



# Contemporary attitudes to women's football in Israel

Ilan Tamir

To cite this article: Ilan Tamir (2020): Contemporary attitudes to women's football in Israel, Israel Affairs, DOI: [10.1080/13537121.2020.1775935](https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2020.1775935)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2020.1775935>



Published online: 07 Jun 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 12



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



## Contemporary attitudes to women's football in Israel

Ilan Tamir

School of communication, Ariel University, Ariel, Israel

### ABSTRACT

The development in women's sports in general, and women's football in particular, has attracted extensive research due to, among other things, the high popularity of football, which functioned as an exclusively male domain for many years. This article examines attitudes towards women's football in Israel, reflected in readers' comments to related sport news items. Analysis of the responses to all the items related to women's football posted in 2019 on sports and news websites, reveals mechanisms of fierce resistance manifested in disparaging and degrading attitudes towards women's football and all factors involved in this sport. Some commenters emphasised women's anomalous presence in football by restricting women to roles in the domestic and sexual spheres, while others explained women's presence on football pitches by obliterating the gendered nature of women's football, even to the point of equating the women with animals and beasts. Yet others blamed women players for the discrimination they experience on the football pitches, identifying the cause as 'feminist terror.'

**KEYWORDS** Israel; football; women; feminism

Football, currently one of the most powerful and popular social institutions, was considered for many years a sphere that reinforced and reproduced male superiority. The physiological element and physicality at the heart of the sport experience supposedly signified the advantages of the male body in the world of sport. Similar to, yet perhaps more extremely than many other branches of sport, football has been considered a traditional male domain<sup>1</sup> and the site 'rigid expressions of chauvinist masculinity,'<sup>2</sup> where such dominance is manifest in the allocation of resources, media coverage, and general societal attitudes. Despite the significant developments in the field of football in recent years, including increasing worldwide recognition of women's football and a growing number of scientific publications on this topic,<sup>3</sup> women's football remains the target of systematic discrimination in comparison to men's football.

It is perhaps the paucity of restrictive rules that control football matches compared to other branches of sport (e.g. limits to the time a player can

---

**CONTACT** Ilan Tamir  [ilant@ariel.ac.il](mailto:ilant@ariel.ac.il); [ilant@ariel.ac.il](mailto:ilant@ariel.ac.il)  School of communication, Ariel University, Ariel, Ariel 40700, Israel

handle a ball, limits to the number of passes, and restrictions on players' location on the field) that accounts for the transformation of football matches into violent competitions that recall warfare, before the sports games politicised.<sup>4</sup> As such a combative setting, football became a masculine domain in which rival players and teams battle each other to gain a decisive victory, and women's entry is perceived as a threat to this masculine domain.

Although women's football leagues appeared in some European countries in as early as the 1930s, they attracted little attention. In England, for example, the English Football Association forbade women to partake in any of the games it sponsored,<sup>5</sup> arguing that the sport was 'quite unsuitable for females.'<sup>6</sup> Women's football received a similar reception in other countries. For example, a 1947 decision of the Brazilian National Sports Council decreed that women were not permitted to play football professionally. The Council's decision that 'women will not be allowed to practice sports incompatible with the conditions of their nature'<sup>7</sup> was rescinded only 40 years later, in 1979. In general, women's entry into the sport evoked fierce resistance in countries with a long (male) football tradition.

The first national women's football team was established in Italy in 1950, with other countries on the continent following the Italian example. Only in the 1980s, however, did national teams participate in official international tournaments, and the first world football championship for women was held a decade later (in 1991), in China. The tournament was entitled the 'Women's World Championships for the M&M Cup,' as FIFA marketing officials feared that the use of the title 'Word Cup,' which was identified with the male football championship brand would be marred by women's participation.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the hurdles and challenges, both the professionalisation and the popularity of women's football have made considerable advances in recent years. The number of spectators, costs of broadcasting rights, viewership of the matches, social media activities related to women's football, recognition of video games in this field, and other indicators show impressive growth. According to FIFA figures, over 160 women's football teams are currently active and ranked.<sup>9</sup> New records were broken at the recent world championship games, which attracted enthusiastic audiences in a large number of countries. More than 750 million viewers watched the 2015 women's World Cup held in Canada,<sup>10</sup> and an even greater number – more than one billion viewers – watched the subsequent championship games in France.<sup>11</sup> According to the consulting firm Brand Finance, the total economic potential of sponsorships for women already exceeds 1 USD billion.<sup>12</sup> Local football leagues, especially in Europe, attract enormous interest and some games have tens of thousands of spectators. One of the reasons of the growing popularity of women's football, in addition to the general increase in

