



***Soft Power Strategies through Sports:
An analysis of peoples' perception about the 2022 FIFA
World Cup Qatar™***

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Table of Contents

About the Authors	1
Acknowledgment	3
1 Introduction.....	4
2 Historical Landscape	6
2.1 Qatar's Foreign Policy.....	6
2.2 Bidding & Awarding Overview of 2022 FIFA World Cup™	7
3 Managerial Theory	12
3.1 Introduction of Soft Power.....	12
3.1.1 Soft Power Definition	13
3.1.2 History of Soft Power in Sports.....	14
3.1.3 The Importance of Soft Power Today	15
3.1.4 Soft Power in Political Context	15
3.2 Soft Power & Transformational Leadership.....	16
3.3 Soft Power in Qatar: Literature Review.....	16
3.3.1 Qatar	17
3.3.2 Major Sport Events hosted in Qatar	18
3.3.3 Main themes in Qatar's Soft Power Strategy Concerning Sport	20
3.3.4 Exhibition of Qatar's Supremacies as a Microstate.....	20
3.3.5 Technological innovation	21
3.3.6 Peace, Security & Integrity.....	22
3.3.7 National Health Issues	23
3.4 Soft Disempowerment in Qatar	24
3.5 Investigations of May 27 th 2015.....	26
3.6 Media Coverage Overview	27
3.6.1 Human Rights Issues	30
3.6.2 Corruption Controversies	31
3.6.3 Local Climate	32
3.6.4 Cultural and Political Issues	33
3.7 Media Overview Conclusion	37
4 Methodology	37
4.1 About the Questionnaire	37
4.2 Limitations.....	39
4.3 Potential Bias	39
4.4 Interviews.....	41
5 Survey Analysis	41
5.1 Demographics.....	42
5.2 Interest in football and interest in the FIFA World Cup	43
5.3 Opinion about Qatar.....	43
5.4 Change of perception	47
5.5 Analysis of perceptions comparing (Football Fans vs. Non-Football Fans)	47
5.6 Correlation? - Likeability of FIFA as an organization and Qatar as a country	51



5.7	Likeability of FIFA and Qatar amongst different groups	52
5.8	Weather and the change of schedule	53
5.8.1	Consistency amongst the GCC	54
5.9	Outcome	54
6	Recommendations	56
7	Research Impact.....	56
8	Future Studies	57
9	Conclusion	57
	Abbreviations	61
	Index of Tables and Figures.....	62
	Bibliography	63
	Annex	68
	Total Word Count	68
	Interviews	68
	Survey.....	73



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1 Introduction

After the unexpected winning of Qatar's bid for the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ on December 2nd 2010, the world turned its attention to the exotic outsider, becoming the first Middle Eastern country to ever host the prestigious football World Cup.¹ The hosting of sport mega-events brings with it unprecedented global media attention, however the problem with global media is that it is impossible to control or manage, and it is not always positive factors that are pictured to the world about the hosting nations. The diverging trend from the traditional European or Western capitalist states toward the emerging and non-traditional democratic states has brought media to talk about issues such as: human rights issues, labor reform, democratic deficits, corruption and cultural boundaries. Qatar's international soft power has perhaps been endorsed to the premier degree by Qatar's acquisition of the 2022 FIFA World Cup™, and, more recently, damaged by its controversial issues surrounding migrant workers.²

Qatar's global media coverage on the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ is under absolute scrutiny, the opposite of what the small country has been trying to transmit. Recent media reports on Qatar's construction sector working conditions mainly for the World Cup have been the contrary of what the Qatari Authorities are aiming for. The goal of Qatari Authorities is to directly manage how the Qatar profile is portrayed and understood internationally.³ The main challenge perceived by the Qatari Tourist Development is to differentiate between the socio-political environment of the Middle East from Qatar. Consequently, the strategy used by Qatari authority is based on soft power tools to use sport mega-events to correct the negative aspects of their international image by showcasing itself as a sport-loving peaceful state.⁴

¹ Scharfenort, N. (2012). Urban Development and Social Change in Qatar: The Qatar National Vision 2030 and the 2022 FIFA World Cup. *Journal of Arabian Studies*, 2(2), pp.209-230.

² Brannagan, P. and Mubanga, I. (2015). *Qatar: A First-Hand Account of Soft Power*. [online] E-International Relations. Available at: <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/03/20/the-state-of-qatar-a-first-hand-account-of-soft-power/>

³ (Brannagan, P. and Giulianotti, R. (2014). Soft power and soft disempowerment: Qatar, global sport and football's 2022 World Cup finals. *Leisure Studies*, pp.1-17.

⁴ Brannagan, P. and Grix, J. (2015). *Qatar's Soft Power Gamble: The FIFA World Cup 2022*. [online] E-International Relations. Available at: <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/01/18/qatars-soft-power-gamble-the-fifa-world-cup-2022/>



Given the media coverage on the award of the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ to the Middle East there is a great attention on the topic world-wide. Although Qatar's international awareness is huge, its perception it is not the most positive. From this reflection the authors have discovered a potential difference in perception from the Middle East and the Western World. To analyze the hypothesis the writers designed a survey to test this possible difference and from there they drew the research findings and conclusion.

The diversified backgrounds of the authors have played an important role in the research and writing the paper. Two of the authors are Arabic native speakers who facilitated the interviews and survey analysis from the Middle East audience. One member comes from a media background and was able to link all the news related to the topic. Another member with management background drew on the managerial theory of soft power. One member with design thinking background was able to draw on the analysis of the findings. In addition, three of the authors have experience with national football federations from three different continents. Along with support from the Supreme Committee of Qatar, and the tutor whom strategically fit on to the topic of this paper. This research would have not been possible without the exclusive formation of this group.

This paper focuses on the ways in which Qatar has been involved in this reality of major sports events. Specific consideration is given to how the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ is being used as a strategy to improve the country's image perception worldwide as a well as power position internationally through what is called soft power. First the authors introduce the key concepts of Qatar's foreign policy to give a background overview of the small Middle Eastern country. Secondly, the authors analyze the media perception between the Middle East and the Western World of the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™. Third, they draw on Nye's conceptualisation of soft power managerial theory, along with Qatar's soft power strategy literature review. Then the writers provide an in depth breakdown of the the survey conducted with the Middle Eastern region, expatriates and foreigners point of view on the image perception of Qatar in hosting the FIFA World



Cup™. In the closing remarks, they summarize the ways in which Qatar uses soft power as well as provide recommendation to future ways of attracting the different perception groups of stakeholders.

2 Historical Landscape

2.1 Qatar's Foreign Policy

Qatar is one of the smallest Arab states, with an area of under 12,000 square kilometers divided into 7 municipalities. The country gained its independence from Great Britain in September 3rd 1971. Qatar is located on the Persian Gulf with the only bordering country being Saudi Arabia; other countries within the Gulf Region include United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Iran and Bahrain. Today the country's population is of 2.1 million and a native population of under a quarter of a million. The capital of the country is Doha with about 700,000 people. Qatar has risen in less than two decades to become one of the regional actors in the international relations of the Middle East. Over time Qatar was driven mainly by the oil and gas industry however growth in the manufacturing, construction, and financial services sectors have pushed the non-oil component to just over half of Qatar's nominal GDP for the first time since 2000. Economic policy is focused on sustaining Qatar's non-associated natural gas reserves and increasing private and foreign investment in non-energy sectors, but oil and gas still account for roughly 92% of export earnings, and 62% of government revenues. With the World's 3rd largest oil reserve, Qatar is the country with highest GDP per capita income, as well as the country with the lowest unemployment rate under 0.4%. The top 5 export destinations of Qatar are: Japan 31%, South Korea 22%, India 15%, Singapore 6.6% and China with 6.4%.⁵ Qatar's Chief of state is Amir TAMIM bin Hamad Al Thani, with the Al Thani family in throne since 1878. The ethnic groups are mainly divided as follows: Arab 40%, Indian 18%, Pakistani 18%, Iranian 10%, other 14%; About 77.5% of the

⁵ Atlas.media.mit.edu, (2015). *OECD: Qatar (QAT) Profile of Exports, Imports and Trade Partners*. [online] Available at: <https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/qat/>



population is Muslim, 8.5% Christian, and 14% Hindi.⁶

2.2 Bidding & Awarding Overview of 2022 FIFA World Cup™

Countries have a strong incentive to bid for hosting rights for a World Cup, due to its international reach being the largest sporting event in the world. *“Hosting this event can serve as a significant bargaining chip in global politics, making the competition amongst bidding countries and cities to host intense.”*⁷ This means that bidding for a World Cup is an extensive and expensive process.

*“The World Cup is going to new lands and I am a happy President as we speak of the development of football”*⁸ declared President Joseph S. Blatter, on December 2nd 2010, after Qatar obtaining majority votes from the FIFA Executive Committee over challenging bidders such as the United Kingdom and United States, to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup™.

FIFA announced on October 29th 2007 that it would no longer continue with its continental rotation policy, implemented after the 2006 FIFA World Cup™ host selection. The reviewed host selection policy is that any country may bid for a World Cup, provided that their continental confederation has not hosted either of the past two World Cups. For the 2018 FIFA World Cup™ bidding process, this meant that bids from Africa and South America were not allowed. For the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ bidding process, this meant that bids from South America and Europe were not allowed.

Responding to the requirements set out by FIFA in the bid registration, the Qatar Football Association (QFA) established a bid committee to handle the bidding process for the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ in 2009.

On March 16th 2009, FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter and FIFA General Secretary

⁶ Cia.gov, (2015). *The World Factbook*. [online] Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/qa.html>

⁷ Rassel, S. (2012). The Necessity for National Federations to Stand Up for Themselves. *Michigan State International Law Review*, 20(3), p.797

⁸ 2022 FIFA World Cup awarded to Qatar, (Online), Available: <http://www.fifa.com/fifa-tournaments/news/y=2010/m=12/news=2022-fifa-world-cup-awarded-qatar-1344500.html> (2 Dec 2010)



Jerome Valcke welcomed the QFA Delegation, led by the President of the country's His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad Al Thani in Zurich to the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ Bid Committee Finals.

The Qatari delegation officially submitted their bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ finals. According to FIFA regulations, the Qataris declared their interest in staging the finals before February 2nd, along with a number of other member associations: Australia, England, Belgium and the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal, USA, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Korea Republic and Russia.

Qatar goal was to become the first Arab country to host the FIFA World Cup™. Failed bids from other Arab countries to previous World Cup editions include: Morocco (1994, 1998, 2006, 2010), Egypt and a Libya-Tunisia jointly withdrew the 2010 World Cup bidding process. Qatar planned to promote the bid as an Arab Unity and hoped to draw on support from the entire Arab World, positioning this as an opportunity to bridge the gap between the Middle East and the Western World. The bid launched an advertising campaign across the nation in November 2009.

The Qatari bid hosting concept, which is in line with Qatar's National Development strategy, presented a novel approach to event operations and legacy. The Qatari bid envisions a concentration of almost all event facilities and venues in a relatively compact area within a 60 kilometers radius. In terms of legacy, due to Qatar's high carbon footprint per capita in the world Qatar, with 55.4 tons of carbon dioxide per person, about 10 times the global average⁹, there is a strong commitment to having a carbon-neutral World Cup, especially through utilization of environmentally friendly cooling technologies.

The Qatari FIFA World Cup bid was supported by: the national and local football authorities, the local city governments, the stadium authorities and the national government all by virtue of duly executed Government Guarantees.

⁹ Team, D. (2011). *Study: Qatar maintains world's highest per capita carbon footprint - Doha News*. [online] Doha News. Available at: <http://dohanews.co/study-qatar-maintains-worlds-highest-per-capita>



In terms of football development, the QFA had outlined its domestic and international grassroots programs. Qatari football is still developing and its youth teams have recorded some success at an international level. In terms of experience in hosting international sports events in the last 20 years, Qatar has already hosted events such as: the 1995 FIFA U-20 World Cup™ the 2006 Asian Games and others (see table 4.2.2).

The Bidder submitted an expenditure budget of USD 645.5 million (current) for a 2021 FIFA Confederations Cup™ and 2022 FIFA World Cup™. The budget was submitted in the format required with supporting information.

The Bidder's plan implied a new operational model for all stakeholder groups, in doing so it raised certain questions, especially in terms of logistics and security of the country. The realization of the plan depends on centralized decision-making and is largely based on construction of projected general and event infrastructure, which represents a risk by restricting FIFA's contingency planning.

All requirements for contractual documents had been met, but additional specific undertakings and securities were necessary given the special situation and the special hosting concept of Qatar.

FIFA is committed to ensuring that its member associations maximize the benefits of bidding for and hosting its other World Cups, both for the continued global development of the game as stated on FIFA's Mission Statement¹⁰ and the achievement of wider social goals and other benefits. These benefits are usually referred to in the context of major events, as sporting event legacy is defined as: *"The sustainable benefits generated for the host member association and country - well before, during and long after the event"*¹¹ While winning a bid is the ultimate goal, the bidding process can also have real value in its own right.

On December 2nd 2010, FIFA awarded the Persian Gulf state of Qatar the right to host the

¹⁰ FIFA.com, (2015). *About FIFA: Organization - FIFA.com*. [online] Available at: <http://www.fifa.com/about-fifa/>

¹¹ *Benefits of bidding for and hosting FIFA's other World Cup events*, (Online) Available: <http://www.fifa.com/governance/competition-organisation/benefits-of-bidding.html> (19 Nov 2010)



2022 FIFA World Cup™, first global sporting event ever to be hosted in the Middle East. For the 2022 tournament, these countries were the five official candidates: Australia, Japan, South Korea, Qatar, and the United States. The final round of voting between Qatar and the United States ended with fourteen votes for Qatar and eight for the United States.

Numerous observers viewed the decision with much skepticism, given that Qatar is one of the world's smallest states, has little football history, and regularly exhibits searing climates. No sooner had Qatar been awarded the tournament then questions began to swirl around the legitimacy of its bid, the process in which they were awarded the tournament, and whether the country could ever host games with extreme temperatures. Qatar promoted their hosting of the tournament as representing the Arab World, and has drawn support from across the member states of the Gulf Region.

