Elements of Postcolonialism in Sportswashing:

A thematic discourse analysis of FIFA in the context of the World Cup in Qatar of 2022

By:

Johan Dahl

Melker Nielsen

Abstract

The study aims to demonstrate to what extent speeches, Instagram posts and LinkedIn posts of Gianni Infantino, as the main representative of FIFA, have been marked by elements of Postcolonialism and sportswashing to influence the acceptance of the FIFA World Cup of 2022 in Qatar. The result of this study indicates that FIFA's rhetoric is marked by Postcolonial elements. Also, the study suggests that certain rhetoric is employed to divert attention away from the criticism of the West in the context of the FIFA World Cup of 2022 in Qatar. Additionally, the study provides insights into how Postcolonialism and sportswashing are related to a certain extent. To reach this conclusion the authors conducted a discursive thematic analysis to highlight themes of the theory of Postcolonialism and the concept of sportswashing. Understanding the field of research into sportswashing is crucial in the pursuit of knowledge about the impact of global sports organizations on the international political arena. This study contributes to the understanding of how elements of Postcolonialism can be found in discourses for the purpose to justify international sports events.

Keywords: *FIFA, Gianni Infantino, Orient, Postcolonialism, Qatar, Sportswashing, West, Whataboutism, World cup*

Words: 9910

Table of contents

1. Introduction

The FIFA World Cup of 2022 in Qatar was immensely criticized due to accusations of violations of human rights by the host country. The critique of this World Cup mainly came from Western countries, from a wide range of individuals and organizations within but also outside of the realm of football. This critique largely focused on the Qatari regime but was also directed towards the president of FIFA and the organization as a whole. The situation came to its peak when the president of FIFA, Gianni Infantino, held his opening speech of the World Cup during a press conference (*Madow, L., et al., 2022, CNN; FIFA, 2022a*). The authors started to wonder about FIFA's role as an actor within the field of politics and thereby its role in critical political issues. That is why Gianni Infantino is of interest, as a representative for FIFA in his role as president, in the understanding of private organization´s use of sports as a means of justifying highly politically criticized tournaments. When the president of FIFA, tells the world about the FIFA World Cup in Qatar as "*...the best world cup ever...*" it made the authors question what this actually means in terms of deflecting the attention of the audience away from human rights abuse in the name of sports (*FIFA, 2022b*).

In regards to Qatar as the first Middle Eastern country to host a FIFA World Cup in history of the tournament and the massive critique which has primarily come from the West brought the authors attention to the theory of Postcolonialism (*FIFA, n.d.*). The theory raises questions whether the critique can be fully justified without being viewed as neocolonial and therefore become connected to Orientalism and the continuous dominance of Western countries in the Middle East. That is why it is of interest in this case study to examine how patterns of Postcolonialism are present in speeches, official statements and writing by FIFA, particularly Gianni Infatino, when addressing the much-criticized World Cup. Furthermore, the authors will analyze the presence of Postcolonial tendencies in the concept of sportswashing and hence who is entitled to use the concept as an accusation.

1.1 Historical Context

A historical context is presented to illustrate how the FIFA World Cup has been used and what discourse the FIFA presidents have employed to justify previous controversial World Cups. In

this part Argentina and the FIFA president João Havelange will be introduced and later Russia and Gianni Infantino to demonstrate how the discourses have been constructed in previous tournaments. The FIFA presidents' role remains the same throughout the tournaments, as the forefront of criticism and therefore becomes an optimal representative for the organization and its values and opinions

<u>FIFA and presidential defense</u>

FIFA (International Federation of Association Football), the main governing body of international football, has arranged World Cups in different countries and one of those tournaments which was characterized by criticism and controversy was the FIFA World Cup in Argentina. A country which was ruled by the infamous dictator Jorge Rafael Videla during the 20th century, hosted the FIFA World Cup of 1978 (*Magalhaes, L, 2020, pp. 904*). The military government in Argentina needed to renew the support they received from the coup which put the government in power. They also needed to achieve consensus from civil society. Therefore, hosting the spectacle was highly prioritized by the government to create legitimacy and also to respond to the critique which primarily came from Europe, the United States and Amnesty international. The criticism emanating from these actors was most often directed at human rights violations in the host country (*Magalhaes, L, 2020, pp. 906-907*). The FIFA president of that time, João Havelange, praised the World Cup with these words: "*The FIFA World Cup of 1978 in Argentina was, in my opinion, one of the best organized final tournaments*". He added:

> "*After the political and economic changes the country went through, the creation of the Ente Autarquico Mundial with the hard work of Admiral Car- los Alberto Lacoste behind it, the support received from the Argentinian authorities…rendered a nearly perfect organization of the 1978 FIFA World Cup possible.*" (*FIFA, 1978, pp. 4*).

This shows how the president justifies the FIFA World Cup and therefore Argentina and the government. This is a recurring rhetorical way for the president of FIFA to justify the organization's actions and in one context in cooperation with the host country. This controversy, of authoritarian regimes using sports as a political tool, can also be seen in later years when the eyes of the world was once again turned to Europe when Russia hosted the FIFA World Cup in

2018. This sparked criticism due to Russia's occupation of Crimea in 2014, murders of the opposition and the banning of homosexuality in social media. The Russian government and Vladimir Putin knew how to shield the event by preventing unwanted perspectives to be shown which bare much of a resemblance to the olympics of Berlin in 1936 (*Bettine, 2021, pp. 193-204*). Gianni Infantino, the president of FIFA, had this to say about the FIFA World Cup in 2018 "*...As President of FIFA, I must of course stay neutral but I do want to once again commend President Putin and the Russian people for hosting the best FIFA World Cup ever...*" (*FIFA, 2018, pp. 1*). This can be understood as an honoring of the hosting country´s capabilities.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The FIFA World Cup of 2022 in Qatar has been criticized because of several human rights violations in the host country, which interested the authors in how the reasoning of supporting such regimes, as Qatar, in terms of sportswashing can be justified with discourses containing elements of Postcolonialism. Therefore, the authors present discourses by Gianni Infantino, as a representative of FIFA, in the context of the FIFA World Cup of 2022, to underscore the patterns of Postcolonialism and sportswashing. The research will be confronted by using a thematic discourse analysis which provides a framework for the manner in which the material can be studied and structured in order to provide the authors with excellent preconditions for conducting the analysis.