interest in sports, is related to the fact that many women's football teams are associated with well-known teams identified with male football (including Real Madrid in Spain, and Juventus in Italy). Because these major football brands benefit from a strong fan base, and matches between the teams evoke considerable emotional charge, matches between these clubs in almost any branch of sport creates enormous interest.

Nonetheless, women's football faces considerable obstacles. As in all branches of sport, allocation of financial resources to women's football remains at the heart of the debate.<sup>13</sup> Although the prizes in the women's world cup championship have doubled, their amount is less than one-tenth of the prizes awarded in the corresponding men's championship.<sup>14</sup> Even in the United States, the world champion in women's football and a leader in the field, the 28 members of the national team have spoken of the 'institutionalized gender discrimination' that prevailed in the field for decades. The US national team, three-time winner of the world championship and winner of four Olympic medals, is the world's top women's football team, yet unequal funding and distribution of logistic resources have reflected a prioritisation of the men's team.

Representation in football associations. Women hold marginal administrative and managerial positions in football organisations and account for a mere 8% of the members of the board or the executive committee of the national associations.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the associations frequently express a dual or even denigrating attitude towards women's football. For example, Sepp Blatter, former FIFA President, considered the highest ranking football official, suggested that women football players wear 'tighter shorts. Female players are pretty.'<sup>16</sup> in order to make the game more appealing.

The development of women's football is also hampered by unequal media coverage.<sup>17</sup> The #MeToo campaign focusing on football in 2018 and 2019 objected against sexual harassment and sexual abuse in the sport. Incidents that had been kept secret in women's football, including abuse of power by players and women, were gradually exposed. After the #MeToo campaign caught momentum in 2017, more than 150 charges of misconduct were made against former sports physician Larry Nassar, who was later convicted of several counts of abuse of minors. His case had a serious impact on women's sports in the United States and worldwide, and inspired brave acts and condemnation of the abuse of gendered power in sports in general, and in football in particular.<sup>18</sup>

## Women's football in Israel

Football is the most popular sport in Israel,<sup>19</sup> and is considered a masculine sport.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, few women play football and even fewer play regularly in an organised setting.<sup>21</sup> Women's football in Israel is on the rise, yet unlike many western countries women's football leagues have failed to take

off or to attract the masses. Limited resources, economic uncertainty, delays in season openings, precarious and sometimes unsafe infrastructure are only part of the story of women's football in Israel.

The women's football league in Israel was officially initiated in 1988 as part of the women's division of the national football association. The field's gradual development was reflected in an increase in the number of teams, leagues, and players. Today, there are three adult women's football leagues (first league, national league and state league), a youth league, and children's league and a pre-junior league (for girls under age 10 who don't play in boys' teams).<sup>22</sup> According to the Israel Football Association, there are a total of 1,500 registered female players, a significant increase from the 556 players registered for the 2006–2007 season.<sup>23</sup> The number of active teams also increased, from 20 at the beginning of the decade to 85 in the 2018–19 season. This growth can be attributed, among other things, to Athena, a national project to promote women's and girls' sports, which funds activities designed to increase the number of active participants in women's sports in general, and especially the number of participating girls.<sup>24</sup>

However, a disheartening picture emerges from a review of the interest and media coverage that the game attracts, and official attitudes and policies. In terms of budgets, women's football in Israel is given the lowest priority: only 3.2% of the budget of the top women's league is funded by the government compared to the parallel men's league.<sup>25</sup> Ben-Porat described the situation of women's football in Israel as 'a tree falling in the forest: Who sees it? Who hears it? Who cares about it, aside from the players?'<sup>26</sup>

Similar to the global trend, new women's football teams are being sponsored by well-known and popular football clubs that were until recently exclusively male (Hapoel Tel Aviv, Maccabi Tel Aviv, Beitar Jerusalem, Maccabi Haifa, Bnei Yehuda, Maccabi Netanya, and others).<sup>27</sup> It is possible that this situation alludes to rising interest in women's football, in line with the trend evident in other countries. Associations with famous clubs also led to increased media coverage and audience interest. For example, in August 2019, approximately 8,500 viewers attended the friendship game between the Israeli team and Chelsea from England.