*“The Arabic world deserves a World Cup. They have 22 countries and have not had any opportunity to organize the tournament.”*¹² FIFA President Sepp Blatter endorsed the idea of having a World Cup in the Arab World and also praised Qatar's progress, “When I was first in Qatar there were 400,000 people here and now there are 1.6 million. In terms of infrastructure, when you are able to organize the Asian Games (in 2006) with more than 30 events for men and women, then that is not in question.”¹³

One of the most significant concerns was the extreme temperature during the summer in Qatar, making a traditional June-July World Cup almost impossible. This issue was apparently considered during the voting process and was repeatedly mentioned in the Bid Evaluation Report for Qatar.

In 2013 the chairman of FIFA's Medical Committee Michel D'Hooghe advised that a summer World Cup in Qatar would be dangerous: *“From the medical point of view I*

¹² Rhys, P. (2010) *Blatter reaches out to Arabia*, (Online), Available: <http://www.aljazeera.com/sport/2010/04/2010424184010305993.html> (24 Apr 2010)

¹³ Rhys, P. (2010) *Blatter reaches out to Arabia*, (Online), Available: <http://www.aljazeera.com/sport/2010/04/2010424184010305993.html> (24 Apr 2010)



think it will be better not to play during the hot summer months.”¹⁴ Even FIFA President Sepp Blatter admitted that awarding a summer World Cup to Qatar was a ‘mistake’ as FIFA was fully aware of the extreme heat and logistical impossibilities of a summer tournament in the Gulf Region. President Blatter recognized the difficulties of moving the tournament due to an implication on football leagues calendar worldwide, but insisted that it was an acceptable sacrifice because some southern teams have previously been required to stop their season for the FIFA World Cup™. This move had caused significant controversy; however, many parties in the football community were against the change in the FIFA World Cup™ calendar for a number of practical reasons.

Opponent to the move, the English Premier League, argued that it would cause untold disruption not only to the 2021/2022 campaigns but also to numerous seasons. To comply with FIFA regulations and directives, the football season will have to be suspended for up to eight weeks in either January-February or November-December of that year. They argued huge disruption to broadcasting partners, sponsors, players' contracts and overlapping with other sports tournaments that would be hard to resolve. Losing bidders for the 2022 tournament, including the United States and Australia, were also unhappy at the prospect of the goalposts being moved.

Furthermore, the 54 members of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), whose president Michel Platini was one of those who voted for Qatar to host the 2022 World Cup™ in December 2010, had given their backing in principle to the likely decision to move the tournament to winter in order to avoid the intense summer temperatures. FIFA was believed to favor moving a World Cup to winter and concluding before Christmas, avoiding a clash with the International Olympic Committee calendar with the 2022 Winter Olympic Games at the start of the year. But UEFA was likely to back playing the tournament in January in order to avoid a clash with its UCL/UEL group stage tournaments. The IOC being an important stakeholder in this matter warned that any proposed dates for the 2022 World Cup must avoid a clash with its 2022 Winter

¹⁴ Pickup, O. (2013) *FIFA medical chief Michel D'Hooghe believes Qatar World Cup 2022 must move to winter to protect fans*, (Online), Available: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/football/world-cup/10312706/Fifa-medical-chief-Michel-DHooghe-believes-Qatar-World-Cup-2022-must-move-to-winter-to-protect-fans.html> (16 Sep 2013)



Olympics, although there is no binding agreement or contractual obligation as such.

Following a decision made by the FIFA EXCO in March 2015, the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ will be played in November-December 2022, with the final taking place on December 18th 2022 – Qatar’s National Day – and with the objective, in principle, of staging the tournament within 28 days.

3 Managerial Theory

3.1 Introduction of Soft Power

As Merriam-Webster dictionary defines *leadership is the power or ability to lead other people*¹⁵, and leaders have to make vital choices when picking the type of power they use. But what is Power? As Joseph Nye the creator of the term soft power states: “*Power is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants. There are several ways to affect the behaviors of others: coercing them with threats; compel them by use of force; induce with payments; attract or co-opt them. With this said, soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others.*”¹⁶ But what everyone is familiar with is the use of hard power, the more tangible way of power mainly via military forces, economic influence and threats.

In this section the authors give an in depth definition of soft power and its intangible abilities of creating value, aspiring others and raising status. The authors provide: the history of soft power in sports and the evolution of the concept with time; the importance of soft power and its use in political context today; and soft power uses by transformational leaders. Then the authors focus on: soft power in Qatar; explain how Qatar uses this strategy as a way to raise international status and attract other nations to the small Middle Eastern country; reference to the ladder process of Qatar is hosting major events as a way to prepare for the world cup; develop upon the main themes in

¹⁵ Merriam-webster.com, (2015). *leadership | a position as a leader of a group, organization, etc..* [online] Available at: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/leadership>

¹⁶ Nye, J. (2004). *The Benefits of Soft Power*. 1st ed. [ebook] Available at: <http://home.comcast.net/~lionel Ingram/The%20Benefits%20of%20Soft%20Power.pdf> [Accessed 7 Jul. 2015].



Qatar's soft power strategy concerning sport; exhibits Qatar's supremacies as a microstate; the technological innovation for the future 2022 FIFA World Cup™; and touch upon the peace, security, integrity and the national health issues of the country.

3.1.1 Soft Power Definition

The concept of soft power was mentioned for the first time in 2003 at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland when George Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury asked former Secretary of State Colin Powell why the United States seemed to focus only on its hard power rather than its soft power¹⁷, Joseph Nye who had already written on the idea of soft power a decade earlier decided to write a book on the topic. So, what is soft power? According to Nye *"It's the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments"*¹⁸ It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. Nye explains that soft power is in a third dimension in contrast from economic or military power, the so-called hard powers.

In order to understand how Joseph Nye came to define the expression 'soft power' one should take a look on the root of each word in itself. *Soft* from the Old English '*sōfte*' means agreeable, calm and gentle; *Power* from latin '*posse*' meaning to be able and control. If one considers the conjunction of the two words one can easily come up with a simple definition that soft power means to be able to influence or make one agree in a calm or gentle way.

Today the term is widely used by politics in order to influence others beyond the edge of hard power of traditional politics. The idea of using soft power to get others to admire your ideals and to want the same things as you without having the monetary variable to get what you want to move them in your direction. The strategy of seducing other in soft terms is far more effective than coercion, like power disputes through war, and values

¹⁷ Nye, J. (2004). *Soft power*. New York: Public Affairs.

¹⁸ School, H. (2015). *Joseph Nye Commentary: The U.S. Can Reclaim 'Smart Power'*. [online] Hks.harvard.edu. Available at: <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/news-events/news/news-archive/us-reclaim-smart-power/>



such as democracy, human rights and individual opportunities are deeply in line with the use of soft power.

3.1.2 History of Soft Power in Sports

The 1st time soft power was ever used as a mean to promote a sport event was perhaps during the Ancient Olympics. The practice of soft power diplomacy can be dated to the 8th century when the tradition of the Olympic Truce was alive ensuring that the host city was not attacked during the Olympic games, and that athletes had safe passage to and from the host city. During this time all warfare, legal disputes and death penalties were suspended.¹⁹

Pierre de Coubertin the founder of the modern International Olympic Committee (IOC) recognized the value of sport as a mean of diplomacy, cultural exchange and promotion of peace. Coubertin believed that sport prepared men for the rigorous warfare and would thus avoid conflict between nations.

The use of soft power in football can be dated to the early 1900s; with its ability to breakthrough any cultural, ethnical or geographical barrier football has increased its role in international diplomacy. During the World War I, British and German troops called a ceasefire over Christmas in 1914, part of this break was a friendly football match played between the two sides. *“For a brief moment, football provided a ritual of commonality, a reminder to the British and Germans that what they shared was more important than what divided them. It was fitting that it should be so, since football was the common man’s game, a shared culture every nation could understand.”*²⁰ In times of peace football has reached even further in an attempt to unite all corners in the world including bringing a World Cup to the Middle East for the first time in history.

¹⁹ Armstrong, G. and Rosbrook, J. (2015). The role of sport in soft power projection. *International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS)*, [online] 1(3). Available at: <http://icss-journal.newsdeskmedia.com/the-role-of-sport-in-soft-power-projection/2>

²⁰ DeGroot, G. (2014). The truth about the Christmas Day football match. *The Telegraph*. [online] Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/11310353/The-truth-about-the-Christmas-Day-football-match.html>.



3.1.3 The Importance of Soft Power Today

In today's world the prospective positive impact on foreign publics of a nation's image has moved from being a welcome consequence to a significant justification for investing in hosting sports mega-events. Nye asserted that if a nation "*can establish international norms consistent with its society, it is less likely to have to change.*" The supposed advantage of the soft power approach lies in Nye's contention that "*the great powers of today are less able to use their traditional power resources to achieve their purposes than in the past.*" For great powers, the use of force has simply become too costly. Additionally, the world has seen-or had seen, when Nye was writing in the 1990s a "diffusion of power" due to economic interdependence, transnational actors, increased nationalism in weak states, widespread technology, and "changing political issues."²¹

3.1.4 Soft Power in Political Context

According to Nye, soft power is exercised "*when one country gets other countries to want what it wants.*" This is to be achieved through "intangible forms of power," such as the setting of a good example, the export of positive popular culture, and a redoubled willingness to approach problems through international bodies and coalitions. All this is opposed to "the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants." Barack Obama has accepted this contrast with little reservation. "All too often," he said in his first interview as president, "the United States starts by dictating." He has since frequently elaborated on what he sees as the aims of the "international community." The similarities to Nye are more than casual. Nye wrote in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War: Increasingly, the issues today do not pit one state against another; instead, they are issues in which all states try to control non-state transnational actors. The solutions to many current issues of transnational interdependence will require collective action and international cooperation.

²¹ Greenwald, A. (2010). The Soft-Power Fallacy. *Commentary Magazine*. [online] Available at: <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/search/?q=the+soft-power+fallacy>



3.2 Soft Power & Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is linked with soft power in many ways. Combined they are the use of integrity and fairness to set clear goals stirring emotions of people and creating and inspiring a vision of the future. A significant strand in which transformational leadership is applied today is described as neo-charismatic and transformational approach. *Charisma is a form of soft power.*²² Leadership theorists argue that charisma relies on personal and inspirational powers whereas on the other end, authority is linked to transactional leadership. Transformational leadership and soft power are about vision, confidence, setting the example and with charisma creating good impressions. Charisma nowadays is treated as a well developed social and strong political skill. Transformational leaders rely on soft power while in contrast to this, transactional leadership rely more on hard power. Transformational leadership also includes an element of intellectual stimulation broadening followers' awareness of situations and new perspectives.

3.3 Soft Power in Qatar: Literature Review

When FIFA announced on December 2nd 2010 that Qatar would host the 2022 World Cup™ finals the press as well as the general public were surprised and skeptical at the same time. Qatar will be the smallest country and at the same time the first country to ever host a World Cup tournament in the Middle East. Hosting the biggest single sport event in the world can be seen as another proof for Qatar's desire to raise awareness through major sport events. By taking a step back this part of the paper will show how hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ is part of a bigger soft power strategy using sport as a powerful tool within Qatari's wider international strategy.²³ In order to understand possible implications of Qatar's soft power strategy the following points will provide a general overview of the state of Qatar.

²² Nye, J. (2006). *Soft Power, Hard Power and Leadership*. p.5.

²³ Brannagan, P. and Giulianotti, R. (2014). Soft power and soft disempowerment: Qatar, global sport and football's 2022 World Cup finals. *Leisure Studies*, pp.1-17.



3.3.1 Qatar

Together with the neighbor Emirates of Abu-Dhabi and Dubai, Qatar has used its wealth to achieve more international recognition and becoming globally better integrated than most other countries in the Middle East. This focus of global integration started under the former Emir Shayk Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani after his peaceful coup d'état against his father in 1995.²⁴ The long-term vision called '2030 National Vision' was introduced in order *"to enhance competitiveness and attract investment [that] will be needed in a dynamic and increasingly borderless international economy"*²⁵ To reach a better global integration of Qatar, different aspects have been targeted through different initiatives. Socially investments have been made in education and healthcare; politically the Qatar based media network Al-Jazeera has become a globally recognized network for free press in the Middle East, and furthermore financially through the state-run Qatar-Investment-Authority which holds shares in major financial corporations and banks internationally.

Qatar has further more developed an understanding of glocal consciousness by understanding that local national actions are highly interconnected in a globalized world. Therefore local or national strategies should not be understood as exposed to global forces, but the interrelations between local and global processes should be used by nation states.²⁶ Researches Brannagan and Giulianotti describe it as:

"Instead, local and national societies or nation-states, through their transnational connections, have substantial scope to adapt, innovate and maneuver, and to differentiate themselves from each other, within this 'glocalized' world."

Although Qatar is benefiting from its economic development its 'hard power' in terms of military power the small Gulf country is very limited, and would most likely not be strong enough to counter a military invasion. Diplomatically, Qatar is holding the US as an international close ally by providing access to natural resources as well as the site of

²⁴ Kamrava, M. (2009). Royal Factionalism and Political Liberalization in Qatar. *The Middle East Journal*, 63(3), pp.401-420.

²⁵ Ministry of Development Planning Statistics, (2008). *Qatar National Vision 2030*. Qatar: Qatar National Authority - General Secretariat For Development Planning, p.29.

²⁶ Robertson, R. (1992). *Globalization*. London: Sage.



the US Middle Eastern military headquarters.²⁷ However, Qatar's foreign policy is rather focusing on the exercise of soft power.²⁸ Within this soft power strategy the engagement of Qatar centered on global sports is one of the areas where the national authorities will mainly focus on.

Sports will most likely be the well-known and internationally recognized area where Qatar is engaging globally. Without looking at the successful bid for the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ at this point already, we can find a number of other examples on how Sports as a part of Qatar's soft power strategy was used over the last years. The state funded Qatar-Sport-Investment-Group purchased a big name in European Club-football with Paris St. Germain, the Qatar-foundation, secured a 150 million euro deal by becoming the first Jersey Sponsor of the FC Barcelona which Qatar airways used to become the first commercial jersey Sponsor of the Catalan team. Together with the UK private company, Delancey, the state-owned Qatari-Diar did as well acquire shares in Europe, namely in the 2012 Olympic Athletes' Village.

In Addition to that using a ladder bid process Qatar did host a number of major international sports Events such as, The Qatar Open Golf Masters, The Qatar Open Tennis Tournament, the 2006 Asian Games, the 2011 Asian football Cup tournament as well as the 2015 Handball World Cup. Furthermore Qatar did bid for the Olympic Games twice with unsuccessful bids of Doha for 2016 and 2020. An overview of major sport events hosted and planned to be in Qatar is presented in the following topic.