Additionally, the purpose of this study is to contribute to extra-scientific relevance because the authors want to contribute to a better understanding of how powerful private actors defend highly criticized actions and decisions with political significance. This study also aims to contribute to intra-scientific relevance in regards to private actors' role in terms of sportswashing rather than the exclusiveness of states which are central within the concept. Furthermore, there is additional intra-scientific relevance in problematising the concept of sportswashing from a Postcolonial perspective. This is done because the concept of sportswashing is mainly used from the West and aimed at non-Western countries. Which raises the question of whether the West has an exclusive right to its use.

1.3 Research Question

Primary research question: To what extent has FIFA´s rhetoric been marked by elements of Postcolonialism and sportswashing in the context of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar of 2022?

Sub-questions: How can the concept of sportswashing be integrated with Postcolonialism? What themes can be identified to detect Postcolonial discourses by FIFA? To what extent do these themes represent different Postcolonial and sportswashing elements?

1.4 Literature Review

Below follows a description of what previous research constitutes regarding the concept of sportswashing. This is introduced to highlight how Infantino together with FIFA's discourses could possibly contribute to sportswashing in the country, ultimately enhancing Qatar's soft power. Since many of the criticisms directed at the World Cup from the West are based on the concept of sportswashing, it therefore forms an important motive behind Infantino's discourses.

Soft Power and Sportswashing

More than four hundred years ago, Niccolo Machiavelli advised princes of Italy that it was more important to be feared than to be loved. However, this advice no longer holds the same relevance for leaders today, as the concept of power has evolved due to the globalized world we live in, where modern information technology disseminates information more widely than ever before (Nye, 2005, pp. 1f). Power can come in different shapes and it is typically associated with control and contesting. These two are components private institutions, states and governments are constantly striving for by achieving dominance in the area of preference. The term dominance is used in a wide range of areas such as dominance in economic activity, resources, territorial gain but also in terms of sport. Therefore, it is too simplistic to assume that sports and politics are separate phenomena. When sports have been used as political leverage to gain influence and power, countries such as the United States and China are used to these practices. The United States have used basketball as a form of diplomacy in India and Africa to achieve diplomatic gains and China has used loans and active financings of stadiums as a *quid pro quo* to gain resources in Africa (*Chadwick, S., 2022, pp.691*). This is what is labeled as sportswashing,

a tool politicians use to direct the audience's perceptions away from less desirable phenomena (*Chadwick, S., 2022, pp. 696*).

This brings us to the term soft power which was introduced by Joseph Nye as a political tool to describe a state's ability to influence others through non military and diplomatic actions, such as the use of sports (*Nye, J., 2005, pp 5-6*). Sportswashing can culturally be linked to the Western hemisphere, countries which are using this to label countries which are the opposite of their values and ideologies. This concept of soft power is used by countries such as France, Britain and Germany, by using sport as a boosting of their global soft power. Most notable is France and her victory in the FIFA World Cup final in 2018, which serves as a contributor to the country´s soft power. Also, Britain is using football as a British national brand to promote trade and diplomatic relationships (*Chadwick, S., 2022, pp. 696*).

Postcolonial Discourses in Morocco and South Africa

The following research is presented to highlight the presence of Postcolonial arguments, in World Cup history, to call for a certain nation to host a World Cup in a marginalized continent. It underlines that a nation's chances of hosting mega-events is very much dependent on their positioning in the international arena. This unequal basis appears when studying African and Middle Eastern countries bidding for hosting the World Cup (*Cornelissen, 2004, pp. 1293*). In addition to this, Postcolonial and neocolonial discourses have played a major role in World Cup contexts in the past. For both Morocco and South Africa, Postcolonial discourses and arguments were at the core of their efforts to host the World Cup. Both countries alluded to an image of Africa that has long been neglected by the West (*Cornelissen, 2004, pp. 1302*). This overarching theme can be recognised in South Africa's slogan when running to bid for the World Cup: "It's Africa's turn!" (*Cornelissen, 2004, pp. 1297*). Strong feelings of marginalization of the entire continent permeated the rhetoric of both countries. Non-Westerns can however change their international image by hosting a tournament, in this way the country can showcase its organizational capacity and thereby challenge the negative stereotype of developing countries as the "archetypal other" against which the West judges itself positively (*Cornelissen, 2004, pp. 1302*). The thematic discourse analysis conducted by Cornelissen (*2004, pp. 1302f*) results in a

number of quotes that are in line with the Postcolonial theme. For example, the former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, stated that:

> *"This is an African journey of hope-hope that, in time, we will arrive at a future*
> *when our continent will be free of wars, refugees and displaced people, free of*
> *tyranny, of racial, ethnic and religious divisions and conflicts, of hunger and the*
> *accumulated weight of centuries of the denial of our human dignity...Nothing could*
> *ever serve to energize our people to work for their and Africa's upliftment more*
> *than to integrate among the tasks of our Second Decade of Democracy and the*
> *African Renaissance our successful hosting of the 2010 Soccer World Cup"* (*Cornelissen,*
> *2004, pp. 1302*).

Some argue that the late awarding of the hosting of the World Cup in Africa and the Middle East is a reflection of broader First World-Third World power relation (*Cornelissen, 2004, pp. 1300f*).

1.5 Key Concepts

In this part sportswashing will be introduced as a key concept of this study in order to contextualize and analyze the words of Gianni Infantino. The concept is also a conclusive part of the methodological approach since it is used as the foundation of some of the themes which constitute the study's thematic analysis.

