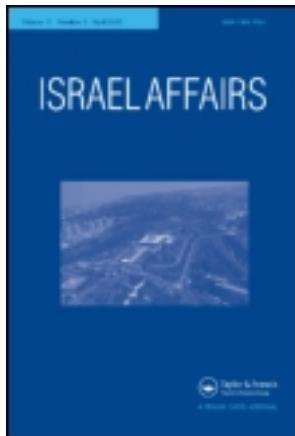


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On: 28 September 2012, At: 10:26

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Israel Affairs

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fisa20>

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Version of record first published: 28 Sep 2012.

To cite this article: Yair Galily, Ilan Tamir & Moshe Levy (2012): The games must go on? The influence of terror attacks on hosting sporting events in Israel, Israel Affairs, 18:4, 629-644

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2012.717393>

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The games must go on? The influence of terror attacks on hosting sporting events in Israel

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The terrorist campaign against Israel, euphemized as the ‘al-Aqsa intifada’, affected Israeli society in terms of perceptions of personal security, economic and political stability and aspects such as tourism and culture. The Israeli sporting scene was affected as well. From 2001 to 2004, international sports organizations adopted policies in stark contrast to one another. While some banned certain sports events from taking place in Israel, others obliged athletes to come to Israel and fined them for refusing to do so. A comparison of how these organizations chose to act in similar cases around the world reveals a striking inconsistency. An examination of the events and information provided in personal interviews indicates that sports associations fail to define terrorism and the conditions under which competitions should be banned.

Keywords: sport; terrorism; international federations; Israeli society

The wave of terrorist acts that have hit Israel since October 2000, as part of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, has taken a high toll on Israeli society. It has affected all forms of life, including the institution of sport, which has been significantly hurt as a result. Foreign sports teams from diverse branches have requested not to come to Israel, mainly due to fear for their safety. From 2001 to 2004, international sports organizations adopted different policies concerning this issue, in stark contrast to each other. While some banned sports events from taking place, others obliged athletes to come to Israel and fined them for refusing to do so. A comparison of how these organizations chose to act in similar cases around the world reveals a striking inconsistency. In football, for example, Israeli teams were not permitted to host any games at ‘home’ for three years. UEFA (the Union of European Football Associations) adopted a harsh attitude, even when security in Israel had returned and football teams from abroad expressed their willingness to come to Israel of their own volition. At the same time, while statements expressing the importance of carrying on with football games during times of terror were issued, for example one delivered by UEFA following an

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explosion in Madrid (March 2004), the organization continued to send mixed signals to Israel when it banned international games from taking place within its borders.

On the basis of interviews conducted with the heads of international sports organizations and sport union directors in Israel, we will attempt to reveal the bias and double standards with which sports organizations around the world have treated Israel in regard to allowing Israel to host sports events. In order to do so, we will first discuss the term 'terrorism' and its association with the world of sports, followed by a discussion on the significance of hosting sports events in a sovereign state from professional, economic, and political aspects. Finally, we will attempt to evaluate the significant differences among the various sports associations in terms of permission granted to Israel to host events during terrorist attacks and their implications.

In seeking to comprehend the processes and achieve the above aims, we found it useful to call upon the 'figurational' or 'process sociology' developed by Norbert Elias.¹ Elias's sociology offers a useful approach to the study of the development of sports and other procedural aspects of culture. We will argue that the process through which sports gambling developed in Israel can be understood adequately only by presenting it in a historical context and by examining its interdependent processes. Using a process-sociological perspective, we paid particular attention to balance of power among individuals and groups. The struggles between sport organizations, international sports associations, and many individuals are examples of balances of power that led to both intended and unintended consequences.

The definition of terrorism

Terrorism is 'a violent act or a threat to act violently, in order to generate fear, change of policy or obedience from a victim'.² Terrorism usually hurts innocent people or representative symbols. Its aim is not to hurt a country's material resources, but rather targets that will generate fear and panic, thus harming a country's symbols. Terrorism can be committed by states and regimes, as well as by organizations or individuals driven by a common ideology.³

Undoubtedly, the series of massive attacks against the US on 11 September 2001 placed terrorism at the centre of the Western world's political agenda. Terrorism turned from a tactical nuisance into a strategic international threat.⁴ Nevertheless, the definition of the term 'terrorism' has remained controversial, and contradictory definitions have been suggested.⁵ The debate is not theoretical alone, as the definition has practical implications, specifically for developing strategies to cope with the threat. Because of the absence of a uniform definition of 'terrorism', the responsibility of defining it seems to fall on the organizations or states that support it.

In contrast to guerrilla warfare, which resembles terrorism in a number of ways, terrorism does not restrict itself to military targets or army symbols.

Its targets are for the most part civilian, with the intention to make a political, social, or economic statement. For this reason, media reaction to a terrorist act has critical significance.