3.3.2 Major Sport Events hosted in Qatar

The decision of awarding the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ to Qatar came as a surprise to a lot of Football fans all over the world. If one takes a closer look into Qatar's strategy of hosting major sport events it cannot be seen as a total surprise or a not strategic step. As mentioned before Qatar has been very interested in using major sport events in order to

²⁷ Sakmar, S. (2007). Globalization and Trade Initiatives in the Arab World: Historical Context, Progress to Date, and Prospects for the Future. *University of San Francisco Law Review*, 42(4), pp.919-940.

²⁸ Sajedi, A. (2009). Geopolitics of the Persian Gulf Security: Iran and the United States. *Islamabad Policy Research Institute - IPRI Journal*, 9(2), pp.77-89.



raise awareness for the country. Between April 2015 and December 2022 Qatar has to date planned 101 sport events in the country of which 57 are international tournament or events.²⁹ In order to get a better overview the biggest and most important hosted and planned sport events since 2011 are listed in the following table:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Organizer</i>
2011	Asian Football Cup	Asian Football Confederation
2011	Arab Games	Union of Arab National Olympic Committees
2012	Asian Shooting Championships	Asia Shooting Federation
2014	FINA Short Course World Championships	Fédération Internationale de Natation
2015	IHF World Men's Handball Championship	International Handball Federation
2015	IPC Athletic World Championships	International Paralympic Committee
2015	World Amateur Boxing Championships	International Boxing Association
2015	World Robot Olympiad	World Robot Olympiad Advisory Council
2016	UCI Road Cycling World Championships	Union Cycliste Internationale
2018	FIG World Artistic Gymnastic Championships	Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique
2019	IAAF World Championship	International Association of Athletics Federations
2021	FIFA Confederations Cup	Fédération de Football Association
2022	FIFA World Cup	Fédération de Football Association

Table 1 - Major sport events in Qatar from 2011 to 2022

By analyzing the number and quality of the hosted and upcoming events in Qatar, it could not have been surprising that the microstate applied for hosting the FIFA World Cup™. However, it is very interesting that none of the above listed events created such a resonance like the football tournament. The paper will later point out several underlying topics that might be an explanation of why this particular tournament became so controversial in the general public and media.

To understand what topics are actually targeted by hosting these mentioned major sport

²⁹ Qatar Olympic Committee, (2011). *Event Calendar*. [online] Available at: <http://www.olympic.qa/en/EventsCalendar/Pages/EventCalendarView.aspx>



events, the following paragraphs will point out three key themes in Qatar's soft power that are related to sports.

3.3.3 Main themes in Qatar's Soft Power Strategy Concerning Sport

The researches Brannagan and Guilianotti identified three key themes in Qatar's engagement with global sports. The three themes their analysis provides of Qatar's soft power strategy are: exhibition of Qatar's supremacies as a microstate, projecting notions of peace, security and integrity and confronting national health crisis. With these subdivided themes in mind the following paragraphs will provide a more detailed overview on the main focus of Qatar's soft power aims.

3.3.4 Exhibition of Qatar's Supremacies as a Microstate

The first theme that emerged is connected to the size of Qatar. Being one of the smallest countries in the world and the smallest to ever host a FIFA World Cup™, this theme focus on the possible influence and effectiveness of Qatar as a microstate. Furthermore this part of a bigger soft power strategy does not only focus on the size of Qatar but at the same time its geographical and political position in the bigger global setting. Being located in the Middle East the nation state has to deal with unmasking from 'Orientalist' images.³⁰ This self-reflecting position is the starting point for this topic of the overall soft power strategy. Understanding how Qatar is portrayed and perceived by the international society in combination with the reputation of a whole region is the essential starting point to strengthen the attractiveness of the country within the global context.³¹ After analyzing interviews with authorities in charge of sport event in Qatar, the researches Brannagan and Guilianotti summarizing it by saying:

“For Qatari authorities, successful engagement with, and leadership of, global sport is one of the most effective mechanisms for promoting better understandings of Arab and

³⁰ Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

³¹ Ministry of Development Planning Statistics, (2008). *Qatar National Vision 2030*. Qatar: Qatar National Authority - General Secretariat For Development Planning.



Eastern cultures, and for demonstrating what ‘Oriental’ societies have to offer in socio-political terms.”

Professionals in charge of Qatar’s bid for 2022 World Cup™ confirmed that the goal of creating a better understanding between the Middle East and the Western world was one of the main topics when handing in the bid. The prejudices described are not unilateral but include wrong pictures by the Western world about the Middle East as well as wrong ideas by the Middle East for the Western world. Therefore, one of the main targets of the bid is to reach the people from the Western world who have little understanding about the Middle East, who have never been to any country in the region and to those who might have a wrong picture about Qatar. Not only do the Qatar authorities want to change the image as a Middle East nation, but also at the same time use the World Cup to prove that professionalism and responsibility is not a privilege to big countries in the Western world but can be found in the gulf region as well as executed by a micro state. Thus Qatar does not only try to show that a small country in the Gulf region is capable of hosting the World Cup, but at the same time sending a signal to other countries all over the world saying “If Qatar can do it, there are a lot more countries that can host the World Cup in the future.” Since football is a global game this might open the opportunity to actually bringing its biggest tournament to new places in the world.

3.3.5 Technological innovation

Within Qatar’s soft power strategy highlighting the countries’ progressive and innovative technology and development along with its’ modern culture is one of the key intentions communicated through hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup™.

The nation’s past as well as its future vision is recognizable in its state-of-the-art Sporting architecture. The Al-Wakrah-Stadium as well as the Aspire Dome are only two examples of this symbolized change connecting the past with the modernism and national ambition reflected in progressive designed architecture.

The further above described glocal consciousness in the decision of hosting the



tournament can also be seen in the technological solution provided for the climate issues. The state-of-the-art innovative and carbon-neutral, environmental-friendly technology which will cool down stadiums and training venues³² aims to provide not only a pioneer position to Qatar but moreover trying to enable other countries with similar climate conditions to host major outdoor sport events. By developing this technology and potentially building the pathway for other countries in the future to use similar technology Qatar shows its' global consciousness. With the same idea Qatar is proposing a strategy to avoid future '*white elephants*'. The under-used infrastructure that is often left behind after big events should not create a problem in Qatar, for the authorities are promoting modular construction stadia so that those can be disassembled and shipped to developing countries after the tournament. These facilities should then be used to develop sport and sport infrastructure in countries that cannot benefit from hosting a World Cup like Qatar can do. The soft power strategy linked with sport and developing countries has already started years before the World Cup is going to take place.

Qatar is highly investing in grassroots, by developing talents from all over the world the Aspire Academy gives chances to boys and girls particularly from developing nations and furthermore support their families as well as hometown of students with sport facilities. The development of talent could also be regarded as importing of talent, which in a state with only roughly 300,000 Qataris might seem as a necessary method.³³ However all national players representing Qatar have to be eligible to play for the Gulf state in accordance with FIFA regulations so that neutralizing foreign players cannot happen overnight without applying the international rules.

3.3.6 Peace, Security & Integrity

Another underlying aim by hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ and other major sport events is to project peace, security and integrity. The authorities in Qatar felt, that the image of the microstate was not clear enough defined and distinguished to other countries

³² 2022 FIFA World Cup Bid Evaluation Report: Qatar. (2010). Zurich: FIFA.

³³ Academy, A. (2012). *Developing Champions*. [online] Aspire.qa. Available at: <http://www.aspire.qa/DevelopingChampions.aspx>



in the region. Therefore socio-political differences to other conflicted regions in the Middle East were not explicitly obvious to westerners. To reshape the international perception and the understanding of the peaceful environment in Qatar, hosting major sport events seemed to be the perfect platform for the Qatari government. The successful bid for 2022 aimed to boost the microstate and its perception as well as improving the profile and raising awareness internationally about Qatar and where it can be found on the world map.

Furthermore Qatar leverages on the global sports in combination with peace, security and integrity by providing best practices and knowledge transfer to the international community through the 2010 founded, Doha-based International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS). This is another example of Qatar's glocal consciousness by providing support to the international sport community through a government-funded organization.

3.3.7 National Health Issues

Another aspect of the states' investment in global sports is the improvement of physical activity among Qataris. According to the Qatar National Health Strategy 71% of Qataris are overweight with 32% being either obese or morbidly obese in addition to 20% suffering from diabetes.³⁴ The fast economic development with rapidly increase in wealth with Qataris eating a big amount of fast food and leaving out physical exercise lead to these alarming figures.³⁵

With regards to soft power Qatar is trying to be a role model in showing that sport can be a solution to overcome these challenges. By hosting major sport events on the one side to motivate Qataris to be more involved and finally participate in sport, and by inspiring young Qataris directly to the institution of Aspire. The state funded Aspire-Zone with Olympic swimming pool, several football pitches, a 50,000 seat stadium and

³⁴ Qatar National Health Strategy. (2013a) 'Executive Summary Update' [online]. Available from: <http://www.nhsq.info/app/media/325>; Qatar National Health Strategy. (2013b) 'Fasting and Diabetes: Maintain a balanced diet' [online]. Available from: <http://www.nhsq.info/strategy-goals-and-projects/preventative-healthcare/nutrition-and-physical-activity/news-details?item=95&backArt=347>

³⁵ Brannagan, P.M. and Giulianotti, R. (2014) *Qatar, Global Sport, and the 2022 FIFA World Cup*. In Grix, J. (ed.), *Leveraging Legacies from Sports Mega-Events*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.



the only *FIFA Medical Center of Excellence* in the Middle East, should identify and recruit future sporting champions to become role models for the next generation of Qataris.

Thus the Qatari government wants the facilities in the field of sport science and talent development to be state-of-the-art and to reach top level in the world. This should then be used as a key driver in every day life in order to overcome Qatar's health issues. Although the desire of improving national health is very worthwhile there is little scientific evidence to show a correlation between the hosting of major sports events and active physical participation in sport.³⁶

3.4 Soft Disempowerment in Qatar

The general idea of soft disempowerment is the loss of influence, attractiveness and prestige, in absolute or relative terms, which a state may experience in the international context.³⁷ As mentioned earlier the use of different soft power strategies does as well bare the risk of soft disempowerment whereby others might get upset, alienate or loose interest and thus leading to a loss of attractiveness. Regarding Qatar's soft disempowerment in sport five sports related issues could be highlighted.

First, the claims that corruption and bribing of African executive committee members and the scandals³⁸ around former FIFA EXCO member Mohamed bin Hammam and former FIFA Vice-President Jack Warner lead to the decision to award the 2022 World to Qatar which were trigger for the official investigation of FIFA's Ethics Committee.³⁹

³⁶ Mass sporting and physical activity events: are they breadand circuses or public health interventions to increase population levels of physical activity?', *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 4(2), 193-202.

³⁷ Brannagan, P. and Giulianotti, R. (2014). Soft power and soft disempowerment: Qatar, global sport and football's 2022 World Cup finals. *Leisure Studies*, pp.1-17.

³⁸ Calvert, J. and Newell, C. (2015). *Qatar's Fifa official gets life ban for bribery* | *The Sunday Times*. [online] [TheSundayTimes.co.uk](http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/insight/article676281.ece). Available at: <http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/insight/article676281.ece>

³⁹ Pattisson, P. (2013) '*Revealed: Qatar's World Cup 'Slaves'*'. The Guardian [online], Wednesday 25th September. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/25/revealed-qatars-world-cup-slaves>



Secondly, initiatives by sexual-minority groups asking the IOC and FIFA not to host any competition in countries that discriminate in any form. Therefore FIFA's Anti-Discrimination taskforce urges football's governing body to make Qatar relax its anti-gay legislation.⁴⁰

Third as previously mentioned on the bidding & awarding overview the fear of UEFA's 54 member associations and leagues that playing in summer in Qatar is a health risk for their players due to the local weather conditions, which lead to the decision of hosting the tournament in November-December which will now create a scheduling issue for most European leagues.

Fourth, the acquisition of French Football team Paris Saint German (PSG) by Qatar Sport Investment Authority in combination with a sponsorship deal between PSG and the Qatar Tourism Authority. In conjunction of possible violation of UEFA Financial Fair play regulations, the Qatari-PSG acquisition in combination with Al Jazeera securing the domestic broadcasting rights for the French Football league left a negative association in the general public perception.⁴¹

Fifth, the issue of how the global awareness of Qatar brought the spotlight on working conditions and human rights situation for expatriate workers. Documentaries and reports about Asian workers in 'modern-slavery'⁴² contracts working on construction sides of World Cup venues documented exploitation, abuse, lack of pay, lack of access to food and free drinking water, and the confiscation of passports.⁴³ These reports were highlighting the fact that "one of the richest nations exploiting one of the poorest to get

⁴⁰ Hubbard, A. (2013). *Inside Lines: After Russia the heat is on Qatar over anti-gay laws*. [online] The Independent. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/general/others/inside-lines-after-russia-the-heat-is-on-qatar-over-antigay-laws-8772830.html>

⁴¹ Rumsby, B. (2013). *Fifa claims it is close to deal with Premier League to switch 2022 World Cup finals in Qatar to winter*. [online] Telegraph.co.uk. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/football/world-cup/10445411/Fifa-claims-it-is-close-to-deal-with-Premier-League-to-switch-2022-World-Cup-finals-in-Qatar-to-winter.html>

⁴² Brannagan, P.M. and Giulianotti, R. (2014) *Qatar, Global Sport, and the 2022 FIFA World Cup*. In Grix, J. (ed.), *Leveraging Legacies from Sports Mega-Events*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

⁴³ Pattison, P. (2013) 'Revealed: Qatar's World Cup 'Slaves'' . The Guardian [online], Wednesday 25th September. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/25/revealed-qatars-world-cup-slaves>



ready for the world's most popular sport tournament.”

Looking at the five above-mentioned examples, there is clear evidence of how Qatar on one side is using soft power strategies to get in the spotlight of the international community but risking at the same time forms of soft disempowerment. Therefore Qatar might encounter a snowball effect, which will bring more attention to the negative aspects leading to the 2022 tournament.

The general soft power strategy of Qatar in using sport to showcase the country as modern and well-managed microstate, raised awareness for Qatar in the Western world, but at the same time produced soft disempowerment in regards to human rights, sustainability, integrity and treatment of foreign workers. These topics have to be tackled by the Qatar authorities.

