

**Gender Goals: A Comparative Analysis of Attitudes Towards Men's and Women's
World Cup on Twitter**

Nousayba Fekhaoui

Onaedo Ilegbune

Northwestern University in Qatar

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Professor Claudia Kozman

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Abstract

This study explores the predominant attitudes towards the 2018 Men's World Cup and 2019 Women's World Cup on Twitter. Using content analysis, the study examines the most common themes and perspectives that emerged from tweets related to the two tournaments, with a particular focus on the role of gender in shaping people's attitudes and behaviors towards the events. The study has found that while both tournaments generated significant interest and engagement, the themes and perspectives that emerged were often different, reflecting the unique challenges and opportunities facing men's and women's football. The 2018 Men's World Cup was marked by national pride, tactics, and controversy, while themes of gender equality, advocacy, and success characterized the 2019 Women's World Cup.

Keywords: Men's World Cup, Women's World Cup, Twitter, Attitudes, Gender, Gender equality

Gender Goals: A Comparative Analysis of Attitudes Towards Men's and Women's World Cup on Twitter

Media have played a significant role in shaping perceptions of gender roles and expectations. Gender stereotypes have been reported to be reinforced through advertising, which frequently depicts women as objects or as having a lower status than males (O'Barr, 2006). Such representation affects consumers' media consumption and contributes to the objectification and sexualization of women in all areas. Women in sports have historically been underrepresented and undervalued in the sports sector compared to men's sports (Rasmussen et al. 2021). This study will examine how the World Cups for men and women differ in gender-related media consumption and advertising. For instance, advertising reinforces gender stereotypes by depicting women as objects or having a lower status than males. The significance of this study is multifold. Firstly, the research proposal provides a platform for exploring and understanding people's attitudes towards men's and women's world cup on Twitter. It is essential to understand how people perceive and discuss these events, as it can impact the overall success and popularity of the event. Secondly, this study can contribute to developing gender equality in sports. By analyzing and comparing the attitudes towards the two events, the research can identify any disparities or biases towards either gender. The study's findings can be used to promote gender equality in sports and increase the visibility and popularity of women's sports events. This research can also provide valuable insights into marketing and branding strategies for sports events. By understanding the themes and topics discussed in the tweets, event organizers can tailor their marketing and branding efforts to appeal to the target audience and increase the event's popularity.

The importance of this proposed study comes in its ability to provide light on gender inequalities in sports media, particularly in relation to the Women's World Cup and the Men's World Cup (Billings & Eastman, 2002). Scholars, policymakers, and practitioners have expressed concern about the issue of gender representation in sports. The perceived lack of interest from the general public has been blamed for the underrepresentation of women's sports, which is further supported by the meager advertising budget devoted to women's sporting events (Cooky et al., 2015). By shedding light on gender inequalities in sports media, this research can contribute to addressing the issue of gender representation in sports and increasing the popularity and visibility of women's sports events.

Literature review:

Women's sports activities frequently receive less funding than males (Duncan et al. 2005). Therefore this underrepresentation extends beyond media attention (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2018). Budgetary restrictions may substantially impact how women's sporting events are advertised and promoted, which may impact how often women's sporting events are covered in the media (Bishop, 2003). Football is undoubtedly the most popular sport globally, with an estimated 4 billion fans. The FIFA World Cup is the most-watched and celebrated event in football, with billions of viewers tuning in every four years. The men's World Cup has been held since 1930, while the women's tournament began in 1991. Though both events share the same name, there are significant differences in how they are perceived, marketed, and covered by the media. This literature review explores the existing literature on attitudes toward the Women's World Cup and compares them to the Men's World Cup.

The Women's World Cup started in 1991 and has been held every four years since then. Despite this, the event has received a different coverage and recognition than the Men's World

Cup. Several studies have shown that the media coverage of women's sports is significantly less than that of men's sports, and the Women's World Cup is no exception (Petty & Pope, 2019). A USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism study found that women's sports received only 3.2% of ESPN's total airtime in 2014 (Medzerian, 2018). Moreover, there is a significant pay gap between male and female football players. According to FIFA's financial report for 2018, the Men's World Cup prize was \$400 million, while the Women's World Cup had total prize money of \$30 million (FIFA, 2018). This disparity has led to several controversies and protests by female football players and their supporters.