The acts such organizations choose to commit vary from an incidental spontaneous strike against pedestrians to a sophisticated, complex series of attacks against civilian and government targets, with dozens of additional known forms of action and techniques falling within the range. Acts of terrorism committed by Islamic organizations in recent years have certainly raised the intensity of potential threats and the number of potential victims. The implications of these incidents are expressed in heightened intelligence efforts, unprecedented security arrangements at tourist sites and government symbols, as well as changes in the immigration policies adopted by a large numbers of countries in the West whose positions regarding the entrance of immigrants, especially Moslems, have become more stringent.

In the context of Israel, the use of terrorism as a means of attaining political aims has been around since the day of its establishment as a sovereign nation, and even prior to it. As early as the 1920s and 1930s, following the end of the Ottoman Empire and the increase of Jewish immigration to the Land of Israel, the relationship between the Jewish and Arab populations has been characterized by mutual unrest. The events that hit the Jewish settlement most severely in those years were directed mainly against British colonial rule. Nevertheless, the establishment of the state and the outcome of the Six Day War deepened the schism as Palestinians realized that Israel's force was mightier than anticipated. The establishment of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) in 1964, with its multitude of sub-organizations and possession of military arms, was a practical consequence. Over the years, the PLO has committed terrorist attacks against Israel, within and outside of its borders, reaching their peak during the two *intifadas*, under which numerous attacks were committed, claiming the lives of hundreds of Israeli citizens and soldiers. At the same time, thousands of Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli security forces.

Sport and terrorism

While sport events have been targeted by terrorists for more than three decades (an estimated 178 different occasions, from the Munich Olympic attack in 1972 through 2004), literature on the relationship between sport and terrorism has been narrowly focused.⁶ To date, the majority of research has focused on operational issues relating to venue security⁷; the media's treatment of security issues at major sporting events⁸; the impact of 9/11 on major sport event attendees at the 2002 FIFA World Cup,⁹ the 2002 Winter Olympic Games,¹⁰ and the 2003 Rugby World Cup.¹¹

The murder of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich was undoubtedly a pivotal event in perceptions on securing sports events in the face of terrorist threats. In this event, the Palestinian Black September Organization

penetrated the living quarters of the Israeli delegation in the Olympic village. Upon their entrance, terrorists murdered two members of the delegation and took the others hostage. Nine more members of the delegation were murdered following a failed attempt at saving them by the German police at the airport. At the end of the day, 11 Israeli athletes were murdered. The Games were suspended for one day and then resumed as planned, justified by the claim that the Games would not be defeated by terrorism.

The events in Munich, in addition to another attack during the 1996 Atlanta Games when one man was killed and dozens injured as a result of an explosion, are practically the only ones that have been ingrained in our collective memory as attacks directed at sports targets. In fact, the numbers are much greater, requiring a theoretical explanation of the phenomenon.

Louis Mizell, a former intelligence officer and special agent of the US State Department who has collected and calculated data on terror events has counted more than 170 attacks targeted at athletes or sports events since the infamous attack in Munich.¹²

In 1987, for example, an 'Air Korea' explosion was attributed to North Korean terrorists whose aim was to disrupt preparations for the Olympic Games to be held in Seoul, South Korea.¹³ Three years later, one man was killed and several others injured in an explosion during a baseball game in Chile.¹⁴ In May 2002, ETA, the Basque terrorist organization, was responsible for a car explosion adjacent to the Real Madrid Football Stadium that took place as fans were arriving at the site to watch a game against their sworn rival, Barcelona. As a result of the explosion, 17 fans were injured. Almost two years later, a Greek organization took responsibility for three explosions in Athens, in an attempt to keep 'capitalists and Western tourists' out of the upcoming Olympics. These are only a handful of the acts that have actually been committed. In addition to these, there have been a considerable numbers of threats and intelligence alerts of attacks planned by terrorists: a terrorist was arrested on his way to exploding a suicide bomb at a stadium in Jerusalem; 15 suspects were arrested in Portugal on the opening eve of the European Football Championship (2004) under the suspicion that they belonged to Al-Qaeda and planning to strike Old Trafford, the home stadium of the football team, Manchester United, were apprehended. These are only a few examples of this escalating phenomenon.