1.5.1 Sportswashing

The concept sportswashing is often used to describe the pursuit of soft power through the use of sports. Qatar has implemented several structures and strategies, such as investments in media and humanitarianism, that align with the principles of a country seeking to expand its soft power. These strategies are aimed at enhancing Qatar's international reputation and promoting its culture (*Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2018, pp. 1144-1146*). The concept of sportswashing is also used to describe the strategy whereby regimes or organizations use sporting events to hide or mitigate their poor political or human rights record or to improve their image (Boykoff, 2022, pp. 342f). The practitioners of sportswashing also benefit from presenting themselves as progressive and modern, even though that may not actually be the case. The tool of sportswashing becomes in

many cases an attempt to attract investment or tourists, by creating an image of a country that is welcoming and safe. In addition, the attractiveness of events can divert attention from other problems faced by the country or organization, such as corruption or economic difficulties (Boykoff, 2022, pp. 342f).

The strategy of sportswashing quickly became a well-established part of human rights terminology, partly because Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, the two most influential human rights organizations globally, included sport in their activities. Human rights organizations played an important role in reframing public discussions around the positive and negative impacts of huge sporting events (*Keys, 2019, pp:109f*).

2. Theory

This section will introduce Orientalism and Postcolonialism as the theoretical frameworks for this study, also demonstrating how these theories are interconnected.

2.1 Orientalism and Postcolonialism

The theories of Orientalism and Postcolonialism are distinct theoretical frameworks to implement when studying relations between Western and non-Western countries. As the criticism of the 2022 World Cup by Western countries is directed at a former British protectorate, Postcolonial structures have become of interest to the authors to provide a deeper understanding of FIFA's role in the relationship between the former colonizers and the Orient. As presented in the *1.1 historical context*, sports has been used as a political tool on multiple occasions, however the presence of sportswashing became specifically highlighted in the cases consisting of non-Western hosts. Beforehand, the authors noticed the connection between Postcolonialism and sportswashing and decided to research whether it is present in the discourses of Gianni Infantino and thereby the main governing body of the World Cup. Therefore, the connection between Postcolonialism and sportswashing became an inevitable aspect to research with regards to Gianni Infantino's discourses during the FIFA World Cup of 2022 in Qatar. The theories will be used in an analytical sense. To get a more nuanced understanding of this and the Western hemisphere's influence, this study will use the theory of Orientalism. Edward Said defined it as:

> *"...Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions…It is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical and philological texts…about what "we" do and what "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do"* (*Said, Edward, 1979, pp. 12*).

Edward Said discusses the relation between the West and the Orient as a form of "the strong vs the weak", Europe as the strong and the Orient as the weak. This relationship was seen by the West as the foundation of the relationship in regards to politics, religion and culture. Europeans were viewed as rational, mature, normal and virtuous in comparison with the Orientals which were viewed as depraved, different and irrational. According to Said the Orient was considered

not as a result of the Oriental's own efforts rather by the complex series of knowledge manipulation in which the region was identified by the Western hemisphere (*Said, Edward, 1979, pp. 40*). With that said, Edward Said's theory of Orientalism laid the ground for the theory of Postcolonialism (*Hamadi, L., 2014, pp. 39*).

The creation of this binary relationship between the Orient and the West was crucial in justifying the military, economic and cultural project of European colonialism in the 18th and 19th centuries (*Said, Edward, 1979, pp. 4f*). Postcolonialism is therefore viewed as a result of Orientalism and serves as a useful method for analyzing the long-term impact of colonialism and imperialism on both formerly colonized and colonizing societies. This approach enables the critique of interactions between Western and non-Western states and societies in political, economic and cultural spheres. It is also important to recognize the link between language and power and how certain cultures are portrayed (*Said, Edward, 1979, pp. 20-21*).

The definition of Postcolonialism is termed by Rukundwa & van Aarde (*2007, pp. 1171*) with these words: "*Postcolonial theory is a means of defiance by which any exploitative and discriminatory practices, regardless of time and space, can be challenged*". According to Postcolonial theorists, the political independence achieved after the decolonisation in the aftermath of World War II did not lead to a real liberation of the 'subaltern' individuals and communities (*Spivak, 1988, pp.69-70*). Global structural hierarchies, existing since the emergence of the nation state and still present in today's globalized world of international capitalism, remain unchanged. For Postcolonial analysis to shed light on these issues, it is essential to critically examine how the voices of the silenced subalterns are represented, and by whom. In a lot of the cases the subaltern people are viewed as the cultural "others" (*Spivak, 1988, pp.70f*). Representation practices ensure continuous Western dominance over the Orient (*Said, Edward, 1979, pp. 20-21*).

3. Methodology

In this part of the case study, the methodological approach and consideration will be presented, in relation to the research question and the theory presented above. Firstly, a thematic discourse analysis will be introduced. Secondly, a discussion of important methodological considerations will be featured in order to create a thoroughly structured study and create transparency of the research.

3.1 Discourse Analysis with a Thematic Approach

To enable a deeper understanding of Gianni Infantino's discourses, in regards to the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, a discourse analysis will be applied. Discourse is the idea of language as a mattering factor, the creation of structure in diverse patterns which our perceptions are based upon. This creates our behaviors in certain areas and situations and therefore, a discourse analysis, is an analysis of our linguistic perceptions (*Philips, L., & Jørgensen, M., 2000, pp. 8*). Furthermore, language is perceived as a tool to construct societies, happenings, the social reality and also describes diverse versions of the world. The flexible nature of a discourse analysis as a tool to analyze texts and speeches is an academic advantage for this study which enables a wide range of source material to use (*Bryman A., 2016, pp. 640*).

3.1.1 Thematic Analysis

To understand how Postcolonialism is present in the discourses by FIFA, the study used thematic analysis which provided the framework to identify the themes (patterns) of Postcolonial elements (*Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2006, s. 79*). The method is based on the idea to establish codes and themes which will serve as a helpful tool in the pursuit of identifying Postcolonial patterns when searching through the material (*Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2006, s. 83–84*). Thematic analysis is a widely employed method within the field of qualitative research, making it highly relevant for the study's qualitative methodology. This method is mostly used within the field of psychology, although it can be applied to other research areas as well, which enabled the authors to use this methodological approach (*Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2006, s. 79*). An important aspect is that thematic analysis differs from other types of analytical methods which also aims to identify

themes within qualitative data, for example IPA and grounded theory. IPA (Interpretative phenomenological analysis) is theoretically bounded and is connected to phenomenological epistemology, which aims to create an understanding for people's everyday experience of reality. This method enables the understanding of the phenomenon which are involved. Grounded theory is also used to understand phenomena whose purpose is to generate usable theories based on the phenomenon which can be identified within the data. Due to the aim of this study, to identify themes and not phenomenon, made these methods irrelevant for this study and was therefore discarded in favor of thematic analysis (*Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2006, s. 80–81*).