Historically, men's football has overshadowed women's football in popularity and coverage. Women's football is often seen as less entertaining and skillful than men's (Kane & Maxwell, 2011). The study found that many believe women's football is slower, less aggressive, and less tactical than men's. Media coverage of the Women's World Cup has also been discussed in recent years. Studies have shown that women's sports receive less coverage than men's, which is valid for football. Women's football received only 2.8% of network news coverage of sports, compared to 81.1% for men's football (Billings & Eastman, 2002). This lack of coverage significantly impacts the Women's World Cup's popularity, as fewer people are exposed to the tournament and its players (Giatsis, 2022). Attitudes toward the Women's World Cup are complex and multifaceted. While some view the tournament as an important event that deserves recognition and respect, others dismiss it as unimportant or dull. Men were less likely to be interested in women's football than women, and men who were interested in football had a more negative attitude towards women's football than women who were interested in football (Wann et al., 2001). This suggests that gender plays a role in attitudes towards the Women's World Cup, with men generally less interested and more negative than women. The Men's World Cup, on the

other hand, is considered the most significant event in football. It receives extensive media coverage, and the prize money for the event is significantly higher than that of the Women's World Cup. The Men's World Cup has also been a platform for several social and political issues. For instance, in the 2018 World Cup held in Russia, several players used the tournament to express their displeasure over political issues in their countries.

In contrast, the Women's World Cup is seen as a secondary event, with fewer people watching and less media coverage. This perception impacts how the two tournaments are marketed and promoted, with the Men's World Cup receiving much more attention and resources. The promotion and attitudes towards the Women's and Men's World Cup have vastly differed. The US Federation used Twitter to promote the Women's World Cup, which was held in Germany. The study found that the US Federation used Twitter to engage with fans, promote games, and create excitement around the event (Coche, 2016). The promotion and attitudes toward the Men's World Cup have centered on masculinity, power, and strength. The Men's World Cup is seen as the pinnacle of football, and players are often seen as heroes to their nations. The media coverage of the Men's World Cup is much more extensive than the Women's World Cup. The World Cup is one of many events where this takes place, a study conducted by Greer, Hardin, and Homan aimed to understand the different viewing attitudes towards women in sports versus male sports. The authors analyzed the visual production of men's and women's track and field coverage during the 2004 Olympics to investigate how gender influences media coverage. The study found that men's events were shown more frequently and for more extended periods than women's events (Greer et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the camera angles and close-ups used during men's events were more dynamic and exciting than those used during women's events (Smith, 2016). This suggests that

women's sporting events are viewed as less exciting and engaging than men's. The authors argue that these visual production choices perpetuate gender stereotypes and contribute to the under-representation of women in sports. By treating women's sports as less exciting, media organizations reinforce the idea that women's athleticism is not as valuable as men's. The study will try to answer and delve into the following questions:

RQ1) What are the predominant attitudes and behaviors towards the Men's and Women's World Cup on Twitter?

RQ2) Does the gender of the person tweeting relate to their attitudes towards both the Women's and Men's World Cup?

Methodology

The methodology for this research is a qualitative method and will be based on content analysis of a social media platform, Twitter. The choice of Twitter as our platform is to get people's reactions and points of view on our topic. This research investigates the differences in attitudes and themes related to gender in the context of the Women's World Cup and Men's World Cup and the traffic associated with each event.

Design

The design of this study will be a content analysis of attitudes towards the men's World Cup versus the Women's World Cup and the public's perception expressed through Twitter. The first step in this research is data collection which will be done by scraping 80 tweets from Twitter, 40 tweets for each keyword. For our analysis, we will use Twitter's Advanced Search to retrieve tweets that contain the keywords "men's world cup" and "Women's World Cup."

Time frame

As the current period of the FIFA world cup has not finished, we have decided to analyze the previous games, MWC Russia 2018 and WWC France 2019. The data collection for this study will cover the period from a year before each of the games began until the day after the conclusion of the games WWC- 7th June 2019 to 8th July 2019. MWC- 14th June 2018, till July 16th, 2018.