## Methodology

In view of the significant changes in women's sports in general, and in women's football in particular, this article examines attitudes to women's football in Israel as reflected in comments to items posted in 2019 on three leading Israeli websites: SPORT5 and ONE (two popular sports websites), and YNET, Israel's leading news website.

The sample included 150 items posted on the three websites, which constitute all of the items posted on the topic of women's football in 2019.

These items concerned diverse aspects of women's football, including matches of the Israel Women's Football League and the national team, the state of women's football in Israel (budgets, conferences, infrastructure, season ticket holders), and the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup. With the exception of 27 items (18% of the sample), all posted items attracted readers' comments. In total, 1,061 readers' comments were analysed.

In the first stage of the analysis, comments were classified into three groups in accordance to their: (a) supportive comments, which expressed support for or referred objectively to women's football or the target of coverage; (b) neutral comments, which didn't refer directly to or expressed an opinion about the target of coverage; and (c) negative comments, which expressed a negative or disparaging attitude towards women's football.

In the second stage of the analysis, all negative comments (N = 611) were subjected to content analysis with the aim of identifying key trends and objections to the presence of women's football in the sphere of Israeli sports. The content analysis was designed to identify patterns of resistance by revealing the deep-seated meanings and contexts of the comments.<sup>28</sup> Using this method, it is possible to classify large amounts of texts into categories that represent similar meanings in order to understand patterns.<sup>29</sup>

### **Talkbacks**

Posting comments to website items is a popular practice of Israeli readers, and is known as 'talkbacks.' The majority of Israeli websites enable and encourage talkbacks, and readers frequently post comments to the items they read. Consequently, talkbacks constitute a major aspect of public discourse in Israel and many websites proudly highlight the items they posted that attracted the greatest number of talkbacks each day.<sup>30</sup>

The option that enables readers to post their responses to online texts on a talkback has significance that extends beyond technology. Website site texts have cultural significance. Arguably, in the Israeli context, talkbacks reflect the prevalent discourse culture: comments are immediate, spontaneous, direct, bold assertions expressed with self-confidence, and emphasise patterns of resistance that reject conciliatory points of view.<sup>31</sup>

### **Results**

The main finding in this article is that the general attitude towards women's football in Israel remains disparaging, despite recent global and local developments and trends. Of all comments in the sample, 58% were classified as negative – reflecting a demeaning and degrading attitude to women's football in general and/or a disparaging attitude towards specific women mentioned in the items in particular. A considerable portion of these comments

included scornful remarks and obscenities. No statistically significant differences were found between the websites, though it is possible to determine that the proportion of negative comments was highest on ONE and lowest on SPORT5. Negative comments constituted the majority of all comments on each of the three websites, a finding that importantly reflects the strong and unabashed resistance and objections to women's involvement in football in Israel.

While studies have pointed to Israeli sports media readers' demand for expanded coverage of women's sports,<sup>32</sup> a more complex reality emerges with respect to football, revealing a gap between declared attitudes and informal comments in talkbacks. In addition to comments that refer dispassionately to issues discussed in the items or express support for women's football, four types of criticism or negative attitudes to women's football in Israel were identified in the negative comments.

In an effort to understand the essence and roots of objections to women's football in Israel, we performed an in-depth content analysis of all the negative comments. Findings reveal that commenters reverted to several tactics to express their objections to women's presence in football and to media coverage of women's football: restrictions on women's presence (beliefs regarding women's exclusive belonging to the sexual/domestic domains); invalidation of women's presence (descriptions of women as male or beasts); blame attributions of women (women are responsible for the lack of interest in the sport); and diminution of women's football as a sport (emphasis on lack of interest and coverage).