Therefore it would now be the time for ‘*soft power regeneration*’ where former mistakes are revised to use soft power again in a positive manner.

3.5 Investigations of May 27th 2015

While writing this paper the arrests on corruption charges against members and former members of the FIFA Executive Committee took place in Zurich on May 27th 2015. In addition to that Swiss police opened criminal investigation into 2018 and 2022 World Cup awards. These events might put Qatar's soft power strategy at stake. After Swiss authorities announces a separated investigation into the 2022 World Cup™ award Qatar might not face losing the World Cup given seven years of fending off allegations. While legal terms between FIFA and Qatar Supreme Committee make it rather unlikely to revise the decision who to host the 2022 tournament, Qatar's reputation as a regional political mediator might be harmed.

In order to not risk the hard work of Qatar authorities the Organizing Committee and department who were responsible for the bid must comply with further investigations.



With the events that started to become public at the end of May 2015 the soft disempowerment for Qatar seems bigger than ever before with more and more details about the bidding process still to come. It will be interesting to see in how far the responsible authorities will comply to help providing more information on corruption within the bidding process of the tournament.

However the recent charges did not help Qatar to raise the country's image in the media worldwide. To get a general overview of Qatar's reputation in international media for and after the investigation against Executive Committee members the following paragraphs will provide a press review about Qatar and the 2022 FIFA World Cup™.

3.6 Media Coverage Overview

News sources such as the Internet, TV, and social networks are an important basis of information for the general public specially regarding the major sport events. In this section of the paper the authors highlight the main motivation behind the topic studied. To explain the main framework of this research it was important to see what are the differences and similarities between the reports about the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ in Qatar from the Western and Eastern media. After media monitoring the authors focus on the main controversial themes, which are quoted by media from all over the world, topics include: human rights issues, corruption controversies, local climate, cultural and political issues.

Global, regional political, economic and social development in recent years, has troubled the relationship between the Western and the Middle East societies strongly and manifold. Throughout the world, people are witnessing unsettling changes. A lot of misunderstanding and prejudice seem to grow on both sides even though information systems and means of communication are highly sophisticated.

In the era of communication, controversies begin, continue and end with media perception. The media shapes public opinion and covers realities by their censorship.



Mass media communication channels nowadays are used as the most important weapon. There is a connection between the role of media and post-modernity. The media shapes the world as we see it.

Media coverage over sensitive subjects can also affect relations between the Western and the Arab world. Given the significance of the media, many Middle Eastern regimes heavily censor access to the information. Censorship is only partially the problem, because individual response to the media is more than a function of coverage. Other significant variables include financial circumstance and education, social background and political persuasion.

In contrast with many situations in the Middle East, the Western media are most of the time free of official censorship. Indeed, already during the twentieth century, the Western media has become sufficiently powerful to merit the appellation of the '*fourth estate*'.

The initial role of mass media in Qatar was to facilitate the process of building a modern nation. The planned development of electronic media in particular has reflected this fact. The policies and plans of the Ministry of Information are geared toward using media to bridge the gap between the oil boom during the early 1970s to 1980s and lagging internal development.

For a small state in the Gulf Region, Qatar's rapid media development has been a function of strong government support and the recruitment of relatively well trained journalists from other less affluent Arab countries. Whether Qatari news media will hold their ground in the future is problematic due to declining government financial support endangers career prospects for Qatari citizens. The media also confronts a growing pull for the '*Qatarization*' of media representatives.

The Al Jazeera Media Network (AJMN), a Middle Eastern multinational multimedia conglomerate, is considered the only independent from direct state control. Given that



AJMN has some media freedom it is considered one of the most watchable in the region, people tend to see it as a more neutral channel of information.

The awarding of the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ to Qatar, graded as having 'high operational risk', created a number of concerns and controversies regarding both Qatar's suitability as a host country and the fairness of the FIFA's bidding process. Criticism from a number of media outlets such as: sporting experts, American, Australian and English officials, LGBT and human rights groups, all highlighted problems like Qatar's limited football history, the high expected cost, the extreme local climate, and Qatar's human rights record. There have been numerous allegations of bribery between the Qatar bid committee and FIFA EXCO members. Several FIFA members have since then gone on record saying that the decision to award the tournament to Qatar was a 'mistake'.

Most of the Western media does not focus on the many positives that Qatar will bring such as the dissembling of segments of the venues and seating being donated to Africa after the event, the major infrastructure and building of new cities in Qatar to accommodate the teams' supporters, the job creation, the reaching of a new audience, the legacy this major sport event will leave to the people of Qatar and the surrounding nations of the Gulf Region for many decades to come.

Ever since Qatar won the right to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ in 2010, it has found itself under immense media examination. There has been extensive international coverage of allegations (Swiss authorities are currently investigating) that Qatar officials offered FIFA EXCO members bribes in exchange for support for its bid. Qatar has repeatedly denied these charges.

Over the past five years, the Western media has reported often containing factual errors and misrepresentation of Qatar. The most recent irritants for many residents are the following controversies:



3.6.1 Human Rights Issues

3.6.1.1 Migrant workers and slavery allegations

Modern world slavery allegations is by far one of the most controversial issue discussed by the Western media. In 2013 the Guardian wrote that their investigation “*found evidence to suggest that thousands of Nepalese, who make up the single largest group of laborers in Qatar, face exploitation and abuses that amount to modern-day slavery, as defined by the International Labour Organisation, during a building binge paving the way for 2022.*”⁴⁴ Nepalese workers in Qatar have been dying at a rate of one per day. The Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee denied that this construction directly related to the tournament had yet begun but told to media they are “*deeply concerned with the allegations.*” “We have been informed that the relevant government authorities are conducting an investigation into the allegations.”

3.6.1.2 LGBT (Homosexual fans)

The status of homosexuality as illegal in Qatar attracted attention in the Western media. According to this issue, FIFA’s President Sepp Blatter, attempted to deny the problems, which LGBT supporters may face at the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ in Qatar.

“You see in the Middle East the opening of this culture, it's another culture because it's another religion, but in football we have no boundaries. We open everything to everybody and I think there shall not be any discrimination against any human beings be it on this side or that side, be it left, right or whatever.”⁴⁵

Blatter added even if there are problems, there is still plenty of time to sort out any issues.

“But this gives me the opportunity to say that in FIFA, and this is in the statutes of FIFA, whether it is in politics, whether it is in religion, we don't want racism, and we know what

⁴⁴ Pattison, P. (2013). *Revealed: Qatar's World Cup 'slaves'*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/25/revealed-qatars-world-cup-slaves>

⁴⁵ Press Association, (2010). *Fifa's Sepp Blatter dismisses fears over 2022 World Cup in Qatar*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/football/2010/dec/13/fifa-sepp-blatter-discrimination-qatar-2022>



*this means, and neither do we want discrimination. What we want is just to open this game to everybody and open it to all cultures and this is what we are doing in 2022.*⁴⁶

3.6.2 Corruption Controversies

In 2011 Lord Triesman of the English Football Association (FA) tabled about allegations of bribery on the part of two members of FIFA's EXCO. FIFA had opened an internal inquiry into the matter, and a revote on the 2022 World Cup™ remains a possibility if the allegations would be proven. Also, FIFA admitted that there was a ground swell of popular support to re-hold the 2022 vote won by Qatar.

Qatar officials denied any impropriety and insisted that the corruption were being driven by envy and mistrust by those who did not want a World Cup to be staged in the Middle East.

In this regard, FIFA appointed a former United States attorney Michael J. Garcia as the chairman of the investigative branch of its Ethics Committee and a German judge Hans-Joachim Eckert as the chairman of the Ethics' Committee adjudication chamber. It was a part of the announced anti-corruption reforms by FIFA, including giving them the power to retrospectively investigate old cases.

*"Garcia and Eckert are regarded as key independent figures from outside the so-called 'football family' who can help restore FIFA's credibility after bribery and vote-buying scandals."*⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Press Association, (2010). *Fifa's Sepp Blatter dismisses fears over 2022 World Cup in Qatar*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/football/2010/dec/13/fifa-sepp-blatter-discrimination-qatar-2022>

⁴⁷ CNN, (2015). *FIFA unveils new crime fighting duo to tackle corruption in soccer - CNN.com*. [online] Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/07/17/sport/football/football-fifa-ethics-corruption/>



Michael J. Garcia declared his intention to investigate the bidding process and decision to award the right to host the 2018 and 2022 FIFA World Cup™ to Russia and Qatar respectively by the FIFA Executive Committee.

In September 2014 the report into 2018 and 2022 World Cup bidding process was submitted to FIFA, and a released summary of this report was also submitted, which cleared Russia and Qatar of corruption. In result, Michael J. Garcia claimed that the summary of his report was 'materially incomplete' and contains 'erroneous representations', but on December FIFA agreed to release the full Garcia's report.

Before the FIFA presidential election in May 2015, the United States Department of Justice arrested seven FIFA officials in a hotel in Zurich. Besides this time, authorities in the United States and Switzerland said that Qatar and Russia were both under investigation as part of an extensive analysis into the legality of their bidding for the World Cups in 2018 and 2022. In response, embattled longtime FIFA President Sepp Blatter abruptly announced his resignation.

*"If evidence exists that Qatar and Russia received the (World Cup) awards only thanks to bribes, then the awards could be annulled"*⁴⁸ the head of FIFA's auditing and compliance committee Domenico Scala told the Swiss Sonntagszeitung weekly. These comments were the first by a FIFA official to admit the possibility that Qatar could lose hosting the world's biggest football event. However, he added that no such evidence had been provided so far. Qatar has maintained its bid's responsibilities to date and remains unaffected by the latest allegations.

3.6.3 Local Climate

There has been a continuous debate ever since the FIFA Executive Committee controversially voted for the tiny Gulf State of Qatar to host the tournament in preference over the United States, Australia, Japan and South Korea, ignoring the inspection report

⁴⁸ *Messi jubelt, Blatter zitter* (Online), Available: http://www.sonntagszeitung.ch/read/sz_07_06_2015/nachrichten/Messi-jubelt-Blatter-zittert-36971



that warned the high risk to players and fans from the extreme summer climate conditions; sports' calendar interferences over the November-December World Cup change are still under dispute to this date as previously mentioned.

Qatar Bid's Chief executive, Hassan al-Thawadi said, *"Heat is not and will not be an issue."*⁴⁹ The Qatar 2022 Bid's official site also explains:

*"Each of the five stadiums will harness the power of the sun's rays to provide a cool environment for players and fans by converting solar energy into electricity that will then be used to cool both fans and players at the stadiums. When games are not taking place, the solar installations at the stadiums will export energy onto the power grid. During matches, the stadiums will draw energy from the grid. This is the basis for the stadiums' carbon-neutrality. Along with the stadiums, we plan to make the cooling technologies we've developed available to other countries in hot climates, so that they too can host major sporting events."*⁵⁰

In March 2015, the FIFA Executive Committee made a decision that the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ will be played in November and December 2022, with the final taking place on 18 December 2022 (Qatar's National Day) with the objective, in principle, of staging the tournament in 28 days.

3.6.4 Cultural and Political Issues

3.6.4.1 Football in Qatar

When Qatar was awarded as a host country of a World Cup it was ranked number 113 in the Coca-Cola Ranking in the world and had never qualified for the tournament before. The Qatari National team has been known to naturalize players from foreign nations; these facts led some media to question the strength of football culture in Qatar and if that made them unsuitable World Cup hosts.

⁴⁹ the Guardian, (2010). *Will you be heading to Russia or Qatar for the World Cup?*. [online] Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2010/dec/02/russia-2018-qatar-2022-world-cup>

⁵⁰ 2022 FIFA World Cup Bid Evaluation Report: Qatar. Pg. 11. (2010). Zurich: FIFA.



3.6.4.2 Alcohol

The Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee said that the Muslim state would permit alcohol consumption during the tournament, including specific fan-zones will be established where alcohol can be consumed. Although expatriates may purchase alcohol and certain businesses may sell alcohol with a permit, drinking in public is not permitted as Qatar's legal system is based on Islamic law.

3.6.4.3 Israeli Qualification

The Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee stated that if Israel were to qualify, they would be accepted to compete in the World Cup despite Qatar's non recognition to the state of Israel. On this note, in 2014 Israel called upon FIFA to re-vote for the host country of the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ as they alleged that Qatar financially supported Hamas during the 2014 Protective Edge operation in the Gaza Strip.

Over the five years the most negative media representatives were from the United States, England and Australia. In respect to this scenario two of these countries were direct opponents of Qatar during the bidding process for the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ in 2010.

In June 2015 the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) posted an official statement on its website that it has thrown its weight behind Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup™, hitting back at Western media's criticism of the Gulf State's dealings with FIFA amid a corruption investigation into the world's football governing body. In this statement OIC also criticized '*Western media tendentious campaigns*' targeting Qatar, casting doubt on its right to host the tournament. Taking the issue over the accusations, the Cairo-based Arab League said:



“The Arab League endorses the resolution issued by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) condemning the hateful campaign that attempts to question Qatar’s right to host the 2022 World Cup.”⁵¹

The organization of the 22 Arab States became the latest group to offer its ‘full support’ to Qatar. In addition to fielding criticism of its human rights record, the country has been fending off allegations of corruption related to the tournament bidding process.

“The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) stresses its support to the State of Qatar and to all that would ensure its success in hosting the World Cup, as well as to its efforts towards optimal preparations for the event.”⁵² Statement from the OIC.

The organization of 22 Arab States became the latest group to offer its ‘full support’ to Qatar. In addition to fielding criticism of its human rights record, the country has been fending off allegations of corruption related to the tournament bidding process.

Representing 57 countries with a total population of 1.5 billion people, the OIC is the world’s second-largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations (UN). The organization declared that it supported Qatar’s position as the 1st Arab country to host such a major sporting event. Qatar has been the focus of a number of articles in international media in recent years that have called into question its bidding process for the World Cup. At the same period the state’s Foreign Minister Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed Al Attiyah and the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani, have asserted in separate media interviews that they believed Qatar was at the center of a ‘racist’ campaign.