3.2 Methodological Considerations

There is no right or wrong regarding what can be considered a theme, there is also no concrete numeral value that defines a certain theme as the most relevant. Therefore, it is the authors who decide what are the most relevant codes and themes for the research question. (*Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2006, s. 82*). This leads to the decision whether to use an inductive or a deductive approach. Firstly, the inductive approach aims to identify themes which are strongly related to the material. This could mean that the themes identified within the material can have little relevance to the research question. This approach does not sectionize the codes into an already existing framework or the authors analytical preconceptions. It is also important to note that the authors cannot put aside their own theoretical and epistemological commitments because these are already existing beforehand. Secondly, the deductive approach is based upon the author's theoretical and analytical interests within the field which are being observed. However, only a small part of the observations will be analyzed and this will result in a more detailed analysis of some aspects of the data. The authors made the decisions to use a deductive approach due to the aim of identifying patterns within the theory of Postcolonialism and the key concept of sportswashing. However, during the collecting of material and data, the authors immediately identified codes which were of interest for the already decided themes. It gave the methodological approach a more dynamic result which made the authors reconsider the narrow choice of an all deductive approach to combine it with an inductive approach (*Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2006, s. 83–84*).

The use of an inductive approach enabled access to a template for the different stages of the research design that researchers can conveniently adhere to. One notable aspect is that the authors did not find any new themes (*step 3*) which were of relevance to the study and therefore the already pre-existing themes were the only which were used. These phases were the fundamental practice for the research process which are presented in figure **1** below:

Figure 1: Phases of thematic analysis (*Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2006, s. 87*)

	Phase	Description of the process
1.	Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2.	Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3.	Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4.	Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5.	Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6.	Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

In figure **2** below, the authors demonstrate the codes from the combination of a deductive and an inductive approach. The codes from the deductive approach was based upon the author's previous epistemological commitments. The inductive approach simplified the process of dividing the codes into separate themes, since it improved the authors understanding of how the codes are represented in the material. The result is presented below:

Figure 2: Themes & Codes

Themes (5)	Motivation	Codes
Generalizing the Others/the Orient/the Global South	This theme originates from Postcolonialism. Therefore, codes were selected that can be linked to the Orient.	Arab nation, Africa, Arab, Qatar, People of Qatar, Gulf, Doha, Middle East, Indian, North Korea, Afghanistan, Muslim. (12)
Portrayal of The West/The Global North	This theme originates from Postcolonialism. Therefore, codes were selected that can be linked to the West.	Europe, West, Western world, England, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Portugal, Scotland, Switzerland, The United States. (12)
Cultural Dichotomization	This theme connects the themes above and focuses on the differences between the West and the Orient. The codes were selected to identify any differences that were claimed.	Migrant, Worker, Global, Unite, Come together, The world, The entire world, Culture, Background, Gender, Nationality, Beliefs, History, Representatives, Religion, Race. (16)
Whataboutism	This theme focuses on the role of whataboutism. Therefore, codes were selected to highlight this principle.	Criticism, Injustice, Hypocrisy, Inclusion, Tolerance, Moral, Double Moral, Divide, Racism, No beer, Human rights, Exclusion, Insult, Abuse, LGBT, Standards, Sexuality, Women, Prejudice. (20)
Distraction, Depoliticizing and Focus on Sports	This theme demonstrates the presence of sportswashing in the discourses. The codes should thus represent words aimed at diverting attention from politics to sport.	Fantastic stadiums, Greatest show, First time, Amazing, Magical, Magnificent, State-of-the-art, Best-ever, Incredible, Spectacular, Beautiful, Generate, Defend, Showcase. (14)

A further consideration the authors made was the decision of whether to use a semantic or latent theme. The semantic theme focuses only on what is said by the analytical objects. Thereafter, the data is organized to gain insight in which themes could be identified and thereafter they would be summarized and later interpreted in regards to what these themes mean and their implications. Whereas the latent theme is doing the opposite of this by identifying, or investigating, the underlying factors such as ideology, ideas and assumptions. The aim of this study is to focus on analyzing what is said and studying the underlying factors, therefore the authors decided to use a latent theme (*Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2006, s.84*). In epistemological terms, the following aspects were taken into consideration. Firstly, the essentialist/realistic perspective focuses on meanings, motivations and experiences by an individual. In contrast, the constructionist perspective focuses on the sociocultural context. The aim of this study was to study a social context within the complexities of Postcolonialism and sportwashing, therefore the authors decided to use the constructionist perspective (*Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2006, s. 85*).

3.2.1 Critique and Defense of Thematic Analysis

Critics argue that thematic analysis is only a sub-component of other qualitative methods and thus not suitable or complete as a separate method to use on its own for analysis (*Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 2-3*). Contrarily, advocates of thematic analysis argue that it is indeed a method in itself. The method is highly adaptable and can be successfully applied to a wide range of epistemologies, research fields and research problems. The thematic analysis helps to identify, analyze, organize, describe and report on themes found in the data being analyzed (*Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp77f*).

Furthermore, critics claim that there is a lack of sufficient literature that creates guidelines for how the method should be applied and therefore creates an increased risk that credibility decreases when no clear application of the method can be found (*Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 2-3*). This can be compared to theories such as grounded theory, which was mentioned earlier in *3.1.1 Thematic Analysis*, where the guidelines are much clearer and the literature far more sufficient. This freedom and vagueness may result in novice or first-time users of the method being uncertain about how to conduct a rigorous research using thematic analysis (*Braun & Clarke,*

2006, pp77f). Criticism of the flexibility of the method is also based on the fact that it can lead to inconsistency and lack of coherence when developing themes (*Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 2-3*).