### ***Restriction of women***

One of the prominent strategies used to explain or to justify the objections to women's football is an effort to restrict women players to two familiar gendered spaces: the domestic domain and the sexual domain. By highlighting women's belonging to these domains, commenters effectively attempt to consign women to classical stereotypical patterns, thus emphasizing the anomaly of their presence on the football field.

In addition, commenters sexualised women through comments centred on women's bodies and especially women's breasts. Comments ranged from a general emphasis on players' physical appearance to blunt, crass sexual descriptions. A large number of commenters mentioned that they would continue to be interested in women's football only if the women players perform the mandatory practice of removing one's shirt (after scoring or at the end of the game). Other comments were coarser and described various sexual implements or sexual contact in response to informational articles on women's sport.

If they take their shirts off after scoring, then I promise to watch the game. (YNET, 29 March 2019)

They're dildo-crazy. (SPORTS, 4 May 2019)

That certainly looks like [it's worth] an energetic butt-fuck. (YNET, 19 May 2019)

What do they change at the end of the game? Bras, dildos, feminine hygiene products ... Women's football is the most revolting thing in the world to watch! (YNET, 21 August 2019)

Women's sport without nudity is like eating food that lacks seasoning. (YNET, 30 March 2019)

They're looking good ... good-looking girls. (ONE, 5 May 2019)

Commenters urged the female players to return to their 'natural' space – the domestic domain. The recent advances in women's football, a field of sports that was the traditional male space, largely mirror the liberation from stereotypical gendered patterns that chained women to the domestic sphere. Therefore, the criticism against women's presence on the football field can be understood as protest against women's liberation in general. Commenters mentioned the family, the home, and specifically the kitchen. These comments apparently constituted the ultimate objection to women's presence in a male world.

This is the world cup in omelette making and microwave cleaning. That's what they should get. Women and football together? Who's interested in that! Hahaha. (SPORT5, 6 June 2019)

Go back to the kitchen – There are 6,057 empty kitchens! [In response to the item, which mentioned that a women's football game in Madrid attracted a record number of 6,057 fans] (ONE, 17 March 2019)

### ***Invalidation of women***

Another strategy used by many commenters to justify women's presence in football involves the invalidation of players' feminine features and denial of their femininity. Feminist scholar Judith Butler discussed the connection between sex, gender, and desire that underlies all social experience, and the anticipated congruence between a person's biological sex (reflected in the body), gender (reflected in behaviours), and sexuality (sexual desire). The assumption that all three categories must match (what she calls "the fiction of heterosexual coherence) is an expression of social expectations that stem from heterosexual hegemony.<sup>33</sup> For years, expectations in the sport world linked sports activities to the masculine sex and masculine physical abilities and sexuality. Of course, the

obverse side of this coin attributes to women and femininity a lack of understanding of or interest in sports. Accordingly, women involved in sports attract comments for generating disruption of these expectations. A deep understanding of the sport, and even more so the ability to play in the most masculine field in the world of sports, are not considered to be a deviation from the gendered continuum of expectations. Therefore, many commenters resolved this disruption or paradox by invalidating the femininity of women football players. As a result, their presence in the football space would conform to expectations. Many players were described in the comments as lesbians, butch, and even as beasts:

It's not exactly football and the players are not exactly women. (SPORT5, 28 March 2019)

There's a broadcast on the lesbian channel. (YNET, 27 June 2019)

Is that a female or male player? (ONE, 6 May 2019)

She looks like a man. (ONE, 19 May 2019)

In the most extreme cases, commenters stripped female football players of their human identity and described them as beasts. The use of the word animal or beast, or reference to specific animals recurred in many comments:

You're not girls, you're rhinoceroses. (SPORT5, 23 July 2019)

### ***Attribution of blame***

Another resistance strategy was epitomised in commenters' anger at women and women's organisations, on two, seemingly opposite levels. On the one hand, commenters argued that women's organisations and feminist ideology are propelling women's sports into centre stage in a manner that is not commensurate with the state of the sport and that sparks revulsion. On the other, commenters blamed women for showing little interest in women's football and are surprised by the calls urging them to become fans.