⁵¹ Walker, L. and author, M. (2015). *Arab region rallies around Qatar and its right to host 2022 World Cup - Doha News*. [online] Doha News. Available at: <http://dohanews.co/arab-region-rallies-around-qatar-and-its-right-to-host-2022-world-cup/>

⁵² Reuters India, (2015). *World Muslim body lends support to Qatar over 2022 World Cup*. [online] Available at: <http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/06/18/soccer-fifa-qatar-oic-idINKBN0OY0UP20150618>



In addition to allegations of corruption, as mentioned before Qatar has also been criticized by international human rights groups about the treatment of construction workers here and scrutinized for its kafala system.

In a bid to counter critics, the GCC Information Ministry issued a directive calling on all media representatives in the Gulf Region to show their ‘full solidarity’ to Qatar by publishing stories that support the country’s right to host the international football tournament.

“GCC information ministers renewed their call for the media to counter all those who seek to question the right of the State of Qatar to host the 2022 World Cup, stressing GCC states full solidarity with the State of Qatar and encouraged media in the GCC to continue countering these campaigns at home and abroad.”⁵³

While this was criticized by advocates of media freedom as an attempt to control the tone of coverage by governments, others supported the stand as a necessary move to balance the international news narrative and bolster the country’s reputation.

“This is not a call for media to produce pro-Qatar content arbitrarily, but to counter reports which are quite clearly aimed at discrediting the right of a GCC nation to host such a prestigious sporting event.”⁵⁴ The acting director of the Doha Center for Media Freedom said to Doha News in a statement that the Gulf Cooperation Council was expected to support Qatar confront 'the campaign and propaganda' put forward by foreign media.

⁵³ Kovessy, P. (2015). *GCC governments order media to support Qatar’s right to host World Cup - Doha News*. [online] Doha News. Available at: <http://dohanews.co/gcc-governments-order-media-to-support-qatars-right-to-host-world-cup/>

⁵⁴ Kovessy, P. (2015). *GCC governments order media to support Qatar’s right to host World Cup - Doha News*. [online] Doha News. Available at: <http://dohanews.co/gcc-governments-order-media-to-support-qatars-right-to-host-world-cup/>



3.7 Media Overview Conclusion

This section analyzed the different topics covered around the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar TM in the Western and Eastern audio-visual media. It's seen that there are differences between the West and the East regarding cultural values, religions and media perception. Over the past five years there is a much more negative picture of Qatar and the World Cup in the Western media, that is why the GCC decided to promote a campaign with local media against Western journalist's reports in 2015.

In the present day, with the scandals and controversies the Western journalists are opposing and skeptical about the World Cup in the Middle East. Nevertheless, in perspective of the upcoming major sport event in Qatar, there is great danger in viewing the media as enemies. The media will always bring its own concerns and priorities that sell to their audience. Normality journalists will automatically default to the abnormal, bad news, rumors etc. These facts are a given in the interplay between the organizers Qatar - FIFA and the media; that is why it is very important for organizers to understand how to deal with this external force. The media coverage overview is directly linked to the topic, it gives an understanding of the negative aspects, written and shown by Western journalists. Based on these realities the authors use this analysis to further propose a communication strategy, which should look separately towards the clusters of the Western and Eastern media.

4 Methodology

4.1 About the Questionnaire

In order to better understand the differences in how well Qatar's soft power initiatives worked, the authors conducted a questionnaire to see differences of perception of Qatar and the 2022 FIFA World Cup between different stakeholders groups. Therefore the authors set up a self-administrated questionnaire online. The survey was shared publicly via various social networks online. This method was chosen due to increased timeliness and potentially higher response rate compared to mailed questionnaires, as well as



reaching a wider audience from all over the globe; the fact that the participant already enters the data made the authors decide to run an online questionnaire. The overall questionnaire responses total 1,348 people who answered the questionnaire of which 1,082 answered the questionnaire completely. The questionnaire reached stakeholders over 70 countries covering all continents. The majority came from Gulf Council Countries with 776 respondents followed by 299 participants from outside these countries and 36 expatriates, further definition and reasoning of the groups will follow in the analysis section.

The survey contains a section with questions about: demographics; general interest about football and the FIFA World Cup; opinions about Qatar in combination with the World Cup; opinion on potential changes of perception through the World Cup; as well as questions regarding the likeability of FIFA as an organization and Qatar as a country. The majority of questions offer answer options in *Likert* Scale as well as multiple-choice question with additional text boxes for other answers (*see appendix 'survey'*). The authors specifically distinguished between nationality and residence in order to find out about difference between expatriates living in Qatar and people without Qatari citizenship that never lived in Qatar as well as locals.

The authors chose to mainly use the ordinal scale format in *Likert* Scale style asking to what extent the participants agree or disagree to certain statements and so tapping into the cognitive and affective components of perception and attitudes⁵⁵. The authors chose this format since it has the advantage of not just giving yes or no answers but rather allow for degrees of opinion. The quantitative data obtained from it is easier to analyze^{56, 57}.

⁵⁵ Likert, R. (1932). A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes. *Archives of Psychology*, 140, 1-55.

⁵⁶ Bowling, A. (1997). *Research Methods in Health*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

⁵⁷ Burns, N., & Grove, S.K. (1997). *The Practice of Nursing Research Conduct, Critique, & Utilization*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders and Co.



4.2 Limitations

There is very little research done over the impact and implication of soft power related to sports. The limited literature on the topic of soft power and sports mega-events fails to explain the concept, give examples or show that the actuality of sport is the main idea behind the soft power strategy of mega-events.

As for the survey, the respondents came from over 70 countries and covering all continents. However the number of expatriates answering the questionnaire was around 5% of the number of people from the GCC. Within the expatriate group the authors could not reach workers from India, Nepal or Bangladesh. Assuming, that the expatriate experience of a doctor working in Doha might differ from the one of a construction worker, the authors are skewed towards higher educated expatriates due to the network in Qatar. Furthermore the survey has been shared through the social media channels of the authors. Therefore the group of respondents might possibly be more sports oriented and football fans than the general public on average and had more knowledge about the World Cup topic. Furthermore the paper does not give any analysis about whether the soft power strategy did influence the perception of any group, since the survey does only present a picture of the perception at one point in time.

4.3 Potential Bias

The above-described questionnaire might be potentially biased in several ways. First of all the authors were only able to reach people with internet/computer access who follow social media. Therefore the survey does not cover opinion of people without access to Internet. Given this, the authors did not reach the expatriate workers who come from Nepal, India and Bangladesh; their “expat-experience” is likely different from educated Western individuals working in Qatar. Furthermore did the authors of this paper share the survey through their social media channels, thus a possible bias could be that participants were generally more familiar with this sport related topic than the general public would be. Within the multiple choice questioned offering a text box options for additional answers decreased the bias of forced choice. Regarding the scale format it was chosen a



1-5 Likert Scale, which tends to force respondents to take sides. There is also a possibility of a cultural bias associated with the answers; although the survey was anonymous it is inevitable that people from the Middle East would not answer questions about Qatar with more patriotism.

About the Likert Scale:

For survey questioned that offered answer choices from one to ten the scale has been divided as follows. For these empathy ratings the values 1,2 do represent an extreme bad feeling; values 3 and 4 a bad feeling; 5 and 6 a rather neutral feeling; 7 and 8 a good feeling and 9 and 10 an extremely positive feeling.

In one of the first questions the respondents were asked to identify the Qatar flag among four flags from the Gulf countries in order to test about general knowledge about Qatar. Since the survey required Internet, the participants could have easily searched for the correct answer. In the end of the survey the respondents were asked to indicate whether they have ever lived in Qatar, a potential bias can be that people from Western countries who visited Qatar a lot but never lived there have another perception due to a more profound knowledge about the region but will not be marked as expats. Since a major part of the analyses is to distinguish different perception depending on being an expat, from the gulf region or being from the rest of the world this might cause a bias in the analysis.

Like most surveys the validity of Likert Scale opinion measurement can be compromised by social desirability. However the anonymity of the questionnaire should lower this social desirability bias⁵⁸.

The Timing of the questionnaire is a potential source to bias as well. While it helped to gather a large amount of answers, the fact that the questionnaire was shared during the week around the May 27th 2015 might cause a skew in the data. Questions asking about

⁵⁸ Paulhus, D. L. (1984). Two-component models of socially desirable responding. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 46 (3), 598.



the likeability of FIFA or the World Cup in Qatar may due to the investigations starting during this time answered in a different way than they would have been answered during a different period of the year.

4.4 Interviews

In the process of identifying whom to interview to gather some qualitative opinions, the authors put into consideration most of the relevant stakeholders related to the topic. For example, the authors wanted to collect unbiased data through a good balance between media, researchers, Qatari, fans, academic, and football fans. Although it could not be possible to reach out to some of the previous categories, the authors interviewed most of the main stakeholders (*See interviews on annex*).

5 Survey Analysis

In order to understand if the perception of the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ is different amongst local people, expatriates living in Qatar and the rest of the world the analysis of the questionnaire will focus on these three variant groups and is trying to outline differences. Since the countries in the Gulf region share a same culture and due to the low number of Qatari citizens the authors define local people as nationals from the Gulf Council Countries (GCC) in a way to reach more respondents who in addition do not live in Qatar so that there is no overlap with the definition of expatriates. The members of the GCC are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Expatriates living in Qatar are people defined by living in Qatar but not having Qatari citizenship. Respondents from the rest of the world are defined as neither a citizen of a GCC country nor a resident in Qatar. Since the majority of questions offered answers on an ordinal Likert–Scale average percentages of answers is calculated but a mean is also mentioned. A few questions allowed for Interval-Scale analysis were numeric values with constant intervals were given to the respondents as options.



5.1 Demographics

GCC

The 776 participants from GCC countries are 28,52 years old on average with a standard deviation of 8,59 from under 18 to 55 years and older and live spread over all the six GCC countries. 16,5% of those respondents were female, 83% were male, one person were of other gender and 4 people decided not to indicate their gender. 29% of the respondents of the GCC have at some point lived in Qatar.

Expatriates

36 Expatriates filled in the questionnaire thus are the smallest group in the survey when it comes to nationality and residence. The average age of the expatriates is 27,17 years with a standard deviation of 6,07 while nobody was under 18 or over 54 years old; they are coming from 20 different countries. 30,5% of the respondents in this group were female and 69,5% were male. The expatriates were coming from 20 countries from 5 different continents.

Rest of the world

299 people from the rest of the world answered the questionnaire with an average age of 27,33 years with a standard deviation of 7,47 with respondents from the age of under 18 to 55 and older and holding 73 different passports. 25,8% of the participants from the rest of the world were female and 71,6% were male as well as two people of other gender and three people preferring not to indicate their gender. 11% of the respondents from the rest of the world have lived in Qatar before.

	Average age	Female	Male	Undisclosed	Total Respondents
GCC	28.52	16.5%	83.0%	0.1%	776
Expatriates	27.17	30.5%	69.5%	0.0%	36
Rest of the World	27.33	25.8%	71.6%	2.6%	299

Table 2 - Demographics



5.2 Interest in football and interest in the FIFA World Cup

The majority of participants are interested or very interested in football. Amongst respondents from GCC countries 88% indicate to be interested or very interested in football, while 80% of expatriates and 82% of participants from the rest of the world consider themselves at least interested in football. 89% of the GCC in the survey follow the FIFA World Cup™; amongst the expatriates they are 82% and 86% among the rest of the world. Regarding the plans to watch the tournament in 2022 on TV, 70% of the GCC citizens and 65% of expatriates as well as 73% of the rest of the world plan to watch the World Cup. To take it one step further the authors asked about the plans of watching a game live in the stadium. 73% of people from the GCC countries plan to do so together with 88% of the expatriates but only 23% of the rest of the world.

It is obvious that the majority of respondents is interested in Football, follows the FIFA World Cup and is planning to watch the tournament on TV. However, while the people who are already in the region, whether in Qatar or in another GCC country, rather plan to watch the World Cup live in the stadium whereas the majority of the rest of the world plans to watch the tournament on TV and not live in the stadium.

5.3 Opinion about Qatar

To get a bigger picture of what the respondents are associating with Qatar the respondents were asked to list the top three elements that are associated with Qatar. Along with given answer choices the participants had the chance to fill in additional elements via an 'other'-text box.

For the GCC citizens the top three elements associated with Qatar are *Money*, *Sport events* and *Desert*. For the expatriates the top three are *Sport events*, *Football* and *Money* whereas the top three elements for the rest of the world are *Money*, *Oil* and *Desert* with a high number of 'other' answers mentioning predominantly *Human Rights* with regards to *Labor conditions* and *Gay Rights* whereas the few 'other' elements mentioned by GCC citizen refer rather to positive ideas of *Hospitality*, *Achievements* and the *good people*. It



is interesting to see that the majority of ‘other’ elements came from the group of the rest of the world with negative notations in regards of the above-mentioned topics.

Furthermore only the item *Money* is shared by all three groups, while *Sport events* and *Football* are not perceived in the rest of the world to be associated that strongly with Qatar. Although a huge amount of major, world sport events are happening in Qatar, these were not listed in the top three for the rest of the world group. Therefore it seems as if these elements of Qatar’s soft power strategy do not reach people outside the region as they reach people within the GCC.