Clearly, terrorist organizations have internalized Black September's success in the Munich attack by placing the Palestinian issue on the international agenda.¹⁵ Organizers of large-scale sports events have realized that they must address security issues in order to cope with terrorist threats. An immediate indication of this realization is the significant increase in budgets for this purpose, and the unprecedented security arrangements being made in preparation for major sports events. The security undertaking in the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens is one such example. According to financial estimates, the security budget of the Olympic Games in Athens stood at over €1 billion, which accounted for 20% of the overall Games budget.¹⁶ Seventy thousand policemen and security

officers patrolled the Olympic village and the city, and another 50 ships patrolled the sea coast.¹⁷ Patriot missile batteries were positioned in the region of the Games sites as part of air security and NATO airplanes circled the skies above Athens. Spectators were required to arrive in advance in order to pass a strict security check. Moreover, 1500 surveillance cameras were installed throughout the Olympic village.¹⁸ A review of the International Olympic Committee's insurance policy suffices to comprehend the magnitude of fear from a terrorist attack during the Games – the Committee had secured a \$170 million insurance policy in case the Games were postponed, cancelled, or disrupted by war, natural disaster, or a terrorist attack.¹⁹

In an attempt to analyse the factors that have turned sports into such an attractive target for terrorists, a number of possible explanations provide a theoretical framework for the phenomenon. Obviously, they are interconnected, and the neat separation made here is not as clear-cut in reality.

First and foremost, the link between sport and the media plays a significant role. Terrorism, by means of the media, calls public attention to the distress and claims made by different groups and organizations. Media experts have called the phenomenon a 'puppet theater', to emphasize the usage made by terrorist organizations of the mass media.²⁰ Turning to sport in this context is understandable. The expansion of electronic media and the development of sports channels in recent years have increased the volume of sports broadcasts and have diversified the profile of the audience. Today, practically every important sports event is broadcast live via the media and ratings of such sports events remains unmatched by any other form of entertainment. During the drama that transpired in the Munich Olympic village, more than 500 million spectators were watching, a large portion of whom were learning about the Palestinian problem for the first time.²¹ Ratings of major sports events break new records all the time. The American network, NBC, has paid \$3.5 billion for the rights to broadcast the Olympic Games on television between 2000 and 2008.²²

Besides the media, in the last few decades sport has turned into one of the most important institutions in society. Of the five largest super-state international organizations in the world, four of them are sports organizations. Sports events enlist spectators, in stadiums and in their homes, in numbers unmatched by any other domain, turning them into a festive event. Athletes gain admiration and huge financial rewards and some become cultural heroes. In their continued attempt to make an impact and gain recognition, a strike against sports stars by terrorist organizations is likely to make waves, as the Columbian terrorist organization succeeded in doing in 1963, even before the television set had become an essential part of the typical household, when it kidnapped Real Madrid's Argentinean football star, Alfredo DiStefano.

In the eyes of the public, the identification of representative athletes with their nation is ideal. Sports fans can identify the country of origin of their objects of admiration, sometimes even down to the exact city and district. Consequently, many people are familiar with countries and their location thanks to their

representative athletes. Wong and Trumper have found that even when sports stars reach international levels and are admired around the world, their initial national identity is maintained, alongside and parallel to their global representations.²³ Therefore, an attempted strike against an athlete, a sports site, or a large-scale event clearly symbolizes a strike against the country itself.

An understanding of the link between sport and politics can assist in better understanding the phenomenon as well. Sport, as many studies have shown, is a tool used in many political processes, locally and internationally. In Israel, for example, many attempts have been made to conduct football matches between Jewish and Palestinian athletes as a symbolic act of appeasement which will lead to a more concrete peace process. A strike at such an event signifies a strike against the process itself.

At this point it is important to emphasize that not all terrorist organizations aim at national liberation. A large numbers of organizations have been driven by social ideologies, for the most part Marxist ideologies, which aim at undermining the social and economic order. Urban terrorism in Italy and Germany in the 1970s provides such examples. Capitalist economy, as a representative of American imperialism, has often served as a focus of social criticism and violent events. Sport, as an institution that is identified with Americanization and globalization processes, has in this context also become a viable target for terrorist organizations. For example, three bombs were exploded prior to the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. The 'Revolutionary Struggle' organization, which took responsibility for the explosions, stated that capitalists and Western tourists were not welcome in their country.

The violent atmosphere, both physically and verbally, which often develops among the fans in sports stadiums often glides into racial lines and can often turn sports events, or the stadiums where they take place, into a symbolic arena where terrorist organizations choose to commit attacks. In the Israeli context, charged football matches between Beitar Jerusalem, identified with the Israeli right wing, and teams from the Arab sector in the country, regularly turn into clashes with a religious and national background. This can indeed explain the reason that a terrorist was arrested in 2007 on his way to commit a suicide attack in Teddy Stadium in Jerusalem.

Hosting sports events

Besides the athletic advantage of playing on one's home field, hosting large-scale sports events yields other considerable benefits to the host country or team. Not surprisingly, fierce struggles frequently take place between cities, countries, and teams for the right to host sports events. Only five years ago we witnessed main cities in the Western world (London, Paris, Madrid, and New York) competing for the right to host the 2012 Olympic Games, conjuring up every means possible – from public relations in the media, to recruiting politicians and celebrities, to long-term investments of resources. Even in small and routine

sports events, hosting the event has significant implications. In order to understand the importance of hosting sports events, three principal factors will be briefly discussed.