A league of feminist thieves? (ONE, 17 October 2019)

No one cares! If they play with shirts that say "Down with feminist terror," then we'll support them. (ONE, 16 June 2019)

Let all the damned feminists and women's organizations go to hell ... The Ministry of Sports – that's public money that puts funds [in sports] that attract public interest (men's football) and not in where politicians and anti-Semitic organizations that are destroying the nuclear family in Israel [women's football] (SPORT5, 11 July 2019)

The discrimination is [caused] by women who don't go to women's games, and most of them don't attend any sports events. (ONE, 25 September 2019)

Many commenters expressed the familiar argument that women are the natural audience of women's sports, and men's sports is mainly a matter for men.<sup>34</sup> However, reality is more complex and in fact crosses gender boundaries: An increasing number of women view sports played by men and the interest (by both genders) surrounding women's sports in general, and specifically women's football, is on the rise.

### ***Diminution of women's football***

The final category of justification strategies identified in this article focused on the methodical discrediting of women's football. The commenters' argued that their dissatisfaction with the development of women's football and the growing media coverage of the sport stem from the inferior standards of women's football. Commenters justified their disinterest in women's sports through the use of disparaging and demeaning women's sports and discrediting images:

Women's football is less interesting than reading the back of an air freshener. (YNET, 19 May 2019)

Even the European Cup for player up to age 6 is more interesting than the Women's World Cup. (YNET, 4 July 2019)

Women's football is simply not interesting. (YNET, 27 February 2019)

Women's football is not interesting. (SPORT5, 28 March 2019)

Within this strategy, it is unsurprising that commenters' rage is also directed against the media that cover women's football events. Many commenters noted that the decision to cover the events is scandalous in view of the sport's poor standards:

You're killing us with these items about popular women's football ... How many spectators come to a game? ... I don't understand why any sport that has two and a half fans, half of whom are family members, demands a lot of money. Wake up and move on. (SPORT5, 16 July 2019)

Only infantile and misleading media will make noise out of this, because they love noise per se. It's impossible to watch women's football. (SPORT5, 27 October 2019)

### **Conclusions**

The male hegemony that characterised sports for many years has been supplanted by male dominance. Sports institutions remain dominated by

men, but the gender walls have largely been breached and women are participating in a variety of fields of sport as players, spectators, and managers.<sup>35</sup>

This significant change is the consequence of developments related to women's equality that occurred outside the sports sphere, with the effect that women's presence in the public sphere and among decision makers became more natural. The proportion of female parliamentarians has risen across the world (although women remain under-represented in the majority of countries), as well as in the media and other spheres of human activity. Sport, traditionally considered a masculine space, also opened its gates to women and a steady increase is evident in women's presence in stadiums, training facilities, sports media, and the decision making organs of sport organisations and institutions. These changes prepared the ground for women's integration in football – the traditional bastion of masculinity.

In effect, women's football exists in a space of 'relative autonomy'<sup>36</sup> – autonomy granted to women by men who control the key positions and centres of power in football associations. In recent years, women's football has gained popularity, feeding growing interest in the challenges and problems facing women's football in areas such as budgets, recognition, and public attitudes.

This article examined attitudes of sport fans in Israel to women's football, reflected in comments to sport-related news items on this topic. Its findings indicate that attitudes to women's football remain mainly disparaging and demeaning, despite the global and local changes in sport in general, and specifically in women's football. The majority of the comments were negative in tone. An in-depth content analysis found strategies of justification of fierce resistance to women's football, manifest in a disparaging attitude towards women's football and the women involved in the sport. Some commenters underscored women's belonging to sexual and domestic domains in order to emphasise the anomalous nature of women's presence in football, while others sought to explain women's presence in football by obliterating their feminine nature (to the point of equating the women with beasts). Yet others blamed the women themselves for the discrimination they experienced on the field, even accusing them of 'feminist terror.' Alongside these strategies, many commenters used disparaging similes to criticise the standards of women's football, or used theological arguments to support their position against women's integration in sports.

It is important to stress that commenters' anonymity precludes a gender-based classification of the comments analysed in the article. Though Hebrew language distinguishes between male and female voice, in many cases it is nonetheless difficult to identify the commenter's gender. Consequently, the article made no effort to differentiate between men's and women's attitudes to women's football. However, the fact that the majority of readers of sports

columns and sports websites are men<sup>37</sup> implies that the majority of commenters are men. Future studies may wish to further explore such distinctions.