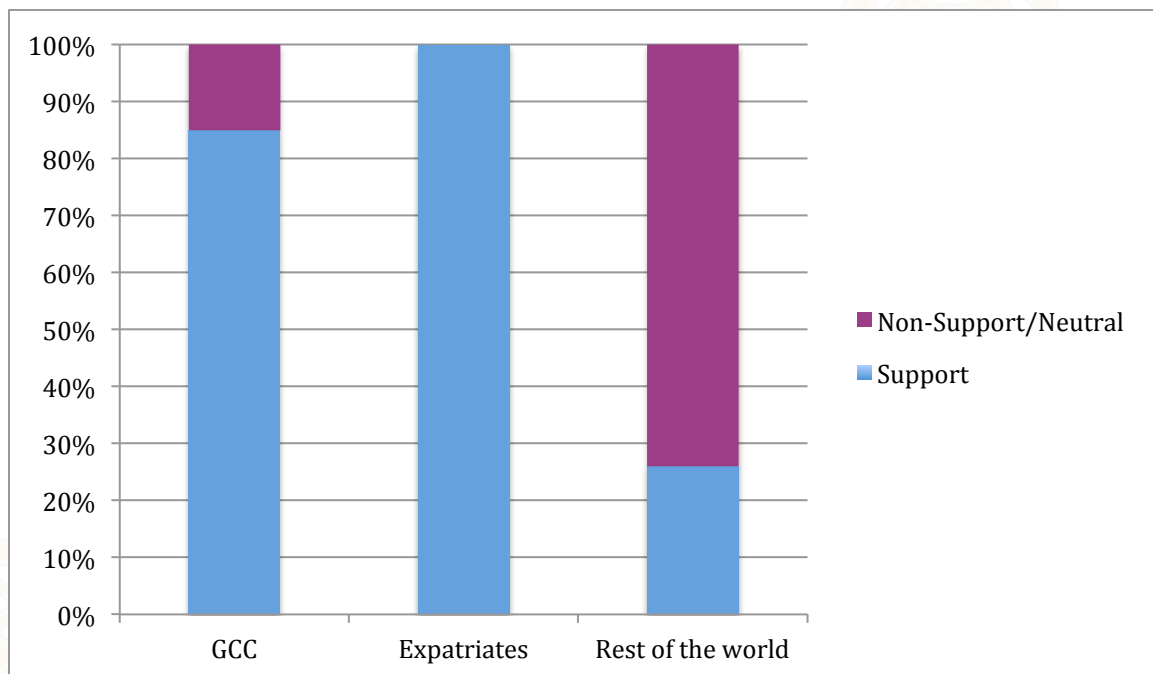


Figure 1 - Difference in support among the three groups

Of the GCC citizens 85% support Qatar as a host of the World Cup, respectively 100% of the expatriates indicate to support Qatar but only 26% of the rest of the world do, with 39% strongly disagreeing with supporting Qatar as the World Cup host.

Being asked whether Qatar is capable of hosting the World Cup, 71% of the respondents from GCC countries agreed or strongly agreed with the microstate being capable, as well as 86% are at least agreeing that Qatar has sufficient infrastructure; 100% and



respectively 94% of the expatriate but only 48% and 62% of the respondents from the rest of the world feel that Qatar is capable or has sufficient infrastructure for the tournament. It is obvious that the support and the expectations on Qatar being able to host the tournament differ between the three subgroups. While the majority of the GCC supports Qatar as a host and thinks it will be capable and has sufficient infrastructure to host the World Cup, the expatriates are even more supportive and optimistic about Qatar hosting the tournament. In the rest of the world the support is by far the lowest as well as the expectations of Qatar being able to host the World Cup.

Seven years before the tournament the excitement about the World Cup seems to be different depending on the region as well. Amongst the GCC respondents only 7% said they are not excited about the World Cup being hosted in Qatar while 86% feel excited already. 96% of the expatriates are excited about the tournament while only one respondent felt neutral about it and nobody disagreed or strongly disagreed with being excited about it. A different picture can be observed in the rest of the world; 28% are agreeing or strongly agreeing on being excited about Qatar to host the World Cup with 53% of them disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Regarding a revision of the award to Qatar of hosting the tournament 80% do not think FIFA should revise the decision whereas 13% do think so out of the respondents from the GCC. 94% of the expatriates do not agree with a revision of the decision and none of them agreed with it. Again a different picture becomes visible among the rest of the world; 32% disagree with a revision while 52% would agree or strongly agree that FIFA should revise its' decision.

About bribing under investigation that was involved in the award to Qatar 16% of the GCC would agree or strongly agree with this hypothesis but 59% would disagree or even strongly disagree. Out of the asked expatriate 19% do believe that bribing was involved but 67% do not believe so. In the rest of the world the distribution is the other way around with 67% believe in bribing having been part of the award and 15% not believing in it. One can see a clear link between the percentages of respondents within the



subgroups believing in bribing being part of the award and are for a revision and the respondents that do not believe in bribing as part of the award and are against a revision. Again the groups from the GCC and the expatriates gave more pro-Qatar answers than the rest of the world.

Amongst the GCC participants a majority of 68% thinks that it was a good idea to move the tournaments to the months of November and December and 20% being against it. Among the expats nobody believes it was not a good idea while 87% do think it was a good idea. In the rest of the world 40% think it was a good idea, 39% think it was not and 22% prefer not to answer or think neutral about it.

With the perspective of the tournament happening in seven years the GCC respondents 85% believe that the World Cup will be a success; 100% of the expatriates also agree with this view. Among the rest of the world 36% do not expect the tournament to be a success while 38% and 23% are neutral about it.

When asked about one to three issues that might turn up during the World Cup from a given list, with optional text box the top three answers from the GCC were *Weather* (391 votes), *Access to Alcohol* (226 votes) and *Accommodation* (184 votes) while the option *Non of the above* got 145 votes as well. Amongst the expatriates *Non of the above* (12 votes) was the top answer together with *Public Transportation* (12 votes) followed by the *Weather* (10 votes). In the rest of the world the top answers were the *Weather* (161 votes), *Women's rights* (98 votes) and *Access to Alcohol* (77 votes). Although the rest of the world is a much smaller group in the survey compared to the GCC countries over 50% of all 'other' issues were provided by this group, predominantly mentioning *Human, gays and workers rights*. It is noteworthy to see that the *Access to alcohol* seems not to be a big issue coming up judged by foreign people who live in the condition all year long, while *Public transportation* is, which did not rank high within the other groups. Weather however got mentioned within the overall top three by all three groups. This issue will be further analyzed later in the paper.



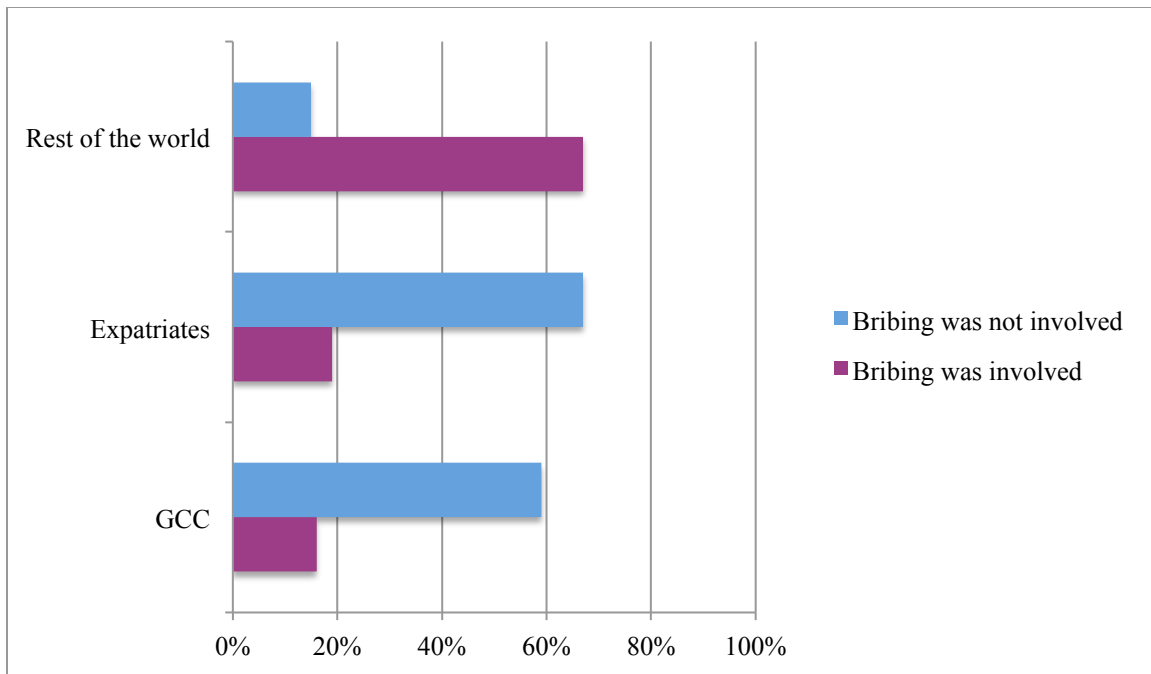


Figure 2 - Believe of involvement of bribes in the Qatar 2022 bid

5.4 Change of perception

83% of the GCC respondents believe that the World Cup will change foreigners' perception of Qatar while 88% of the expatriates and 45% of the rest of the world at least agree with this statement. Asking on the other hand whether the World Cup will change Qataris' perception of foreigners one can see a more similar distribution among the three groups with 48% of the GCC, 53% of the expatriates and 39% of the rest of the world would agree or strongly agree with this effect of the tournament. Regarding the internal change of Qataris' perception of Qatar through the world cup, 56% of the GCC expect it to change while only 45% of the expatriates and 31% of the rest of the world foresee this change to happen, with a majority of people among the rest of the world being neutral or not giving any value to this question.

5.5 Analysis of perceptions comparing (Football Fans vs. Non-Football Fans)

One of the main questions the survey started with was - *Are you interested in football?* In order to identify the audience and if they are answering the survey as a football fan who is interested in such topic, or someone who is just answering the survey and has no



interest in the game. The authors found that almost 85% of the people who answered the survey are football fans. By football fans, its meant anyone who watches football, participates in playing whether on amateur level or professional, or interested to read and know about the game.

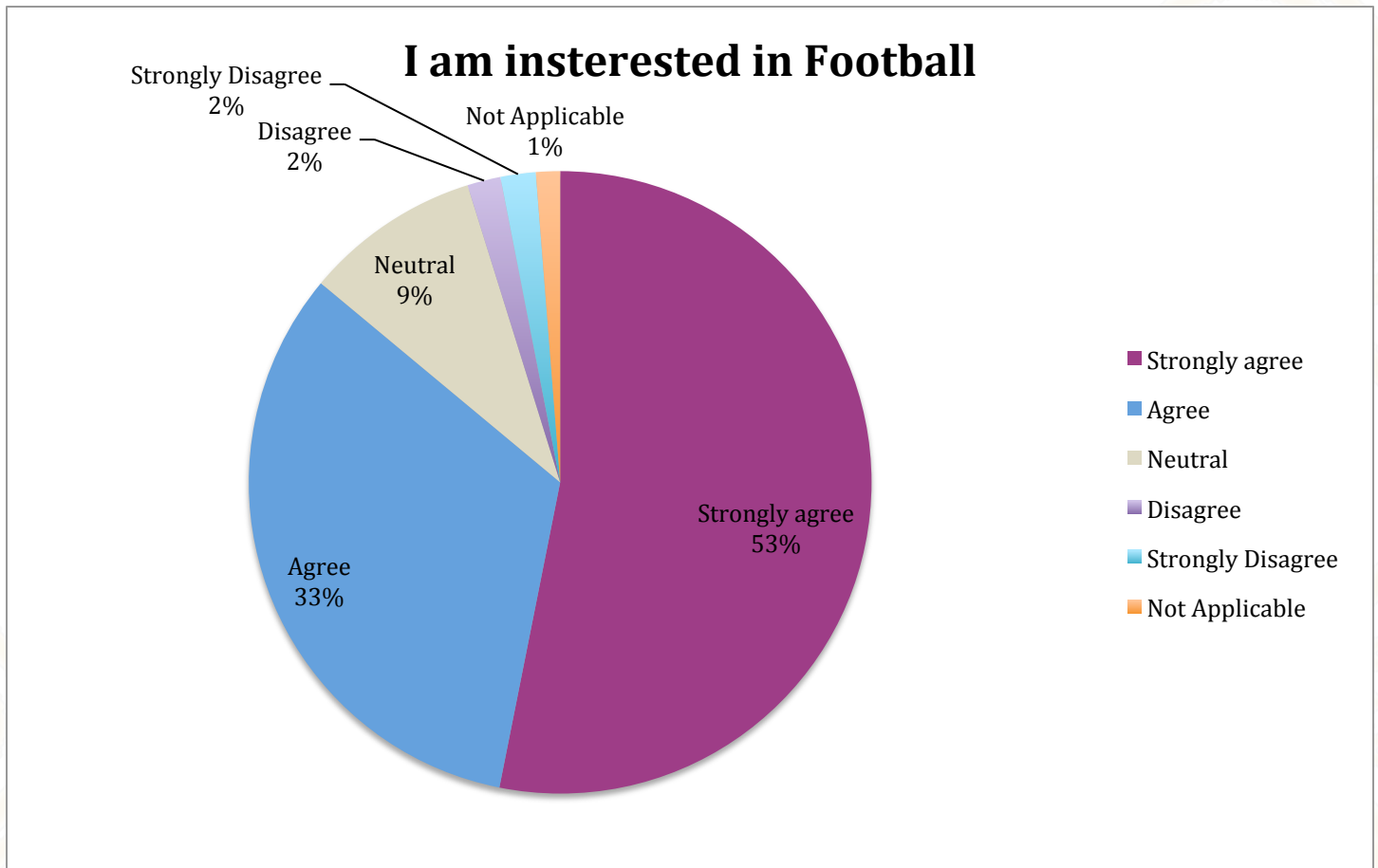


Figure 3 - Interest in football amongst survey respondents

Out of the 1,348 surveys, the majority of the survey applicants (35%) were between the ages of (25-34). Within this group almost 32% are football fans and only 4% are non-football fans. Therefore, its obvious that most of the answers are coming from youth people who understand and have an interest in football. The second big group, 25% were the applicants between the ages of (35-54). Within this group almost 22% are football fans and only 3% are non-football fans.



The next paragraphs will show the gap and also discuss the difference of perceptions between football fans and non-football fans to see if the interest of the game could be a vital variable or not.

When the participants were asked and given the options to pick from - *Which is the flag of the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ host?*

A remarkable 88% of the football fans got the right flag of Qatar, while only 11% of non-football fans got it right. It can be argued that after winning the bid to host the 2022 World Cup™, Qatar's flag has been all over the media outlets, which raised awareness to the flag colors and look to the public all over the world.

Next question was an open type of question to write the answer - *What country will host the 2022 FIFA World Cup™?*

Almost 96% of both football fans and non-football fans wrote Qatar and got the right answer.

Another question was about FIFA's image as an organization to the applicants so the respondents were asked - *On a scale from 1-10 (1 being the lowest, 10 being the highest) how likable is FIFA as an organization to you?*

To make the analysis easier, the authors considered applicants who gave (5,6,7) think that FIFA has good image, while people who gave (1,2,3) believe that FIFA is not likable to them. The group of football fans within (5,6,7) were almost 87%, while non-football fans where the minority of almost 20%. On the other hand, the group of (1,2,3) considering FIFA as a bad image was also intriguingly almost 80% football fans, and 21% non-football fans.