The criticism of its shortcomings can be reversed and it can be argued that the method does not require as much detailed theoretical and technical knowledge as other qualitative methods, making it an easily accessible method, especially for researchers at the beginning of their research career (*King, 2004, pp. 258f*). Even researchers unfamiliar with qualitative methods can learn thematic analysis relatively quickly as there are not many rules and procedures to follow (*King, 2004, pp. 258f*). Clarifying an epistemological position that supports the empirical claims of the study can promote consistency and coherence in the research. This is important to keep under consideration when developing themes. Therefore, the flexibility of thematic analysis can also be considered as one of the main strengths of this methodological approach (*Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 3f*).

3.2.3 Credibility

Since the authors adopt a hermeneutic approach, credibility is discussed in the following section. What determines whether the credibility of a study is established, is when core researchers or readers are confronted with the experience and can recognise it. Credibility concerns the consistency between the respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them (*Tobin & Begley, 2004, pp. 391-392*). There are a number of techniques to improve research credibility such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, data collection triangulation and researcher triangulation. In addition, research credibility is favored by activities such as peer debriefing to provide an external check on the research process (*Lorelli et al., 2017, pp. 2-3*). Peer debriefing is an established practice at Lund University during the process of writing a thesis. The general types of triangulation that can be used to strengthen the credibility of a research are divided into four different types as follows: method of triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and data source triangulation (*Carter et al., 2014, pp. 545*).

To obtain multiple observations and conclusions in a research study, the second type of triangulation, researcher triangulation, is used. This method involves the participation of two or more researchers. This will provide both confirmation of results and different perspectives,

which in turn provides a more diverse and detailed picture of the phenomenon of interest (*Carter et al., 2014, pp. 545-546*). As the study is written by two authors, it demonstrates that two researchers are present and participate in all of the different processes and contribute with their different insights and knowledge.

By applying theory triangulation, the third type of triangulation, to data analysis, different theories can be used to analyze and interpret the data. This method allows different theories or hypotheses to be used to support or refute the researcher's findings (*Carter et al., 2014, pp. 545-546*). This research uses the theories of Orientalism and Postcolonialism as a basis for analysis but also for data collection. The themes created to inform data are based on Postcolonial ideas and the concept of sportswashing.

Data triangulation involves the use of multiple data sources, such as time, space and people, within a study. By combining and comparing data from multiple sources, results can be confirmed, and any weaknesses in individual sources can be balanced by the strengths of others. This can increase both the validity and reliability of the results (*Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021, pp. 2-3*). The study collected data from different periods of time which covers a period before, during and after the World Cup. Which results in a broader dataset of statements of the same phenomenon, the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, from FIFA. The analysis was informed by data collected from FIFA's official website, as well as relevant posts from Instagram and LinkedIn.

3.3 Material and Selection

The material of the research consists of a selection of information from primary sources such as official documents and statements originating from FIFA's official sources. As FIFA's official documents have not been modified by any other source, they are to be considered as primary sources that provide reliable information on the organization's positions, decisions and actions. In addition, primary sources such as publications by Infantino, as a representative for FIFA, on the social media platforms Instagram and LinkedIn were also collected. Publications on Instagram and LinkedIn can be considered as primary sources, as they are first-hand sources of information published directly by the users themselves. This material was collected in accordance with the purpose of the study, discourses and statements from FIFA constitute the main material that is

analyzed to identify postcolonial themes and patterns. The selection of material from FIFA's official channels, which includes the website and social media platforms, that was considered relevant to the purpose of the study was then conducted by establishing patterns to look for in compliance with the method of thematic analysis.

The FIFA President Press Conference on the 19th of November 2022 and the speech on the 15th of November where the FIFA president addressed G20 and called for ceasefire in Ukraine during the FIFA World Cup in Qatar of 2022 was selected as the analysis material to be retrieved from the official FIFA website. This limitation was imposed because the speech on the 19th of November 2022 is by far the most publicized speech by Infantino related to the 2022 World Cup. Also, the speech is of specific significance because it was held during the opening ceremonies in Qatar and therefore only dealt with issues related to the 2022 World Cup. A majority of the speech was devoted to responding to the criticism that had been leveled at the spectacle. The speech on the 15th of November 2022 was selected because it is mostly concerning the World Cup in Qatar but also discussing the role of football internationally. Both speeches were available fully transcribed on the FIFA official website. The length of the speeches also allowed for a comprehensive analysis. These speeches also serve as primary sources due to its origin and therefore contribute to the study´s credibility.

With regard to Infantino's posts retrieved from Instagram, the authors did not delimit their search, which means that 220 posts have been reviewed. This is motivated by the fact that Infantino's first Instagram post was uploaded on 12th of December 2022 and for this reason the authors considered every post since then until 12th of April 2023 to be relevant to the purpose of the study. However, the authors limited the amount of posts that were analyzed from LinkedIn. Due to the way LinkedIn organizes posts without specific dates, the authors opted to analyze 179 posts in reverse chronological order starting from 12th of April 2023. These posts were selected because they were considered most relevant to the purpose of the study in terms of temporal proximity to the 2022 World Cup. All posts from both social medias were gathered and transcribed and later compiled into a separate document (appendix **2**) which enabled the authors to search through the material to identify the codes. The document will be attached at the end of the study to ensure transparency in the research process.

3.4 Limitations

With regards to the limitations, the authors decided to limit the possibility of generalization to focus only on Gianni Infantino as a representative for FIFA. Secondly, to investigate Infantino, Instagram, LinkedIn and FIFA's official website were used to analyze his posts, speeches, interviews and press releases. This was limited to the period 2021 until 2023, this was decided to gain the most relevant information regarding the World Cup. Lastly, the framework of this study, which is based upon the codes and the themes which were used to analyze the material, could have excluded data within the material which could have been of use for the research. The material used in the study was limited within the scope of the codes chosen by the authors.