Readers' comments are not made in a vacuum. Arie Meliniak, former national Israeli basketball team and current sports commentator, has said, 'I love women's basketball, but women and football are two separate things.' Andy Benoit of Sports Illustrated wrote on his twitter account, 'women's football ... women's sports in general not worth watching.' As late as October 2019, in an interview to a television network, Jose Maria Garcia, a longstanding and esteemed sports journalist in Spain, stated, 'Women's football is a lie.' These statements by three sports media professionals in different places around the world, at different times, apparently reflect a pervasive belief about women that characterises sports media and its professionals. The findings of this article resonate with such public media statements.

'Is it time for a victory lap?' asked sports researcher Alina Bernstein almost two decades ago in reference to the status of women's sports.<sup>38</sup> It is impossible to ignore the enormous progress in women's sports since then, and it is even arguable that the finish line seems closer than ever, but this article's findings leave no room for confusion: a victory lap remains a distant prospect.

## Notes

1. Pelak, "Negotiating Gender."
2. Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*, 30.
3. Valenti et al., "Women's Football Studies," 511.
4. Dunning, "Sports in the Quest for Excitement," 477-87.
5. Matheson and Congdon-Hohman, "International Women's Football," 4.
6. Schultz, *Women's Sports*, 17.
7. Rial, "Women's Football in Brazil," 27.
8. Williams, "Upfront and Onside," 128.
9. FIFA, "Women's Ranking."
10. FIFA, "Record Breaking FIFA's Women Cup."
11. FIFA, "FIFA Women's World Cup 2019 Watched by More Than 1 Billion."
12. Brand Finance, "Total Potential of Women's Football Sponsorship."
13. Schultz, *Women's Sports*, 144.
14. Williams, "Upfront and Onside," 123.
15. FIFA, "FIFA, Football, and Women," 1.
16. Christenson and Kelso, "Football Chief's Plan," 1.
17. Schultz, *Women's Sports*, 145.
18. Williams, "Upfront and Onside," 122.
19. According to the Israeli Olympic Committee, over one-third (34%) of all active athletes registered in Israel in the Olympic sports (summer and winter) focus on Football. Also see <http://www.athenawomen.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ar-2.pdf>.

20. Ben Porat, "Cosi (Non) Fan Tutte," 39.
21. Lahav-Raz and Reznik, "Empowering Marginality," 129.
22. According to the Israeli Football Association, girls are allowed to play with boys' team up to the age of 13. After that, they must play only within a girls' team.
23. Israel Football Association, "Women's Football Industry."
24. The project launched in 2005 with the goal of creating social and gender change in Israeli sports culture.
25. The calculation includes marketing agreements and policing costs.
26. Ben Porat, "Cosi (Non) Fan Tutte," 47.
27. Several of Israel's major sport clubs had women's teams in the past, but they dispersed soon after.
28. Hsieh and Shannon, "Three Approaches," 1278.
29. Kirppendorff, *Content Analysis*, 50.
30. Tamir and Bernstein, "Do They Even Know the National Anthem," 752.
31. Galily, "The (Re)Shaping of the Israeli Sport Media," 276.
32. Tamir and Galily, "Women's Sport Coverage in Israel," 92-112.
33. Butler, "Gender Trouble," 3.
34. Tamir and Galily, "Women's Sport Coverage in Israel," 92-112.
35. Ben Porat, "Cosi (Non) Fan Tutte," 42.
36. *Ibid.*, 40.
37. Based on the statistics of the Committee for Internet Rating in Israel, published on ONE, for example. <https://www.one.co.il/article/16-17/7,0,0,0/192790.html>.
38. Bernstein, "Is It Time for a Victory Lap?" 415.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributor

*Ilan Tamir* is associate professor at the School of Communication, Ariel University, Israel, and a visiting scholar at Harvard University.