From a *professional-athletic* aspect, competing on one's home field gives the hosting team an advantage over its rival team, since the game takes place on a familiar field surrounded by the team's fans. Studies that have examined and quantified the phenomenon have clearly proven the salient advantage gained by playing on one's home field.²⁴ Explanations vary, including support given by the home team's fans, the home team players' familiarity with the conditions of the field, fatigue experienced by the rival team as a result of travel, and bias towards the home team on the part of judges.²⁵ Neave and Wolfson have even found physiological evidence of increased testosterone concentration among home team players (as a territorial defence reaction), which can lead to enhanced performance.²⁶ Of course when these elements are compounded, especially when the teams are aware of them, psychological pressure is applied on the visiting team.

From an *economic* aspect, large-scale sports events for the purpose of yielding profits were organized in industrialized Western countries as early as the nineteenth century. However, in the last 20 years they have become an important element of policies aimed at economic renewal adopted by many cities around the world. The aim of hosting such events, which include international exhibits, Olympic Games, and World Cup Football Games, among many other sports events, is to improve the image of the city, create new jobs, and attract tourism and investors. Such large-scale events lead to the construction of a massive infrastructure (e.g. transportation, major public facilities) and arouse a great deal of attention in the media around the world. In the past, large-scale events were funded by the public sector, but the 1984 Olympic Games held in Los Angeles set a precedent when private entrepreneurs produced the event. Events produced by the private sector are expected to yield a profit or at least to break even. The benefits expected by hosting such events include social advantages, such as employment in leisure services, community identification, and social integration, and political advantages such as the democratic influence and community involvement in government planning. The general assumption is that large-scale sports events function in a number of ways that benefit the communities producing them.²⁷ There are countless examples including the Olympic Games in Japan (1964 and 1988), South Korea (1988), Norway (1994), the United States (1996 and 2002), and Australia (2000). A particularly salient example is the Olympic Games which took place in Barcelona in 1992. The Barcelona Games generated a large construction boom in the host city and substantial tourism, which the capital of Cataluña has enjoyed for more than a decade following the Games.

From a *political* aspect, many governments are involved in the state's sports activities in order to gain international recognition and prestige on the field.²⁸ A city can sell an image of 'modernity' and 'development' through large-scale

events, as in the case of Seoul, Barcelona, Atlanta, and Sydney. Wide media coverage of such events turns the city into a status symbol in the eyes of its proud residents, its state, and the rest of the world. Nevertheless, the desire to gain international recognition and prestige is not only expressed by hosting international sports competitions. Many nations subsidize the activities of representative teams in many branches as well as athletes in private branches, in an attempt to succeed in the international sports arena. Such success, according to them, is directly converted into international prestige beyond the stadium. Thus, for instance, many athletes enjoy the generous financial assistance of developing countries in Asia and Africa, who believe that their athletes' victories in the international arena not only affirms their existence, but also gives them exposure as a legitimate nation within the international community.

The case of Israel

Between 2001 and 2004, the reality of sport in Israel produced a complex picture in which certain branches, such as football and volleyball, were not allowed to host international sports events in Israel for security reasons, while in others, such as basketball and tennis, competitions proceeded as usual. In fact, in branches that were allowed to host games in Israel, foreign teams that feared coming to Israel were fined and reprimanded by international sports organizations. The situation's complexity reached extremes when Israel hosted Europe's top basketball event, the Euroleague's Final Four, in May 2004. Later, when permission was granted for international games to be resumed in Israel in all branches of sport, the European Football Organization limited football games to the Tel Aviv area.

An examination of sports events hosted in different countries where, during the same period, many terror attacks were committed reveals an inconsistent policy adopted by international sports organizations. The basic assumption is that such a state is exceptional and requires a deeper understanding of decision making regarding the issue. For this reason, we interviewed sports organization directors from the different branches in Israel and international sports organization representative who are responsible for the organization and management of sports competitions.

Sports branches and the sports ban on Israel

In the following section the impact of terror events on the various branches of sport will be described. We intend to bring to light the significantly different positions taken by two sports organizations regarding Israel's capability to host events during periods of terrorist attacks.

Football

For a little over two years UEFA barred Israel from hosting official football games for fear of endangering athletes and spectators. The sweeping ban included

all competitions of all UEFA football teams to be held in Israel. During those two-plus years, the organization held many discussions in the presence of professionals and politicians, and only at the end of April 2004 did it allow the resumption of football games in Israel, with the qualification that they take place only in the Tel Aviv region.