4. Results & Analysis

4.1 Producing the Report

The thematic analysis generated a result in which the authors could identify the most frequent codes used by Infantino in the material. On the basis of this result, the final step of the thematic analysis begins: producing the report. This part of the analysis involves a selection to be made depending on the results generated by the codes, the selection should consist of vivid and convincing examples that will form the basis of the analysis. Finally, the selected extracts will be analyzed on the basis of the research question and the literature on which the study is based. The authors therefore chose two quotes, within each theme based on the two most frequent codes, to serve as the basis for the analysis. The quotes, or "vivid and convincing examples", were chosen, accordingly with the framework of the thematic analysis (figure **1**), on the two following premises:

1. It is possible to relate the quote back to the research question or subquestions.
2. It is possible to relate the quote back to a) Postcolonialism or/and b) sportswashing.

4.2 Frequency of Codes and Considerations

In this section of the results and analysis part, the authors present the results of the thematic analysis. The section is organized on the basis of the different themes that were used. The top two codes that produced the highest number of hits in the material will be exhibited for each theme. In Appendix **1**, the complete result of the thematic analysis is presented where the frequency of all the codes is accessible, it is also divided into the separated themes which are visualized by their different coloring: Generalizing the Others; the Orient; the Global South (light yellow); Portrayal of The West; The Global North (light blue); Cultural Dichotomization (light green); Whataboutism (Pink); Distraction, Depoliticizing and Focus on Sports (yellow). Below, the top two codes were chosen to analyze based upon the purpose of the study but also in the framework of Postcolonialism and sportswashing. The two most frequent codes within each theme are presented together with a quote that serves as an example that will be analyzed.

4.2.1 Generalizing the Others; the Orient; the Global South

Codes	Frequency: Speech on November 15th (%)	Frequency: Speech on November 19th (%)	Frequency: Instagram (%)	Frequency: Linkedin (%)	Frequency: Total (%)
Qatar	3 (0.32%)	37 (0.58%)	29 (0.21%)	195 (0.55%)	264 (0.46%)
Arab	0 (0%)	5 (0.07%)	10 (0.07%)	89 (0.25%)	104 (0.18%)

Quote 1; Code: Qatar

When Gianni Infantino talks about Qatar he aims to change the perception of the Orient, to change the prejudice of the region and the country. By saying:

"…*The world will discover a country and a whole region that's faced sometimes with prejudice, and I'm convinced that, after this World Cup, that will go away and Qatar will be seen as a welcoming country where people can come together…*" (*Infantino, G., n.d.a, post 4*).

Analysis: In this quote there is an indication of a Postcolonial element with regards to the dominance of the world by the West over the Orient. This aligns with what Edward Said states regarding the ongoing relationship between the Orient and the colonizers (*Edward Said, 1979, pp. 40*). Nye´s concept of soft power suggests that among the non-military means, sport can be used as a tool to gain soft power, which brings sportswashing into consideration. Sports are used to divert the attention away from less desirable phenomena (*Nye, J., 2005, pp 5-6)*. This could be the case of what Infantino is trying to imply by using the World Cup as a means to deflect the attention away from less desirable phenomena, such as violations of human rights which the West is implying (*Chadwick, S., 2022, pp. 696*). This pursuit could be viewed as a form of sportswashing in itself in the eyes of the West, at least if Chadwick´s concept of sportswashing is still applied. Chadwick states that the West is using the concept of sportswashing as a tool, not only to gain soft power of its own, but also against countries which are opposite of their values and ideology (*Chadwick, S., 2022, pp. 696*). This brings back the words of Edward Said and the link between power and the major role of language but also how certain cultures are portrayed. The West has its perception of Qatar, and by accusing Qatar of performing sportswashing, as a

tool of shaming, could be viewed as signs of the continuing relationship of the colonizers (the strong) and the Orient (the weak) (*Said, Edward, 1979, pp. 20-21; 40).*

Quote 2; Code: Arab

In the following quote, Gianni Infantino uses words like Qatari, Arab, African, disabled and migrant worker in the same context. Since he believes that they share a common trait of being victims of discrimination and bullying. He states as follows:

- "*...and the same as Switzerland today has become an example of inclusion, of tolerance, of nationalities working together with rights, Qatar has made progress as well... I'm not Qatari, I'm not Arab, I'm not African, I'm not gay, I'm not disabled, I'm not really a migrant worker, but I feel like them because I know what it means to be discriminated [against], to be bullied, as a foreigner in a foreign country, as a child at school...*" (*FIFA, 2022a*)

Analysis: The quote contains details that would enable it to be divided into the following three themes: *Generalizing the Others; the Orient; the Global South*, *Portrayal of The West; The Global North* and *Whataboutism*. However, since the code "arab" was used, this section will focus on *Generalizing the Others; the Orient*. The quote can be perceived to be a response to the extensive critique the country and FIFA received during the prelude to the World Cup. The pattern of Infantino's statement shows that he equates criticism of Qatar with bullying, seeing the West as the bully and Qatar as the victim. He also claims that Africans and Arabs have experienced discrimination, and equates them and Qatar as "the others", which the West oppresses, which corresponds well with Postcolonial theory (*Spivak, 1988, pp.70f*). Infantino seems to be trying to highlight how the Postcolonial world order maintains a power structure that increases discrimination between West and East when he talks about the widespread criticism and discrimination faced by the host country Qatar (*Said, Edward, 1979, pp. 20-21*). In this case, allegations of sportswashing are used as a discriminatory tool.

4.2.2 Portrayal of The West; The Global North

Codes	Frequency: Speech on November 15th (%)	Frequency: Speech on November 19th (%)	Frequency: Instagram (%)	Frequency: Linkedin (%)	Frequency: Total (%)
Europe	3 (0.32%)	23 (0.36%)	6 (0.043%)	21 (0.059%)	53 (0.094%)
France	0 (0%)	1 (0.0015%)	10 (0.0072%)	9 (0.0025%)	20 (0.0035%)

Quote 1; Code: Europe

In the following quote Gianni Infantino tries to blame Europe for what they have done in the past by saying: "*...I think that for what we Europeans have been doing in the last 3,000 years around the world, we should be apologizing for the next 3,000 years before starting to give moral lessons to people…*" (*FIFA, 2022a*).