The authors also wanted to see if the perception of the image of FIFA has affected Qatar's image as well or not. So the respondents were - *On a scale from 1-10 (1 being the lowest, 10 being the highest) how likable is Qatar to you?*



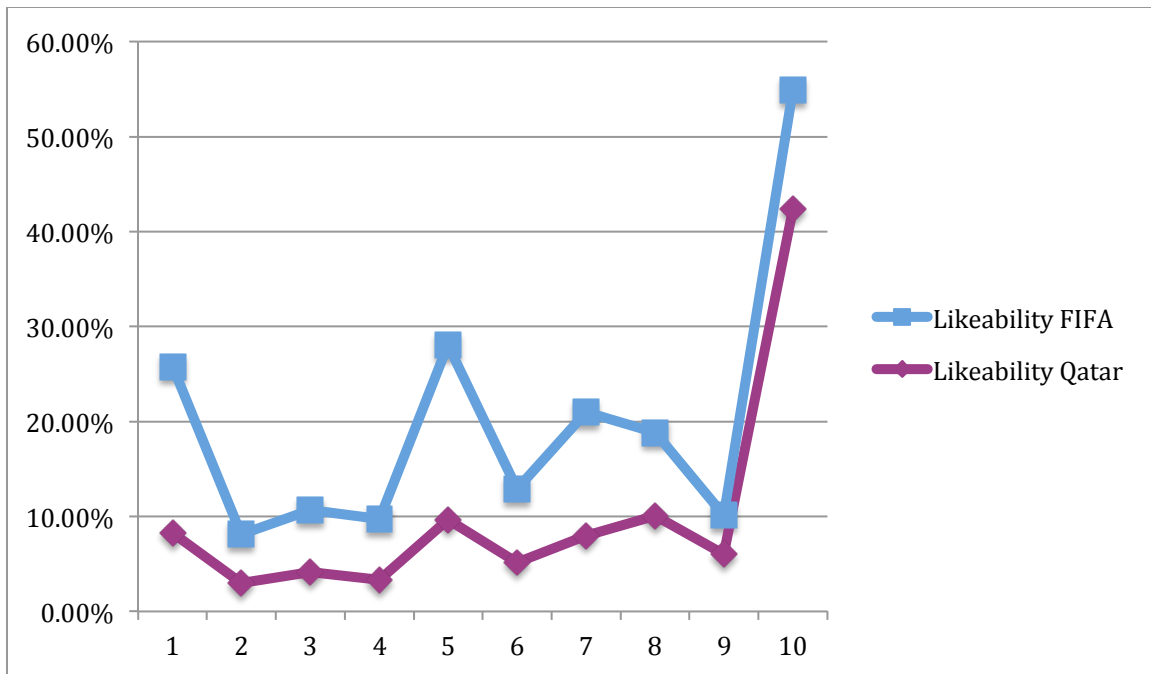


Figure 4 - Correlation between likeability of Qatar & FIFA

Considering the same approach of the analysis of the previous questions, it was considered that applicants who gave (5,6,7) think that Qatar has good image, while those who gave (1,2,3) believe that Qatar is not likable to them. The group of football fans within (5,6,7) were almost 90%, while non-football fans where the minority of almost 10%. On the other hand, the group of (1,2,3) considering Qatar as a bad image was also interestingly almost 75% football fans, and 25% non-football fans. Approximately, the same people who answered the FIFA question previously had the same opinion about Qatar, which shows that the image of a country that will host a world cup is associated with the international federation of football.

Moreover, one of the questions was about - *Moving the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ to November-December was a good idea?* The authors wanted to see if this decision has reached the majority of people world wide, and does everyone know about it? Do they know that the weather in November and December is a suitable weather for football in Qatar? Or has the media not covered such vital decision effectively and a lot of people still don't know about it?



There were six answers categories as options for the applicants such as: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree, and not applicable. Football fans were the majority of almost 50% of the total number of applicants (1,348) who either agreed or strongly agreed. On the other hand, 4% of total applicants who were non-football fans agreed about the decision. This shows that either those non-football fans do not know how is the temperature in Qatar during the winter, or they do not even care about the decision as they are already against Qatar to host the World Cup.

5.6 Correlation? - Likeability of FIFA as an organization and Qatar as a country

In order to better understand if there is a possible connection between the perception of FIFA and the perception of Qatar the authors dug a little bit deeper in the data to take a look at correlations between the likeability of FIFA and Qatar within the three subgroups. The survey closed with a question about how likeable Qatar as a country is on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest value possible). Within the GCC respondents the minimum was 1 and the maximum was 10 with a mean of 8.22 and a standard deviation of 2.61 with 62% giving either 9 or 10 points. Within the expatriates community the minimum value was 5 and the maximum 10 with a mean of 8.85 and a standard deviation of 1.6 with 66% giving either 9 or 10 points. In the rest of the world the range was from 1 to 10 with a mean of 4.97 and a standard deviation of 2.87 with only 13% indicating a 9 or a 10 for Qatar as a country while 33% gave either 1 or 2 points.

Similar to the above-mentioned question about the likeability of Qatar the participants were asked the same about FIFA as an organization, with answer choices on the same scale with value from 1 to 10 (with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest value). Answering the question about FIFA the GCC respondents the whole range from 1 to 10 was covered with an average of 5,65 and a standard deviation of 2,9. The expatriates answered as well between all values, with an average of 5,8 and a standard deviation of



3,11 while the rest of the world gave 4,49 points out of 10 on average with a standard deviation of 2,91 also voting within the hole range.

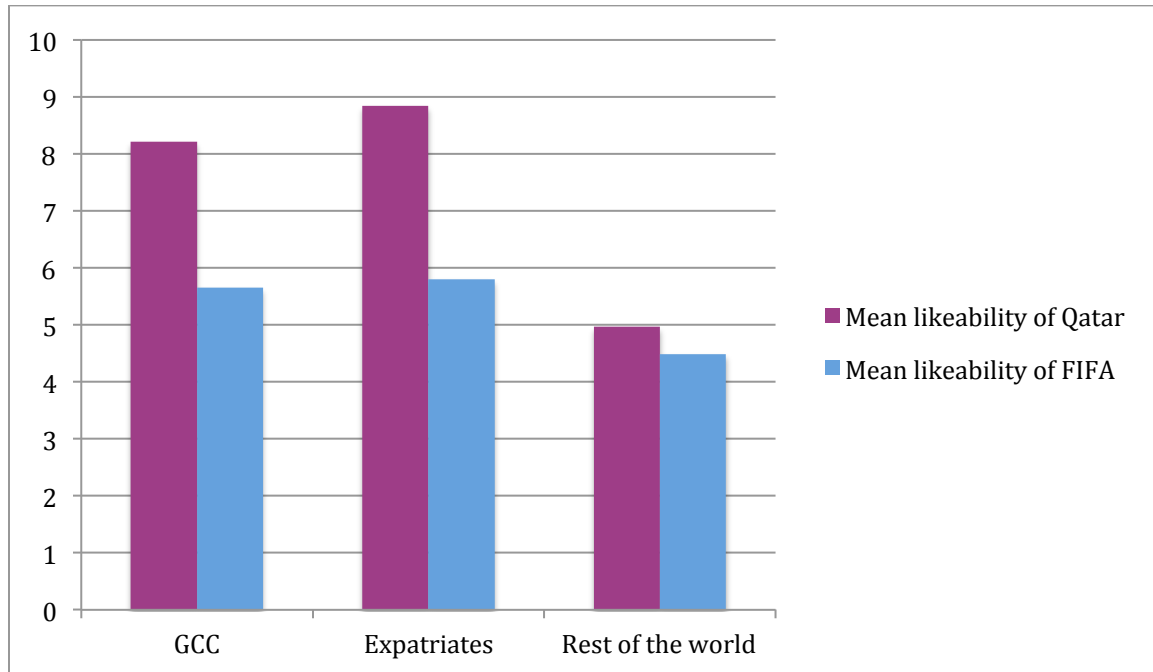


Figure 5 - Likeability of FIFA & Qatar amongst the different groups

Sub-group	Likeability of Qatar (mean)	Likeability of FIFA (mean)
GCC	8,22	5,65
Expatriates	8,85	5,80
Rest of the World	4,97	4,49

Table 3 - Mean likeability of Qatar & FIFA

5.7 Likeability of FIFA and Qatar amongst different groups

Looking at the above data it is clear that overall Qatar has a higher likeability than FIFA comparing the means. However it is much closer within the group of the rest of the world compared to both other subgroups.



To analyze the data further the authors analyzed the correlation of answers given about the likeability within each subgroup testing for the null hypothesis that the data is not correlated.

In the data about likeability of Qatar and FIFA among the GCC there is a weak linear correlation with a correlation coefficient of $r=0,23$, with a p-value of 0,001 testing at a two-sided 95% confidence interval with 81 degrees of freedom. Amongst the expatriates the calculated correlation coefficient is stronger with $r=0,37$ but failed the significance test with a p-value of 0,99 and therefore the authors can not reject the null hypothesis and had to state that they could not prove any correlation in the data to this regard. Looking at the data of the rest of the world there is a correlation coefficient of $r=0,34$, with a p-value of 0,0012 testing at a two sided 95% confidence interval with 81 degrees of freedom. It is seen that the correlation within the rest of the world regarding the likeability of Qatar and FIFA is the highest significant correlation within the survey. Although the correlation in itself is rather weak, in combination with the average values of both questions it is possible to state that the correlation as well as the consistency of the likeability of Qatar and FIFA is stronger amongst the rest of the world than in the GCC countries, while the positive attitude amongst the expats towards Qatar as a country could not match the likeability of FIFA. One could also argue that the correlation among the respondents from the rest of the world shows that they fail to distinguish between Qatar as the World Cup host and FIFA as the governing body; this however is only speculation and leaves room for further research.

5.8 Weather and the change of schedule

As mentioned earlier, weather was the only issue that made it to the top three potential issues during the World Cup in all three subgroups. However there is a difference between these three groups whether it was a good decision to move the World Cup to November-December amongst those respondents indicating weather as a potential issue. While only 17% and respectively 14% of the expatriates and the GCC felt it was not a good idea to move the tournament schedule, 41% amongst the respondents of the rest of



the world said it was not a good idea to move it. Although the tournament was moved to a different part of the year a much bigger group within the rest of the world still perceives weather as an potential issue and does not think it was a good idea to move the World Cup tournament to a different season. Interestingly it is seen as well that the people who live in the region and feel that the weather might become an issue believe it was a good idea to move it though; with 67% agreeing on the new schedule being a good idea amongst the expatriates and 63% amongst the GCC respondents.

5.8.1 Consistency amongst the GCC

Among the six GCC members there is one country that shows a potential different position compared to the other five members. Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia are supporting the World Cup host and are excited that the tournament will take place in Qatar. Between 75% and 100% of the respondents from those five countries indicated that in their answers. However the answers of the respondents from the UAE show a different picture, which only accounts for 33% supporting and being excited about the World cup in Qatar. This could be due to tension between the countries and shows a potential field to improve perception in the region itself.

5.9 Outcome

One can see that there are evident differences in the perception of the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ depending on geographic background. Sport events have not been perceived as being a major part of Qatar outside the GCC and expatriates community. Furthermore it's seen that the support for Qatar as a host in general is strongest amongst expatriates, followed closely by the members of the GCC, and weak in the rest of the world. The rest of the world does as well expect Qatar to not be as capable for the world cup as it is perceived amongst the other two groups. The people outside the GCC and expatriates community is also less excited about the tournament and believes with a majority that revising the award would be good and that bribing was involved in the bidding decision.



The Weather is a common topic connection between all three groups as expected to be an issue during the tournament. Within the rest of the world subgroup the authors see the perception of Qatar and FIFA being very similar on a scale dimension whereas in the GCC and for the expatriates Qatar has a better standing than FIFA. Overall it is interesting, that the perception of the tournament and the host nation among the expatriates is even better than among the GCC. The expatriates do not represent a group that is in between the GCC and the rest of the world, but is even more positive about the World Cup and Qatar than people from the region themselves. This could be explained by the choice of people from this group to work in this country or by the fact that living and understanding the culture, similarities and differences can actually increase the perception of a country and a sport event better than any communications campaign. However this can just be assumed and represents an interesting field for further detailed research.

The most interesting finding observed by the authors was that the group of expatriates' perception was not between the GCC and the rest of the world but surprisingly the most positive and supportive group. While there are no explanatory data behind this descriptive analysis within this paper, a number of reasons could be the possible answer to this observation. First of all, the expatriates that were answering the survey choose their job in Qatar freely. Therefore they might like the region or are generally more open for new experiences. Another explanation could be that the expatriates are better informed about the events and the circumstances in Qatar and/or are influenced by different media than the rest of the world. This whole theme of why are the expatriates so positive about the World Cup could be a topic for another paper. The authorities in Qatar should, regardless of the reasons, try to take the perception of the expatriates as a benchmark to improve their strategy in the rest of the world.

As from the observations, the sport part of the soft power strategy has potential fields to improve, especially in the rest of the world in order to increase the perception within this group.



6 Recommendations

As we have seen there is a difference in perception between the three groups analyzed on the survey. Given this gap between the ideas about Qatar and the 2022 World Cup, the organizers, authorities and FIFA should make sure that unparalleled issues are addressed differently to the three groups. While the Weather for example is an issue that all groups are concerned about the fact that two out of the three groups have first hand experience in living in that region, the topics have to be communicated another way among these clusters. Since the most positive group towards the World Cup in the survey were the expatriates, it might be helpful to leverage on their experiences in order to change the perception in their respective home countries. Overall it seems clear that a specific communication strategy for each group is necessary to deal with issues within every single subgroup. In general the expatriates should be a benchmark for future campaigns. One specific recommendation would be to analyze underlying reasons within the expatriates' community for the positive and supportive attitude towards the World Cup. By providing both a media review as well as a survey comparing the Middle East and the rest of the world, this is a great opportunity for future studies. Possible research can be done in analyzing how far one does affect the other. Furthermore this paper showed a rather negative perception of the World Cup in Qatar. It might be interesting to see how this perception might be even different within the group of the rest of the world depending on whether a respective country did bid for the 2022 World Cup as well or not. As mentioned above earlier, one of the main future study topics can be the reason for the massive support of the expatriates and how this can be transferred to other groups around the world.