Sample

The sample for this research proposal is 80 tweets which will be collected using a random sampling method and that contain the keywords "men's world Cup" and "women's world Cup." The sample will be collected within the specified time frame, and the content will be analyzed to determine attitudes toward the two events.

Variables

Our primary variable for this research is the type of tournament, whether it is Men's World Cup or the Women's World Cup. Our second variable would be attitudes and behaviors toward the event. Our final variable is gender, whether gender affects behaviors and attitudes towards events.

Findings

MWC- 14th June 2018, till July 16th, 2018

“World Cup” search results during the Men’s World Cup period

After searching the “World Cup” as a keyword on Twitter, results have shown that most tweets for the World Cup didn't refer to the women's World Cup at all. Still, rather than discussing the performance of athletes, 90% of the tweets only focused on players and the teams and how well or poorly they played, disregarding all other issues outside the games themselves.

To answer our first research question, unlike the “Men’s World Cup” search, there is no talking about the women’s world Cup, and it's only about the World Cup, which also refers to the men’s world cup, and the hype is about the games and the players themselves. Based on a keyword search of "World Cup" on Twitter, we have identified several themes. The focus is on men's football, The World Cup is traditionally associated with men's football, and this is reflected in the conversations on Twitter. Most tweets are about the men's World Cup, with a minimal discussion about the women's World Cup.

The hype around the game and players

Moreover, there is a lot of hype around the games and players, excitement, and enthusiasm around the World Cup games and the players. Fans are actively discussing the matches, the scores, the goals, and the performances of individual players. This shows that the World Cup is not just a sporting event but also a cultural phenomenon that generates a lot of passion and interest. A central theme that we have extracted from our analysis is nationalism and pride, both terms are a big part of the games, and the World Cup is also a platform for national pride and identity.

National pride & patriotism:

This is a common theme in conversations about the World Cup on Twitter, as fans express support for their country's team. We have noticed that fans are expressing their support for their national teams, and there is a lot of discussion about the cultural and social significance of the tournament. In addition, there was a lot of conversation and competition to prove how each person is proud of their country and their team regardless of how they performed, just to show that they support their national team no matter what happens. We have also noticed that, unlike the previous search about the Men's World Cup, where there is very little discussion about

gender issues related to the World Cup. This indicates that the tournament is still largely seen as a male-dominated event, and there is little consideration given to the women's game. The World Cup is a highly competitive tournament with a lot of focus on the winning and losing teams. Fans are discussing the strategies and tactics of the teams, and there is a lot of analysis of the results and outcomes of the matches. Overall, these themes suggest that the World Cup is a highly popular and engaging event on Twitter. However, it is still primarily seen as a male-dominated competition, with little attention given to the women's game.

Star players

Fans often discuss star players, such as Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo, and their performance during the World Cup. This reflects the importance of individual players in soccer and the role they play in shaping the narrative of the tournament.

Global reach: The World Cup is a truly global event, reflected in the diversity of languages and nationalities represented in the conversation on Twitter. Fans from all over the world can come together to discuss the tournament and their respective teams.

Lastly, after our in-depth analysis of the tweets, we have come up with a conclusion; the reason why there isn't much discussion of gender or gender issues in the context of the World Cup is that the focus is primarily on the sport and the tournament itself rather than broader social gender-related issues, even for women who mentioned the gender discrimination in other contexts only focused on the games. During the World Cup, people tend to show strong support for their national teams and show their national identity, they tend to display strong emotional reactions to the outcomes of World Cup matches, expressing joy or disappointment and sharing their thoughts with others. Therefore, since the World Cup is a highly competitive event, we have

noticed that people tend to forget all the issues and only focus on the games and what happens within them.

“Men’s World Cup” search results during the Men’s World Cup period

To answer our second research question, we have noticed that men tend to be more negative regarding the women’s world cup. On the other hand, women tended to talk more about women’s issues when mentioning the men’s world cup. The analysis of tweets using the keyword "the men's World Cup" reveals three main themes related to the women's World Cup mainly. However, is Men’s World Cup: the pay gap, inequality, gender discrimination, and sexism. Most tweets that discuss the bias surrounding the term "The World Cup" being used exclusively for the men's tournament also express frustration and concern about the unequal treatment of women's sports.