The cancellation of games in Israel occurred at the very height of Israeli football's success. To describe the chronology of the decision we must go back to October 2001, when a decisive game between the Israeli and the Austrian national teams that would determine who would advance to the World Cup was scheduled to take place. Nine of the players from the Austrian team announced their refusal to come to Israel and eventually FIFA, the International Football Association, decided to postpone the game to a later date. Because the game was to take place within the World Cup preliminaries framework, the organization responsible for the event was FIFA, the international association, rather than UEFA, the European one.

During the year prior to this decision, Israel was rife with terrorist attacks. Over the entire period international games took place in Israel as usual, and the month preceding the scheduled game was relatively quiet. Only four days before the Israeli–Austrian game, an official Israeli football game took place in the European Championship preliminaries between the Israeli and Romanian youth teams. In a FIFA statement to the media, a request was made by the Austrian team not to come to Israel following an explosion on a Siberian Airlines passenger flight on its way to Novosibirsk, three days before the game. The explosion took place far away from Israeli territory, and later it transpired that it was caused by an accident during a military drill by the Ukrainian army. The day after the explosion – that is, prior to the scheduled game – the Ukrainian President was quoted as saying that the plane might have been shot down by a missile during a military exercise. Clarifications by the former Chairman of the Israeli Football Association, Gavri Levy, and the Israel Minister of Sports at the time, Matan Vilnai, who tried to explain to the Austrians and FIFA that the downed plane and the security situation in Israel were unrelated, fell on deaf ears and the game was cancelled.

The next link in the chain was a game in the UEFA Cup tournament between Hapoel Tel Aviv and the London team, Chelsea FC. Six players from *Chelsea* abstained from the game which took place as planned in Israel some two weeks after the game scheduled with the Austrians. Here again, the downed Russian plane was the reason given for their absence. Moreover, Emanuel Pétit, one of the team's stars who chose not to come to Israel, claimed that he did not believe the plane came down by accident.

Two important points must be considered in this context. First, Chelsea is one of the biggest and best known teams in Europe. The objection to coming to Israel for security reasons by well-known and admired players had a significant impact. The attention given to the issue placed it on both the sports and political agenda. Second, it is important to understand that the absence of a team's significant

players can cost the team the game and lead them to lose their place in a prestigious competition, as in fact it did in this case. Individual players also stand to lose considerable amounts of money (grants awarded for advancing in a competition) by being disqualified from the tournament. With so much at stake, it can be assumed that such players, as in the example of the Austrian team, did in fact fear for their lives.

The last official international game that was played in Israel during the period under discussion took place at the end of February 2002, between Hapoel Tel Aviv and the Italian team Parma. Less than a week after the game, a terrorist attack took place in Israel and had far-reaching implications for sport. A terrorist entered a restaurant and shot dead three Israeli civilians. Among the restaurant guests during the attack were a number of football players from Hapoel Tel Aviv, which was supposed to host AC Milan's football team a week later. News of the attack and photos of the terrified football players reached far and wide across Europe. As a result, UEFA decided to bar the team from hosting the quarter-finals in Israel. Like the FIFA ruling on the game against Austria, in this case too UEFA's decision appears to have been driven by emotional influences. Following bigger attacks (according to the very problematic and limited criteria that the number of casualties are indicative of the size of the attack), as in the examples provided at the beginning of this section, the games were not transferred from Israel. However, in this instance, the attack took place in the centre of Tel Aviv in the presence of football players and other celebrities.

Four months later, at the end of June 2002, UEFA decided on a sweeping ban of official international games in Israel, for security reasons. It should be noted that during these four months, additional terrorist attacks were committed in various parts of Israel. Some were significant in terms of their magnitude and impact. This was an extremely tense period when the IDF carried out widespread operations in Judea and Samaria. At this time UEFA's decision was accepted by Israeli actors as clear and legitimate. In its decision, UEFA clarified that it did not object to having games in Israel, as long as the rival team agreed and accepted responsibility for any possible outcome. Yet when European clubs expressed willingness, at least in the media, to come to Israel and compete against Maccabi Haifa in the prestigious Champions League, UEFA refused to grant its approval.

The first meeting between representatives from UEFA and the Israeli Football Association following the sweeping ban took place in Istanbul on 19 September 2002. The President of UEFA appointed two of his deputies as members of a special committee that would examine the situation in Israel and give its recommendations regarding continued activities. Gavri Levy, the Chairman of the Israeli Football Association, claims that as soon as the deputies (one from Spain and the other from Turkey) were appointed to the special committee, he realized that things were moving in the right direction, as both were personal friends of his (personal interview). That same day, a bomb exploded on a bus in Tel Aviv, which delayed the delegation's arrival and posed new obstacles.