Analysis: As in the first theme of the analysis, Infantino clearly states the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. Infantino urged Europeans to reflect over their own wrongdoings before they criticize others. This is a clear form of whataboutism in the sense that he tries to change the focus to Europe and her wrongdoings and thus away from the issues the Europeans are stateing *(Borrelli, pp. 315-316)*. Therefore, the code could have been analyzed within the theme of whataboutism as well. Edward Said's Orientalism is once again of importance, Infantino's description of the relationship can be viewed from a Postcolonial perspective regarding Europe's dominance over the Orient as a continuous issue which Infantino tries to highlight (*Said, Edward, 1979, pp. 20-21; 40*). Infantino´s critique of Europe could be viewed from a Postcolonial perspective as a description of the world order, the West as the oppressor and the Orient as the oppressed. This is observed as aims to promote self-awareness among Europeans by highlighting the ways in which their actions perpetuate inequality and limit progress towards equality (*Rukundwa & van Aarde, 2007, pp. 1171; 1190*). Lastly, one important aspect is that Infantino identifies with the oppressor by saying "*we should be apologizing*". This becomes of interest, due to him stating earlier, that he knows how it is to be oppressed, as migrants and the rest of the world has been. This suggests that Infantino alters his identification with different groups based on his agenda.

Quote 2; Code: France

In the following quote Infantino addresses the critique on beer bans, especially originating from the West:

"*... I think personally if for three hours a day you cannot drink a beer, you will survive, especially because the same rules apply in France, or in Spain, or in Portugal, or in Scotland, where no beer is allowed in stadiums now. Now, here, it seems to become a big thing because it's a Muslim country - I don't know why. We tried*" (FIFA, 2022a).

Analysis: Infantino alludes to European cultural superiority when he discusses the Europeans´ reactions to the beer ban in Qatar. Drinking beer is a cultural staple at sporting events in Europe and because of their cultural superiority, they show a lack of understanding of other cultures' attitudes towards alcohol. According to Infantino, Europeans thus show an unwillingness to adapt in any way to other cultures despite being guests in their countries. Orientalism describes how Europeans differentiate themselves from non-Europeans, and it can be contended that the primary factor that established European culture's dominance both within and beyond Europe is the notion of European identity being superior to other identities and cultures (*Said, 1979, pp.7-8*). In addition, Infantino explains how the Western reactions completely differ when it comes to European countries who impose a beer ban. Infantino claims that the critique arises because it is a Muslim country. This is an effort to demonstrate how a decision made by a Western nation can be deemed legitimate by other Western nations, while that same decision made by countries in the Orient could be subject to scrutiny by Western nations. This can be due to a perception of Western superiority, which gives them the right to influence decisions made in the Orient because of their pre-eminence in certain areas (*Said, 1979, pp. 36f*).

4.2.3 Cultural Differences

Codes	Frequency: Speech on November 15th (%)	Frequency: Speech on November 19th (%)	Frequency: Instagram (%)	Frequency: Linkedin (%)	Frequency: Total (%)
The World	21 (2.28%)	29 (0.46%)	70 (0.5%)	178 (0.5%)	298 (0.52%)
Unite	7 (0.76%)	4 (0.06%)	59 (0.42%)	63 (0.17%)	133 (0.23%)

Quote 1; Code: The World

Here Infantino is talking about the culture differences and urging for a more mutual understanding among cultures by saying: "*FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is already having a huge impact on the Middle East. It is also an opportunity for Qatar and the whole Gulf region to present itself to the world in another light and get rid, once and for all, of some of the prejudice that sadly still exists. It will definitely help to get more mutual understanding between people of different cultures and backgrounds…*" (*Infantino, G., n.d. b, post 123*).

Analysis: This quote brings back the thinking of Edward Said, as in the first theme and the code "Qatar". Here, Infantino highlights the prejudice of Qatar and the whole Gulf region, which can be understood by the relationship between the Orient and the colonizer (*Said, Edward, 1979, pp. 40*). It has been proven difficult to call for a certain nation to host a World Cup in a marginalized continent earlier. This became evident for Morocco and South Africa, where both countries referred to a neglected perception of Africa that has been long overlooked by the Western world (*Cornelissen, 2004, pp. 1302*). By highlighting the international view of the Gulf region, Infantino is alluding to the perception of the Orient accordingly with Postcolonialism and sports as a means to achieve change. Therefore, the concept of sportswashing and the theory of Postcolonialism becomes connected. Chadwick argues that sportwashing is a political tool which is used to change the perception of the audience away from less desirable phenomena. This can be argued is what Infantino is aiming to do by using the World Cup as a tool (*Chadwick, S., 2022, pp. 696).* With regards to the massive critique from the West, Infantino's rhetorical use of the World Cup can also be understood by attempts to hide poor political decisions and also human rights violations by the host country in the name of sports (*Boykoff, 2022, pp. 342*).

Quote 2; Code: Unite

Infantino talks about the World Cup and the importance of uniting around sports instead of allowing differences to divide people:

"But let the people enjoy this World Cup – it comes once every four years. How many occasions do we have to unite the world, how many? Do we want to continue to divide? Do we want to continue to spit on the others, just because they look different or they feel different?" (*FIFA, 2022a*).

Analysis: Infantino urges people to enjoy the World Cup, because it happens so rarely, instead of focusing on all the negative aspects surrounding the tournament. The attractiveness of major sports events can be used, as a maneuver to divert attention away from poor human rights records or widely criticized policy, in attempts of sportswashing. Also, the attractiveness of the sport can be used to divert attention away from critique (*Boykoff, 2022, pp. 342f*). That is what Infantino is trying to accomplish with these rhetorics. He urges people to put their differences aside and enjoy football instead.