7 Research Impact

This paper allows a better and deeper understanding on how the perception of the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ differs amongst the Middle East, the expatriates' community



and the rest of the world. This paper does not provide any analysis on why this perception is formed or what underlying stereotypes are assumed for forming this perception. It does not try to draw conclusion from the media reports to link with the perceptions seen in the survey either. It does however provide an analysis of the current soft power strategy of Qatar and displays what are the main issues that are part of the actual perception of the World Cup and shows additional fields for future studies.

8 Future Studies

Further research can build on the idea of sports mega-events being used as a means of soft power for public diplomacy; in the case of 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™, since there is still seven years of development to the event, research can be done in order to restore the image of Qatar due to the alleged allegations of corruption for the World Cup bidding.

Furthermore this paper showed a rather negative perception of the World Cup in Qatar. It would be valuable to see how this perception might be even different within the group of the rest of the world depending on whether a respective country did bid for the 2022 World Cup™ as well or not.

9 Conclusion

Throughout history it is possible to see how soft power was used as a vessel in arts, culture or charitable acts, such as developed countries sending aid to less developed nations in times of crisis. It is easy to see how sports falls into this context; as a way to be both competitive and inclusive sport can be used as a means to communicate and influence diplomatic relations.

The survey shows that there is a negative perception of the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ outside the Gulf region. However with seven years to the tournament this also



provides a historical opportunity for Qatar and the organizers to shape and form this perception in a different way and use it to not only change the view of a football tournament but to leave a long lasting legacy for a whole region. Thus the tournament in Qatar has the opportunity to use a sports event to make an impact that will last much longer 90 minutes.

From a managerial perspective, the authors learned that the awareness of an event is not everything for the organizers. The perception of the product, service or event has to be formed and managed with great thought. However this perception can differ within different groups, therefore diverse communications strategies should be used to impact the perception amongst different subgroups.

With regards of the legal influence on the paper, the discussion going on about whether FIFA might need to revise its award to Qatar will probably not have legal ground due to the internal regulation of FIFA and a contract between FIFA and the host country. Although this might change the perception of the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar TM within certain groups it is very unlikely to happen. As the authors learned in Neuchâtel there are different legal foundations in different countries. Therefore it would be interesting to see changes in perception depending on whether corruption being legal or illegal in certain countries in regards to judging the involvement of bribes in the award.

“Qatar is like an actor on a big theatre stage. All spotlight are on he is standing at the beginning of the piece and forgot his first line” (Brannagan, 2015 annex interview). With seven years to the kick-off of the 2022 FIFA World Cup TM a lot of things can be changed, assuming one knows what to improve.

As the authors pointed out when introducing this paper, the hosting award to Qatar was controversial and therefore perceived very diversely. This award, being part of a bigger soft power strategy, is perceived differently and therefore the authors put forward the following research title:



*Soft Power Strategies through Sports:
An analysis of peoples' perception about the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™*

This paper shows that the above research question was based on differences in media coverage in various regions since the host award in 2010. Therefore the authors analyzed the different topics covered around the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ in the Western and Eastern audio-visual media; They saw a much more negative picture of Qatar and the World Cup in the Western press.

To understand what Qatar's initial interest in hosting the World Cup was the authors analyzed the countries foreign policy, sports interest and general agenda. By doing so it became evident that the hosting of major sport events in general and hosting of the World Cup in particular has to be seen as a segment of a wider soft power strategy of the microstate in the Gulf. This soft power strategy was set up to get Qatar on the map and raise awareness for the country plus changing its' perception and loosening it from the Middle East in the Western world. By analyzing the soft power strategy the authors also discovered the theory of soft disempowerment, which can be applied to the status of Qatar right now. While the World Cup hosting decision brought the wished attention and awareness to the Gulf-country it also shed more light on issues in Qatar. Though it reached high awareness, in combination with negative perception the soft power intention can create a negative overall picture in people's head.

To understand better the differences in perception of the people in the GCC, expatriates living in Qatar and the rest of the world the authors designed a survey. It is seen that the World Cup in Qatar is perceived different amongst these three different groups. Expatriates being the most positive and supportive with the GCC-respondents to follow, while the rest of the world had a more negative perception of the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™. Although weather became a clear issue to all groups the overall picture is more diverse with different understandings and difficulties between the groups.



However, the authors noticed that these groups have very different perception of one and the same thing. Thus future communication strategies for these three groups cannot be the same but have to be tailor-made. In addition, with groups being so different, it might become impossible to win everyone for such a delicate topic. Therefore a focus on the major issues within the most important groups seems most adequate.

During the process of writing the paper the authors encountered a few problems. However, one issue that was both an advantage and disadvantage at the same time was the timing of the survey. While they conducted the survey during the end of May 2015 the investigation around the FIFA Congress helped to potentially reach a bigger audience, the authors might have slightly biased data due to the general atmosphere at this time. Moreover the survey does only measure the perception at a single point in time and not a development alongside soft power changes or media shifts.

Further study should focus on underlying feelings and stereotypes that formed the observed perception. In addition an analysis about the different analyzed subgroups should be done in order to see which one is worth focusing on in future strategies and communication within the upcoming seven years.



Abbreviations

AJMN - Al Jazeera Media Network

CIA - Central Intelligence Agency

The **FA** - English Football Association

FIFA - Fédération Internationale de Football Association

FIFA EXCO – FIFA Executive Committee

GCC - Gulf Cooperation Council

ICSS - International Centre for Sport Security

IOC - International Olympic Committee

LGBT - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

PSG - Paris Saint German

QFA - Qatari Football Association

UCL - UEFA Champions League

UEFA - Union of European Football Associations

UEL - UEFA European League

UAE - United Arabic Emirates

UN - United Nations

USA - United States of America



Index of Tables and Figures

Table 1 - Major sport events in Qatar from 2011 to 2022	19
Table 2 - Demographics.....	42
Table 3 - Mean likeability of Qatar & FIFA.....	52
Figure 1 - Difference in support among the three groups.....	44
Figure 2 - Believe of involvement of bribes in the Qatar 2022 bid	47
Figure 3 - Interest in football amongst survey respondents.....	48
Figure 4 - Correlation between likeability of Qatar & FIFA	50
Figure 5 - Likeability of FIFA & Qatar amongst the different groups	52



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Annex

Total Word Count

From Introduction to Conclusion: 18,393

Interviews

1- Paul Brannagan - BA, MSc Teaching Fellow in Sport Policy and Politics and Researcher

Q1: Soft Power of hosting big sports events consequences on Qatar as a country? Is it working?

From a branding point of view, “the World Cup has done wonders to the brand of Qatar all over the world”, No body knew about Qatar before winning to host the World Cup 2022.

For Qatar, up till now, there are some positive and other negative points. The positive one is that this soft power has put Qatar on the global map as a play maker in different areas including sports. Negative one is more towards the social issue and regulations inside the country that no body knew about before world wide like the Kafala system, and work force problems for example.

“The soft power is all about attraction, so to be a host for FIFA World Cup has given the stage to Qatar to perform like an actor on the stage. But till now, it seems that the actor has lost his lines in the first couple of minutes of the play. BUT this does not mean that he can not get back and perform in a great way that entertains the audience”.

Q2: How could the Supreme Committee work on its communications to better deliver its product in the next few years to the whole world?

“The Committee has to decide who is their target audience first, because you cant make everyone happy”. They need to start being proactive and target their audience effectively to cover any misconceptions or misunderstandings exist.



2- Majed Alkhelaifi - Editor Director of Doha Newspaper

Q1: From your point of view, does the soft power, which Qatar uses to host world's largest championship, have positive or negative effect so far? Why?

In the beginning, I would like to say that Qatar has bet on the soft power to achieve the aspired results that include the transition to a powerful force in the world sports' map. Qatar has succeeded clearly in doing so by hosting many global and regional tournaments and sport events. We can be certain that the impact of this soft power was positive through the good reflections on the organizational, the technical and the strategic levels. The whole world watched how Qatar succeeded in adopting sports as a strategic factor to build the future plan and emphasize its position in the international forums.

The results of the soft power in terms of hosting major tournaments have had many advantages. They include investing in sports diplomacy and utilizing it in sponsoring local and international competitions and sports clubs. Believing that sports investments are the cornerstone in achieving the long-term development can do this.

In fact, among the biggest successes of country sports diplomacy is to win the hosting of FIFA World Cup Championship in 2022, which is the most attractive world championship to the media. Also, the implications of hosting many conferences, forums, and international meetings in Doha, have confirmed the right vision for those who are responsible for the Qatari sport. It has also confirmed its role in perpetuating the global reputation of Doha as the capital of the world sport, along with the future rewards on the economic level.

This hosting has proved the Qatar's capacity to transform to a power, which cannot be neglected on the organizational, and the human capital levels. Even Qatar bet on the tools of the soft power including "sports diplomacy" to protect the hosting of FIFA 2022. Ultimately, it turned to be more secure to do that and less expensive.

Among the fruitful results of the soft power's success, (i) the ability of Qatar to invest in all sports diplomatic areas, including the organization of international competitions, (ii) the development of the sport on the national level (sport academies, sports centers, major tournaments, and infrastructure), (iii) sponsoring several competitions or sports entities,



and access to exclusive competitions broadcasting rights for International competitions, and (v) buy foreign sports clubs.

Q2: From your point of view, what does the organizing committee for FIFA world cup 2022 need to do in Qatar to improve its reputation in the future?

I find it is fair to express our gratitude for the effort done by the higher committee for projects, which is responsible for preparing the hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022. Those young men have been working very hard since 2010 after the voting in Zurich, until Qatar won the bid to host this global event and bringing it the Middle East for the first time. They are working very hard to hold a unique version of the Mondial and make it a huge global event, which will leave human, social and economic heritage for Qatari people after 2022.

I am also proud of all people in committees and the supporting institutions which work on creating a unique model which has the professional and the technical merit and the best strategic techniques for event organization.

Despite all the positive signs for the committee's role and efforts we must admit that there are challenges that require us to heighten the level of fierce confrontation with Western media and the manipulative role it plays against Arabs and the Middle East to fail hosting this great event.

For example, yellow journalism in Britain and other Western areas wait for the opportunity to chant boring speeches about the 2022 from time to time. One time they talk about the expats, another time about the timing of the tournament, and about human rights and voting rights. They try fabricating crises, news and stories, which lack legal evidence. This requires us to offer an extensive media effort and disciplined action plan, which we hope the organizing committee keep in mind.

We also require lining the Arab and regional support, and find a platform to attract all fair votes from our communities. In particular, we have seen in recent initiatives serious invitations from entities such as their Excellency media ministers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and all the concerned entities in succeeding in hosting the 2022 World Cup. They try to handle and respond to news which questions Qatar's right to organize



the 2022 World Cup. They also stress on the solidarity of the whole GCC with Qatar as well as the supportive role the Islamic Cooperation Organization plays to endorse and host Qatar 2022 World Cup.

3- Abdullah Almarri - Head of News department at ALKASS Sports Channel

Q1: From your point of view, does the soft power which Qatar uses to host world's largest championship, have positive or negative effect so far? Why?

Indeed, it has positively affected the hosting of the World Cup, and the best evidence is the world championship for volleyball. It contributed to increasing people's passion for this game. Also hosting such events and championships develops our media skills and organization capabilities. It also increases people's awareness of the game and encourages them to participate in the future. We still remember our hosting of the 1995 FIFA World Youth Championship and 2006 Asian Games (the XV Asiad).

Q2: From your point of view, what should the organizing committee for the 2022 World Cup do to improve Qatar's reputation in the future?

We as Qatari people have the absolute trust in the organizing committee and their visions and capabilities. What they have offered assures their persistence and desire in getting the work done. And you can see how they revealed five sport courts seven years before the hosting of the 2022 World Cup. They also devised a cooling technique for stadiums since 2010 and the organizing committee didn't request to hold the World Cup in the winter, but FIFA did.

This proves that the committee is ready to host the event anytime and that the infrastructure is well taken care of by the state. For example, the train project and other projects have begun two years ago. We are building our state and don't stand with our arms folded waiting things to happen. We will continue working in various fields such as infrastructure, education, health and sports.



The organizing committee has worked on winning the challenges and do not need to improve its image because the image is already bright and brilliant. They are very committed and we support and encourage them, and we are proud of its every single member. No words of appreciation can tell their real worth. What they need the most is time and by then they will achieve the long awaited creativity.



Survey

1) Age

- ☐ under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-54
- ☐ 55+

2) Gender

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

3) Country of residence

**Survey had list of all countries*

4) Nationality

**Survey had list of all nationalities*

5) Which is the flag of the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ host?

☐ 220pxFlag_of_qatar_svg.png



☐ 220pxFlag_of_kuwait_svg.png



☐ 220pxFlag_of_bahrain_svg.png



☐ 218pxFlag_of_saudi Arabia_svg.png



6) What country will host the 2022 FIFA World Cup™?



7) On a scale from 1-10 (1 being the lowest, 10 being the highest) how likeable is FIFA as an organization to you?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

8) I am interested in Football

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

9) I follow the FIFA World Cup™

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

10) I plan to watch the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ on TV

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

11) I plan to watch a 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ match live in the stadium

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

12) Which three of the following elements do you associate most with Qatar?

☐ Desert

☐ Football

☐ "Cool"

☐ Money

☐ Oil



☐ Dubai

☐ Sport events

☐ Tourism

☐ Other: _____

13) I support Qatar as the host of the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

14) Qatar is capable of hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

15) I am excited that the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ will be hosted in Qatar

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

16) FIFA should revise the decision of Qatar hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup™

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

17) I think there was bribing involved in the decision of Qatar being the 2022 FIFA World Cup™ host

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

18) Qatar will have sufficient infrastructure to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup™

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

19) Moving the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ to November-December was a good idea

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable



20) I think the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ will be a success

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

21) What do you think might become an issue during the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™? (max. 3 answers)

- ☐ Weather
☐ Accommodation
☐ Public transport
☐ Sustainability
☐ Access to alcohol
☐ Islam
☐ Women's rights
☐ Language problems
☐ Football tradition
☐ Terrorism
☐ None of the above
☐ Other: _____
-

22) Foreigners' perception of Qatar will change after going to the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

23) Qataris' perception of Qatar will change after the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable

24) Qataris' perception of foreigners will change after the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™

- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Not applicable



25) On a scale from 1-10 (1 being the lowest, 10 being the highest) how likeable is Qatar to you?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

26) Have you ever lived in Qatar?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Thank You!