In 2003 a number of discussions took place in UEFA on the issue of games in Israel, and despite the improved security situation in Israel their previous decision was not reversed. The turning point began with the arrival of Joseph Blatter, FIFA President (superior to UEFA in the hierarchy), in Israel, in June 2003. During his visit to the Israeli Football Association's 75th anniversary celebrations, the President announced that in the World Championship preliminaries, which were to take place in 2004, Israel would play on its home field. As the date approached, FIFA sent UEFA the message that it should be prepared to allow games to resume in Israel. Gerhard Eigner, UEFA President, was not a great sympathizer of Israel, as Gavri Levy, who attended numerous of meetings with him, testifies (personal interview). Eigner's replacement by Morten Olsen, the new President of the organization, removed the final hurdle, and the games were allowed to resume in Israel.

During the interview with Gavri Levy, he summarized the factors that allowed the games to resume in Israel. The two members appointed to the special committee helped. Blatter's statement was crucial. The replacement of President Eigner facilitated the decision, as did the political influence of a number of Israeli ministers (including Silvan Shalom and Tzahi Hanegbi) (personal interview).

It should be noted that the renewal of games in Israel was under the provision that UEFA could reverse the decision at any given time, and that the games take place only in the Tel Aviv region. Paradoxically, it was the attack in the heart of Tel Aviv that had triggered the situation.

Basketball

Israel continued to host international basketball games as scheduled, including the Final Four, the biggest event of the European Champion's League, the Euroleague, which took place in Tel Aviv in 2004. The accord between the Euroleague President and Maccabi Tel Aviv management to host the Final Four in Tel Aviv was signed two hours after a suicide bomb exploded in Jerusalem on 29 January. The enormous difference between the football and basketball organizations regarding this issue is apparent. The accord between Maccabi and the Euroleague included a clause stating that the event would be cancelled only under extremely unusual circumstances.

Throughout the entire period, very few incidents in which European basketball organizations or teams objected to coming to play in Israel were recorded. In April 2002, following several terrorist attacks and the widespread IDF operation in Judea and Samaria, the Turkish team Ulker announced that it would not come to play in Israel. The Euroleague management's response was decisive and the Turkish team was reprimanded for their absence with a technical defeat and a monetary fine.

Jeljenik Belgrade's announcement that it had no intention of coming to Israel to play against Hapoel Jerusalem encouraged Valencia's managers, who led the strongest campaign against permitting Israel to host games during times of terrorism, to put into question whether the Final Four would take place in Tel

Aviv.²⁹ Valencia's objection to coming to Israel to play against Maccabi Tel Aviv followed the assassination of Hamas leader, Ahmad Yassin in March 2003. The team's coach called a press meeting where he announced that the team would not play in Tel Aviv. Interestingly, the announcement was released not by the management, but by the coach. Considering the fact that Valencia had lost in the previous game to Maccabi and an additional defeat would take it out of the competition, Maccabi Tel Aviv's claims that Valencia was taking advantage of the situation in order to try and gain an edge over its rival were reasonable. This claim was supported by the fact that two weeks prior to Valencia's announcement a major attack occurred in Spain that claimed the lives of 200 victims. Thus, Valencia's argument that it feared coming to Israel lacked credibility.

At the same time as Valencia released its announcement, protests were being voiced by fans across the continent against conducting the Final Four in Tel Aviv. Many stated they would not come to Tel Aviv, and mentioned that in another branch, football, games in Israel had been banned for two years (Omer Benovich, personal interview). Protests by fans and pressure applied by Valencia in an attempt to turn its specific case into a general issue (hosting the Final Four) led the Euroleague President to call an urgent meeting of the management board.

Accusations were made against Valencia, and the Israeli Minister of Sport, Limor Livnat, claimed that the newly elected government of Spain, which favoured new policies (in support of taking troops out of Iraq for example), was behind Valencia's attempt to prevent Israel hosting the games. The management board scheduled further discussions to take place in March 2003. The campaign succeeded and the Final Four remained in Tel Aviv. In order to understand the vast difference between UEFA, the football associations, and the basketball associations regarding their position on games taking place in Israel, two explanations have been suggested. The first is that Maccabi Tel Aviv had a top position in European basketball for a number of decades, and a reputation as one of the best teams in Europe.³⁰ In recent years, Maccabi Tel Aviv has attracted more fans to its games than any other team, which gives it important economic leverage in the Euroleague. The second, and perhaps more significant explanation, is the position Maccabi Tel Aviv's Chairman, Shimon Mizrachi, enjoys among European basketball institutions. Mizrachi is considered on the continent as one of the leading figures in basketball, having close personal ties with the heads of associations across the world (Benovich, personal interview). He has been credited with impressive achievements over the years – such as hosting the Final Four in Tel Aviv in 2004 despite the threat of terrorist attacks. He has had impressive personal success as well.

The above examination demonstrates that in regard to conducting sports events in Israel during times of terror, the perceptions and attitudes of the various international sport associations are clearly inconsistent.