Pay gap

Firstly, many Twitter users discussed the pay gap between male and female athletes, specifically in the context of the World Cup. They argue that female players deserve the same pay and recognition as male players, as they train just as hard and put in the same amount of effort into their sports. There are a lot of debates and tense discussions on how female athletes deserve to be compensated and recognized for their achievements, hard work, and talent.

Inequality

The analysis of tweets also reveals that many users believe there is still inequality between men's and women's sports. They argue that the men's World Cup receives more coverage, recognition, and funding than the women's, although both tournaments showcase world-class athletes and competition. Twitter users express their frustration and disappointment that women's sports are not given equal recognition and respect as male sports.

Gender discrimination

Many tweets also highlight the issue of gender discrimination in sports, specifically concerning the World Cup. They argue that the lack of recognition and coverage for women's sports reflects the larger societal and cultural norms that prioritize men's sports over women's sports. Twitter users call for a change in how sports are viewed and valued, with equal recognition and respect given to both men's and women's sports. The findings from the analysis of tweets about the bias surrounding the term "The World Cup" reflect the ongoing conversation about gender inequality in sports. While it is true that the men's World Cup has a long history and a larger audience, it is essential to acknowledge and give equal importance to the women's World Cup.

Sexism

Finally, many tweets while searching for the "Men's World Cup" discuss the sexism issue and how the world is unconsciously showing more excitement for the Men's world cup than the female's world cup, which discourages the female's trust in themselves and affects their performance. The linguistic bias surrounding the term "The World Cup" is just one example of how male sports are often given more recognition and importance than female sports. The bias reflected in the tweets results from the larger societal and cultural norms prioritizing men's sports over women's sports. It is crucial to address this bias to promote gender equality in sports and to give women's sports the recognition they deserve. One way to do this is to use gender-neutral terms such as "FIFA World Cup" or "International World Cup" to refer to men's and women's tournaments or call the men's world cup by its name and not "The World Cup."

Men's World Cup is referred to as "The World Cup," regardless of the continuous rise and improvements, efforts, and performances of women in the Women's World Cup. It is still not

getting equal attention, hype, and merit as the Men's World Cup. In Twitter specifically, some tweets using "the Men's World Cup" also compared the performance, skills, and salaries of male and female players, highlighting the gender gap and inequality in football. These findings show that football fans have diverse and complex attitudes toward men's and women's World Cups that reflect their social identities, values, and preferences. The analysis of tweets using the keyword "The men's world cup" reveals that most tweets discuss the bias surrounding the term "The World Cup" used exclusively for the men's tournament. Many Twitter users express frustration over neglecting the women's World Cup, often called "The Women's World Cup" or "The Female World Cup." This linguistic bias is perceived as a reflection of gender inequality and reinforces the idea that male sports are given more importance and recognition than female sports.

WWC- 7th June 2019 till 8th July 2019

From what we have researched, the 2019 Women's world cup sparked a broader conversation about gender inequality in sports, with many fans and advocates using Twitter to raise awareness and demand greater recognition and support for women's soccer. There was also a lot of excitement around the performances of individual players and teams, with the United States women's team winning the tournament and dominating much of the Twitter conversation. There was also a lot of discourse surrounding the behavior of the women's world cup players, particularly the American team. Many Twitter users reacted negatively to the team celebrations, calling it over the top and unsportsmanlike.

“Women’s World Cup” & “World Cup” search results during the Women’s World Cup period

There was very little difference between searching “World Cup” and “Women’s World Cup” in the time period from the 7th of June 2019 till the 8th of July. From the sample for this search, all the tweets referred to Women only. The analysis of tweets revealed multiple themes that can be compressed into 2 main categories; Sexism in Sports and Player Behaviour. Several tweets found discussed the Pay gap between the women's world cup winner and men's Cup winner as well as the inadequate media coverage.

Sexism in Sports

Twitter users frequently discussed instances of sexism in sports related to the Women's World Cup, with many tweets highlighting issues such as unequal pay and inadequate media coverage. The tweets expressed calls for gender equality in sports, emphasizing the importance of providing women athletes equal pay and opportunities to compete on an equal footing with male athletes in the World Cup. The main example given was the fact that the Women's world cup winners made a lot less than the men's world cup winners, 30 million in comparison to the 400 million dollars that the Men's world cup winners made. Criticisms were also directed at FIFA and other sports organizations for their lack of action and support for women's soccer, highlighting the need for greater attention and investment in promoting gender equity in sports.