## Bibliography

- Ben Porat, A. "Cosi (Non) Fan Tutte: Women's Football 'Made in Israel.'" *Football & Society* 21, no. 1 (2020): 39-49. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/jan/16/football.gender>.
- Bernstein, A. "Is It Time for a Victory Lap? Changes in the Media Coverage of Women in Sport." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 37, no. 3-4 (2002): 415-428.
- Brand Finance. "Total Potential of Women's Football Sponsorship." Accessed February 12, 2020. <https://brandfinance.com/news/total-potential-of-womens-football-sponsorship-undervalued-by-over-us1-billion/>

- Butler, J. "Gender, Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse." In *Identities: Race, Class, Gender, and Nationality*, edited by L. Martin Alcoff and E. Mendieta, 201–211. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.
- Dunning, E. "Sport in the Quest for Excitement: Norbert Elias's Contributions to the Sociology of Sport." *Group Analysis* 30, no. 4 (1997): 477–487.
- FIFA. "Women's Ranking." Accessed February 12, 2020a. <https://www.fifa.com/fifa-world-ranking/ranking-table/women/>
- FIFA. "Record Breaking FIFA's Women Cup." Accessed February 12, 2020b. <https://www.fifa.com/womensworldcup/news/record-breaking-fifa-women-s-world-cup-tops-750-million-tv-viewers-2745963>
- FIFA. "FIFA Women's World Cup 2019 Watched by More than 1 Billion." <https://www.fifa.com/womensworldcup/news/fifa-women-s-world-cup-2019tm-watched-by-more-than-1-billion>
- FIFA. "FIFA, Football, and Women." <https://img.fifa.com/image/upload/i2berd89n7syxdjl5fhq.pdf>
- Galily, Y. "The (Re) Shaping of the Israeli Sport Media: The Case of Talk-Back." *International Journal of Sport Communication* 1, no. 3 (2008): 273–285. doi:10.1123/ijsc.1.3.273.
- Hargreaves, J. *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Hsieh, H.-F., and S. E. Shannon. "Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis." *Qualitative Health Research* 15, no. 9 (2005): 1277–1288. doi:10.1177/1049732305276687.
- Israel Football Association. (2018). "Women's Football Industry Is Gaining Momentum." <https://www.football.org.il/404/?itemid=%7BC5B97A32-A2FA-441F-96E7-5570C06803A6%7D>
- Kirppendorff, K. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. 4th ed. Beverley Hills: Sage, 2018.
- Lahav-Raz, Y., and S. Reznik. "Empowering Marginality-Hapoel B'not Sakhnin." *Social Issues in Israel* 18, no. 2 (2014): 129–151. [Hebrew].
- Marcus, C., and P. Kelso. "Football Chief's Plan to Boost Women's Game? Hotpants." *The Guardian*, January 16, 2004. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/jan/16/football.gender>
- Matheson, V. A., and J. Congdon-Hohman. "International Women's Football and Gender ineQuality: Revisited." *College of the Holy Cross, Department of Economics Faculty Research Series, Paper 11-07*, Worcester, MA: College of the Holy Cross, 2011.
- Pelak, C. F. "Negotiating Gender/Race/Class Constraints in the New South Africa: A Case Study of Women's Football." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 40, no. 1 (2005): 53–70. doi:10.1177/1012690205052165.
- Rial, C. "Women's Football in Brazil: Invisible but under Pressure." *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America* 11, no. 3 (2012): 25–28.
- Schultz, J. *Women's Sports: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University, 2018.
- Tamir, I., and A. Bernstein. "Do They Even Know the National Anthem? Minorities in Service of the Flag — Israeli Arabs in the National Football Team." *Football & Society* 16, no. 5–6 (2015): 745–764.
- Tamir, I., and Y. Galily. "Women's Sports Coverage in Israel: Perception versus Reality." *International Journal of Sport Communication* 3, no. 1 (2010): 92–112. doi:10.1123/ijsc.3.1.92.

- Valenti, M., N. Scelles, and S. Morrow. "Women's Football Studies: An Integrative Review." *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal* 8, no. 5 (2018): 511–528. doi:[10.1108/SBM-09-2017-0048](https://doi.org/10.1108/SBM-09-2017-0048).
- Williams, J. "Upfront and Onside: Women, Football, History and Heritage Special Edition. Introduction: Women's Football and The# MeToo Movement 2019." *Sport in History* 39, no. 2 (2019): 121–129. doi:[10.1080/17460263.2019.1604423](https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2019.1604423).