In general it can be concluded that during the time of terror under discussion, some ruling bodies of sport – football, as well as volleyball and handball – prohibited foreign teams from coming to Israel for security reasons, while other

sporting bodies – basketball as well as tennis – reprimanded teams that refused to play in Israel.³¹

Undoubtedly this situation is problematic and raises many questions in regards to decision making and considerations on the part of international sports organizations in terms of whether to permit or prohibit sport competitions at a given time and in a given place.

In light of the difficulty in defining terrorism and assessing its impact, it is not surprising that no organization has a precise definition, or clear red lines, which could regulate the permission or prohibition of games during times of terror. For this reason, each organization and its heads enjoys the liberty of weighing their own considerations, employing strategies, and making decisions. As a result, 'contacts' and interpersonal relations end up playing an important role.

Discussion and conclusions

An examination of the events and information provided in personal interviews indicates that sports associations fail to define terrorism and the conditions under which competitions must be banned. Not surprisingly, sports organizations are not interested in defining the term 'terrorism' or assessing its impact on sport. In terms of precise regulations regarding the prohibition of games as a result of terrorist acts, organizations have no preliminary definitions, for it is virtually impossible to determine which attack is more severe – should it be judged according to the number of casualties, or the size of the bomb? Even then, who can assess the exact outcome of the attack?

However, on the other hand the lack of clear definitions leads to subjective decision making. The practical interpretation, at the end of the day, lies in the hands of a few individuals who determine, often arbitrarily, where competitions can and cannot take place. Indeed, when the decisions are examined, the gap that exists between the various associations is apparent. For the decisive majority of the period of terrorism under discussion, sports events were permitted to take place in basketball and tennis, while competitions in other branches were completely banned. Moreover, theoretically, an absurd situation could have occurred where two teams from the same city in Europe refused to come to Israel, but since one was a basketball team it would have been reprimanded, while the other, because it was a football team, would have been validated.

International sports associations cling to their independence, which is another contributing factor in determining which games are to take place in a certain country. Each association makes its own decisions independently of others, and there is absolutely no cooperation among them when dealing with the global problem of terrorism.

Another explanation for the differences among the various associations regarding games taking place in Israel or anywhere else could be the weight of the branches of sport or their teams on the world map. Based on process sociology, we suggested that in order to understand this one has to pay particular attention to a complex number of interests as well as to processes that are not isolated but

rather interdependent, and therefore of importance when discussing the complexity of relations.

Significant or successful actors who are received with enthusiasm and generate large revenues might play an important role in keeping sport events going, regardless of terrorist threats. With other teams or branches where achievements and popularity are insignificant, consideration of problems revolving around terrorist threats is more limited. This factor is interconnected to another significant factor that is repeatedly raised as an explanation for the differences between the various sport branches – the interpersonal element. Heads of successful sport teams, organizations, or branches often enjoy closer relations with decision makers in the sport governing bodies as well as with politicians. In situations where detentions and decision making suffer from ambiguity, these social networks have a decisive effect on the final outcome, and especially on the decision whether or not the games must go on.

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Notes

1. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).
2. Boaz Ganor, “Conceptual Problems in Defining Terrorism” [in Hebrew], *Nativ* 68, no. 3 (1999): 20–29.
3. Ibid.; Yehezkel Dror, *Medinot Metorafot* (Tel Aviv: Marachot, 1972).
4. Amos Yadlin, “The Problems in Defining Terror” [in Hebrew], in *Aspects of Terror and Counter-Terror*, ed. Ezra Aidan (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 2004), 7–16.
5. Ganor, “Conceptual Problems.”
6. Tracy Taylor and Kristine Toohey, “Perceptions of Terrorism Threats at the 2004 Olympic Games: Implications for Sport Events,” *Journal of Sport and Tourism* 12, no. 2 (2007): 99–114; Bernd Wedemeyer, “Sport and Terrorism,” in *International Politics of Sport in The 20th Century*, ed. Jim Riordan and Arnd Kruger (New York: Routledge, 1999), 217–31.
7. Warren, A. Whisenant, “Using Biometrics for Sport Management in a Post 9/11 Era,” *Facilities* 21, no. 5–6 (2003): 134–41.