Another example of sexism in sports that was highlighted through tweets was the attitudes of many men toward the Women's world cup. Although there were a significant number of tweets expressing support and appreciation for the Women's World Cup, with male Twitter users praising the skill and athleticism of the women athletes and expressing enthusiasm for the tournament, men made the most negative/ trolling comments. Many also expressed their thoughts

on watching the Women's world cup and how they either didn't know it was happening or had no interest in it.

Player Performances and Behaviours

Although a majority of tweets that were found contained " World Cup " discussed issues more related to gender, several also mentioned the actual games and players. There was a lot of praise for players who scored important goals, made key assists, or demonstrated exceptional skill and athleticism on the field. There was also criticism for poor performances. Some tweets criticized players who underperformed or made costly mistakes during the tournament. Fans expressed frustration with players who missed opportunities or failed to reach their potential. The Women's World Cup 2019 may have also generated controversies about player behavior, such as unsportsmanlike conduct, diving, or verbal altercations on the field. All the tweets in the sample relating to player behavior were directed toward the US women's World Cup team about their attitude on the pitch. Several players were labeled unsportsmanlike as they celebrated goals.

Discussion

Starting with the 2018 Men's World Cup, it is clear that the tournament generated a significant amount of interest and engagement on Twitter. One of the most prominent themes that emerged was national pride and patriotism, with fans worldwide expressing their support and enthusiasm for their respective teams. There was also significant discussion and debate around the tactics and strategies employed by different teams, as well as the performance of individual players. Turning to the 2019 Women's World Cup, there was a clear shift in attitudes and perspectives compared to the men's tournament. One of the essential themes was gender equality and the role of women in sports, with fans and commentators expressing their support for women's soccer and advocating for greater investment and support for women's sports in general.

There was also significant discussion around issues such as pay equity, media representation, and sexism in soccer. Another prominent theme was the performance and success of the United States women's soccer team, who won the tournament and generated significant excitement and pride among American fans and garnered anger from other countries' fans as they were called unsportsmanlike. Despite the positive attitudes towards the Women's World Cup, there were also significant challenges and controversies, particularly around the relative quality and competitiveness of women's soccer, with some people questioning whether the Women's World Cup was as exciting or competitive as the Men's World Cup.

As previous literature states, women's sports have traditionally been given less investment, attention, and support than men's, leading to a disparity in resources and opportunities (Cooky et al., 2015). This lack of investment and support has led to lower levels of interest and engagement in women's sports, as well as perceptions of women's sports being less exciting or less competitive than men's sports. This context explains why women are generally more likely to be interested in the Women's World Cup than men, as they may have a greater appreciation for the challenges and barriers facing women athletes in sports. At the same time, men may be more likely to be interested in the Men's World Cup, as they may have been socialized to see sports as a central aspect of their masculinity and identity. The results of our research have shown that this is true. Most people tweeting about the Women's World Cup and gender issues regarding the world cup were other women. Although several men supported the notions, all the negative tweets about the lack of interest in the women's world cup came from men discussing their views. Our study shows a growing awareness and advocacy for gender equity in sports. This has increased investment, attention, and support for women's sports, including the Women's World Cup. This increased focus on women's sports may lead to greater

interest and engagement from both men and women, as well as more positive attitudes towards women's sports and the Women's World Cup, specifically from all genders. However, most antagonization towards it comes from men.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our study revealed a significant bias in how "The World Cup" is used exclusively for the men's tournament, neglecting the women's World Cup. This linguistic bias reflects the larger societal and cultural norms that prioritize men's sports over women's sports. To promote gender equality in sports, it is important to address this bias and give equal recognition and importance to both men's and women's sports. Our research showed that the 2019 Women's World Cup sparked a larger discourse about gender inequality in sports, with many fans and supporters using Twitter to raise awareness and demand more support for women's soccer. The US women's team dominated Twitter with joy about their performances. Another conclusion we came up with is that women are more interested in the Women's World Cup than men because women's sports receive less funding and support. However, gender equity in sports has increased investment, attention, and support for women's sports, including the Women's World Cup. This increased attention on women's sports may enhance interest and engagement from both men and women, resulting in more positive sentiments regarding women's sports and the Women's World Cup, especially from women, although men criticize it most.

