 'Arab Spring': The Root Causes of the Tunisian Jasmine Revolution and Egyptian January 25 Revolution. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, *13*, 69-79. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohd-Irwan-Syazli-Saidin/publication/326185188_Rethinking_the_'Arab_Spring'_The_Root_Causes_of_the_Tunisian_Jasmine_Revolution_and_Egyptian_January_25_Revolution/links/5b3fa885aca2720785203e2a/Rethinking-the-Arab-Spring-The-Root-Causes-of-the-Tunisian-Jasmine-Revolution-and-Egyptian-January-25-Revolution.pdf
- Seippel, Ø., Dalen, H. B., Sandvik, M. R., & Solstad, G. M. (2018). From political sports to sports politics: on political mobilization of sports issues. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, *10*(4), 669–686. https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2018.1501404
- Sherif, H. (2015). ألتراس: خمسة أعوام من الغموض والتأثير..الحلقة الأخيرة [The Ultras: Five Years of Mystery..The Final Episode]. *Al Masry Al Youm*. https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/173220
- sokaelahlawy. (2010, March 31). *Al Ahly Vs Petrojet Ultras Ahlawy* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpggoLYe26M
- Spitz, R. (2023). The Algerian Hirak: Civil Society and the Role of Artists in a Civic Space Under Pressure. In *Civil Society Responses to Changing Civic Spaces* (pp. 165-190). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Talaat, T. (2018, May 28). Egyptian giants Zamalek follow Ahly and disband Ultras supporters group. *BBC Sport*. https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/44280548
- Tarrow, S. (2008). Charles Tilly and the Practice of Contentious Politics. *Social Movement Studies*, *7*(3), 225–246. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742830802485601
- Taylor, C. (2010). Biopower. In D. Taylor (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (pp. 41–54). chapter, Acumen Publishing. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/tampere/reader.action?docID=1886870&ppg=50
- Tilly, C. (2006). *Regimes and repertoires*. University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226803531
- Tilly, C., & Tarrow, S. (2015). *Contentious politics*. Oxford University Press, Incorporated.

- Tuastad, D. (2014). From football riot to revolution. The political role of football in the Arab world. *Soccer and Society*, *15*(3), 376–388. https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2012.753541
- Tuastad, D. (2022). The Politics and Passion of Middle Eastern Football Spectator Cultures. In *Routledge Handbook of Sport in the Middle East* (1st ed., Vol. 1, pp. 208–218). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003032915-23
- Turan, Ö., & Özçetin, B. (2019). Football fans and contentious politics: The role of Çarşı in the Gezi Park protests. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *54*(2), 199–217. https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690217702944
- UltrasAhlawy07Media. (2011, September 13). *libertà - Freedom - حرية Ultras Ahlawy*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mgb5p438iv0
- Wiggins, S. (Academic). (2017). *An introduction to discourse analysis* [Video]. Sage Research Methods. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473964709
- Woltering, R. (2013). Unusual suspects: "Ultras" as political actors in the Egyptian revolution. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, *35*(3), 290-304. https://web.p.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=1a06b6bc-27f3-4e83-ac10-eb81fb0073a5%40redis
- Zaimakis, Y. (2018). Football fan culture and politics in modern Greece: the process of fandom radicalization during the austerity era. *Soccer & Society*, *19*(2), 252-270. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/14660970.2016.1171214?casa_token=il-ivOpyq8kAAAAA:kUOwAVeKfIwpOI2TFDmwdKExdorB6m14UXahZALMlItVzNF6ANZirTzi8nwYff4RdwUw6wWtRHvnsg