8. Ibid.
9. Kristine Toohey, T. Taylor, and C. Lee, "The FIFA World Cup 2002: The Effects of Terrorism on Sport Tourists," *Journal of Sport Tourism* 8, no. 3 (2003), 167–85.
10. Michael Atkinson and Young Kevin, "Terror Games: Media Treatment of Security Issues at the 2002 Winter Olympic Games," *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 11 (2002): 53–78.
11. Tracy Taylor and Kristine Toohey, "Security, Perceived Safety and Event Attendee Enjoyment at the 2003 Rugby World Cup," *Tourism Review International* 11, no. 4 (2006): 257–67.
12. Kim Clark, "Targeting the Olympics," *US News and World Report* 136, no. 21 (2004): 34–6; Don Yaeger, "How Safe Will It Be?," *Sports Illustrated* 101, no. 4 (2004): 61.
13. Anna Haigh, "Terrorism vs. Sports," *US News and World Report* 136, no. 21 (2004): 40.
14. Yaeger, "How Safe."
15. Dan Gilgoff, "The Meaning of Munich," *US News and World Report* 136, no. 21 (2004): 39.
16. China has not detailed the exact costs of its security operations in the 2008 Olympics but state media reports in 2008 carried early estimates of about \$300 million, a fraction of the \$1.4 billion spent in Athens in 2004, the first post-9/11 Olympics. The cost in Beijing, where security forces receive much lower pay, was finally estimated in \$500 million; Clark, "Targeting the Olympics."
17. Yaeger, "How Safe."
18. Clark, "Targeting the Olympics."
19. Haigh, "Terrorism vs. Sports."
20. Gabi Weiman, "Theater of Terror: Democracy's Big Challenge," in *Terror* (see note 3), 17–39.
21. Ibid.
22. Holger Preuss, *The Economics of Staging the Olympics: A Comparison of the Games 1972–2008* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004).
23. Lloyd Wong and Ricardo Trumper, "Global Celebrity Athletes and Nationalism: Fútbol, Hockey, and the Representation of Nation," *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 26 (2002): 168–194.
24. Richard Pollard, "Worldwide Regional Variations in Home Advantage in Association Football," *Journal of Sports Sciences* 24, no. 3 (2006): 231–45.
25. Alan Nevill, N. Balmer, and A.M. Williams, "The Influence of Crowd Noise and Experience upon Refereeing Decisions in Football," *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* 3 (2002): 261–72.
26. Nick Neave and Sandy Wolfson, "Testosterone, Territoriality, and the 'Home Advantage,'" *Physiology and Behavior* 78 (2003): 269–75.
27. Nevertheless, some believe that this assumption underestimates two factors. First, such events are initiated by the local or state governments which have power and prestige to gain from the endeavour. Civilians benefit in the long run at best, and generally are not consulted regarding the nature or details of the event. Second, the civilian side usually ends up with more expenses than benefits or authority. The role of civilians is to be 'good hosts', which means they must produce the event and foot the bill. The role of the hosts is expressed informally: they are expected to provide work voluntarily and to serve as an audience – as ticket purchasers they end up funding the event. Even when local residents express a positive attitude towards the event taking place in their city, the heavy costs undoubtedly come out of their private pockets. Maurice Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2000).
28. Jay Coakley, *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversy* (New York: Mostby, 2009).

29. It should be noted that even earlier Israeli teams reluctantly hosted their games outside Israel throughout 2003. The reason was the war in Iraq and not local terrorism within the country's borders. In the Final Four of the Adriatic League (a small local league in which Macabbi Tel Aviv participated for a short while) the game was transferred from Tel Aviv to Ljubljana, following the war. It should be emphasized that the Euroleague in 2004, which Macabbi Tel Aviv struggled so hard to host, is nothing like the Adriatic Final Four in terms of the team levels, funds invested in the event, or prestige.
30. Michael Bar-Eli, Y. Galily, and A. Israeli, "Building and Maintaining Dominance: On the Strategic Similarities between Maccabi Tel Aviv BC and FC Bayern München," *European Journal for Sport and Society* 5, no. 1 (2008): 75–96.
31. The European Volleyball Federation was one of the first to prohibit official international games from taking place in Israel. The decision was made immediately following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The ban was supposed to have been enforced prior to this tragic event, but the 'fight' given by the Israeli Federation prevented its initiation. The account of the Israeli struggle during the first attempt made by the European Volleyball Federation to prevent games from taking place in Israel is illustrative of how arbitrarily and capriciously decisions which have significant athletic, economic, and political implications are made. The European Federation requested to ban official games from taking place in Israel because, as it claimed, the Foreign Ministry of Luxemburg, the location of the Federation's headquarters, released a warning to avoid travelling to Israel. Further inquiry with the Israeli Foreign Ministry and local contacts revealed otherwise (Jacob Shtofman, personal interview). Like the stance taken by basketball associations, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) also insisted that teams, including those that expressed discontent, should play in Israel. The Federation's regulations do not specify whether games should take place during times of terror, though the Chairman of the Israeli Tennis Federation, Ian Fruman, claims that from his knowledge of the figures involved in decision making, only an extreme situation would lead the ITF to ban games in a certain location and that interpersonal relations were significant in this context (personal interview). These differences even create in-between situations such as those that affect the education system, in which the Municipality of Jerusalem and the State of Israel are responsible for providing education services and education infrastructure in eastern Jerusalem, but in practice Israel's responsibility for the education system in that part of the city is limited.