The study's findings can help raise awareness about the gender disparities and biases in sports and the media coverage of sports events. This information can be used to develop educational campaigns and initiatives to address these issues and promote gender equality in sports. By understanding the themes and topics discussed by different demographics on social

media, sports organizations and marketers can develop targeted marketing and branding strategies that appeal to underrepresented groups, such as women and girls.


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Appendix

Sample Tweets from the Men's World Cup

 **James El Crack** 🌟 @neztthedude · Jun 27, 2018 ...


They said 'fifa world cup' not 'fifa women's world cup'. Mia hamm obviously didn't play with men. I'm all for equality, but trying to make fox's tweet in to something it's not is just buffoonery.

1 1 34

 @waddlesyo · Jun 27, 2018


So call it the FIFA men's World Cup. It's not difficult.

7 108

 **Mona Eltahawy** ✓ @monaeltahawy

THANK YOU all who watched this men's #WorldCup with me on this TwitterLand! It has been a brilliant ride and I have loved hearing from you from all over the world. I have been especially glad and made room for women's opinions on men's football. We own this space too.

11:20 PM · Jul 15, 2018

 **Kim Hillier** @KimmyHillier ...

Men's World Cup soccer would be so much more fun to watch if all of these guys didn't flop so much. You watch Women's World Cup and you don't see an ounce of flopping... 🙄 hmm

... i, 2018

 **mando's love interest** @rzaha_ ...

hi if ur a soccer fan who only watches the men's world cup and skips out on the women's world cup then ur sexist and also not a real soccer fan

11:03 PM · Jul 15, 2018

 **mando's love interest** @rzaha_ · Jul 15, 2018 ...

the women's world cup also happens every four years! the 2019 one is going to be in france.


women's professional sports aren't taken seriously by the general public (@ men) so it's on us to change that by supporting them

1 12

 **mando's love interest** @rzaha_ · Jul 15, 2018 ...

also if ur still calling the tournaments "the world cup" and "the women's world cup" then don't even talk to me and consider us unfriended. call each of them by the gender of their players or don't call either of them by that. i'm not here for this inequity in tournament names

8

 **lyder sagen** @Lyderhorn73 · Aug 8, 2018 ...

And the the men's world cup bring in about 100 times as much money as the womens.

 **Hannah** @hskettler · Jul 15, 2018 ...

As we enjoy the **Men's World Cup**, let us remember the Womens **World Cup** this Summer, and how little these athletes get paid compared to the men footballers.

8

Sample Tweets from the Women's World Cup



Faith @RoseOfWindsong · Jul 8, 2019

Wow, the Women's **World Cup** was so exciting! Now I'm super psyched for the Men's **World Cup** so I can cheer on America as we fail to qualify!

4

1

28



ᄁᄁᄁᄁᄁᄁᄁᄁ @OcCalvin · Jul 4, 2019

I don't mean to be controversial but the USWNT should be paid triple the men get until they can make it to the **World Cup**

1

2

11



jamie. @j_mee949 · Jul 4, 2019

can the media stop calling everything the USWNT does distasteful??
what's distasteful is that they don't get paid as much as men who can't even qualify for the **world cup** lmao

1

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20



Dan Liebke @LiebCricket · Jul 6, 2019

England, showing how a number one team should behave in a **World Cup**. Even if it means losing the number one ranking in the process.

1

2

20



[Show this thread](#)



Bo
@Bo10221616

I didn't know there was a girls World Cup until today either. And I'm proud as hell too tell everyone that I never have and never will watch a second of soccer

2:55 AM · Jul 8, 2019



David Berri @wagesofwins · Jul 7, 2019

Tomorrow we have the **Women's World Cup** final.
We have the USA Softball International Cup final.
And we have four WNBA games.
You can watch **women** do amazing things in sports all day on Sunday.

5

227

1,305



Katie S. @KatieSimons24 · Jul 6, 2019

The **Women's World Cup** should have it's own day. That's the point people are trying to make. Cause it's a **World Cup** Final. End tweet. Thanks for coming to my TED Talk.