Notably, in this quote, Infantino is still identifying with the West and no longer with the East. He alludes to how the West, or "*we*" as he now refers to it, has repeatedly divided the world historically and argues that this should not continue. He calls for unification, at least during the World Cup. In this sense, the authors also identified normative patterns of Postcolonialism, since he is advocating for change by confronting the behavior of the West in relation to the East (*Rukundwa & van Aarde, 2007, pp. 1170f*). Furthermore, he refers to the East as "*the others"* and "*they"*, which constitute recurring rhetorics in the Postcolonial theory to capture how the West undermines and generalizes other cultures (*Spivak, 1988, pp.70f*).

4.2.4 Whataboutism

Codes	Frequency: Speech on November 15th (%)	Frequency: Speech on November 19th (%)	Frequency: Instagram (%)	Frequency: Linkedin (%)	Frequency: Total (%)
Women	1 (0.01%)	11 (0.017%)	71 (0.051%)	115 (0.032%)	198 (0.035%)
Human rights	0 (0%)	2 (0.03%)	2 (0.001%)	8 (0.002%)	12 (0.002%)

Quote 1; Code: Women

Infantino uses the history of gender inequality and women rights in Europe as a tool to his advantage by saying: "*...I often give the example of the [right to] vote for women…[do] you know when women were granted the right to vote in the last Swiss Canton? I [will] tell you when, in the 90s. Not the 1890s, in the 1990s...It was the Swiss Supreme Court who forced the men of that canton to say: "No, women have to have the right to vote."... These were the mentalities a few years ago in Europe; let's look at ourselves in the mirror, see where we come from and try, if we are convinced, that we defend the right causes, try to convince the others by engaging…*" (*FIFA, 2022a*).

Analysis: This quote by Infantino is an example of *tu quoque* (whataboutism). He argues that Switzerland and Europe had patriarchal structures not a long time ago which indicates that Infantino aims to deflect the critique away from the situation by shifting the focus towards Europe. By presenting this argument, it becomes evident that he, Qatar, and the region cannot be held accountable since the accusers themselves have engaged in similar actions *(Borrelli, pp. 315-316)*. However, instead of equal treatment of both sides by getting the same consequences, he tries to achieve the clean hands-treatment which means the accusers and the accused will go unpunished (*Borrelli pp. 319*). The term "*the others*", which he uses, has a clear connection to the theory of Postcolonialism. The subaltern is viewed as the others according to Spivak, which becomes highlighted in Infantino's use of this term (*Spivak, 1988, pp.70f*).

Quote 2; Code: Human rights

In this case, Infantino addresses some of the areas most widely criticized by the West regarding the World Cup, namely human rights and migrant labor:

"So, speaking about workers… a human rights watch study… says, basically that because of the European migration policy 25,000 migrants have died since 2014. In eight years. 1,200, only this year, human beings died. So, if we take two steps back of [from] this, I also wonder… if Europe really cares about the destiny of these young people, well, Europe could also do as Qatar did, create some channels, legal channels, where at least a number, a percentage of these workers could come to Europe …" (FIFA, 2022a)

Analysis: Infantino questions whether Europeans really care about the fate of migrant workers. If so, Infantino claims that Europe should start by reviewing its own efforts in favor of migrants. By highlighting a report that emphasizes Europe's inadequate efforts to help migrants, Infantino demonstrates how the Europeans criticism should be put into perspective. This is in accordance with the technique of whataboutism (*Borrelli K., 2019, pp. 315-316*). Infantino acknowledges the criticism regarding the conditions of migrant workers in Qatar, but attempts to invalidate it by referring to the tragic consequences of the migrant policy in Europe in 2014. This leads him to question whether Europe is in a position to criticize the migrant policies of other countries. Sportswashing is considered a method to divert attention away from less desirable phenomena in favor of sports (*Boykoff, 2022, pp. 342f*). Therefore, it is possible to recognize a certain connection with the technique of whataboutism. Since whataboutism, can, as in the case above, be used to divert attention away from the criticism presented towards the World Cup by the West.

4.2.5 Distraction, Depoliticizing and Focus on Sports

Codes	Frequency: Speech on November 15th (%)	Frequency: Speech on November 19th (%)	Frequency: Instagram (%)	Frequency: Linkedin (%)	Frequency: Total (%)
Beautiful	2 (0.21%)	2 (0.03%)	30 (0.21%)	24 (0.06%)	58 (0.1%)
Incredible	0 (0%)	2 (0.03%)	19 (0.13%)	25 (0.07%)	46 (0.08%)

Quote 1; Code: Beautiful

Here Infantino praises the group stage and the stadiums and how successful the World Cup has been by saying: "*…I have seen all the matches and, put very simply and very clearly, the group stage was the best of any FIFA World Cup ever. The matches have been of great quality in beautiful stadiums, while we've had record-breaking TV viewership figures with more than two billion viewers already…*" (*Infantino, G., n.d.a, post 143*).

Analysis: In this quote Infantino is portraying the group stage as the best ever and later praises the "*beautiful stadiums*" which aligns with the concept of sportswashing. By using the attractiveness of the stadiums and therefore the event it becomes clear that Infantino directly, or indirectly, tries to divert the audience's perception away from less desirable phenomena within the host country. In this case it would most certainly be the Western critique (*Boykoff, 2022, pp. 342f*). Even if his aim is likely to defend FIFA's choice of hosting the World Cup in Qatar of 2022, Qatar becomes positively affected by this use of rhetoric by Infantino.

Quote 2; Code: incredible

Infantino seems very satisfied with the World Cup and praises it a lot:
"*...on what has been the best @fifaworldcup ever. Thank you to everyone
who has contributed to an incredible tournament.*" (*Infantino, 2022, post: 22*).

When Infantino is praising the World Cup to be "*the best ever*" and overall "*an incredible tournament*", he is contributing to optimizing the Qatari regime's suggested sportswashing attempt. This massive praise was also done by João Havelange during the FIFA World Cup in Argentina of 1978 (*FIFA, 1978, pp. 4*). This repeats itself when Infantino countered the criticism of the World Cup of Russia in a similar way as he did with the criticism of the World Cup in Qatar, by alluding to sporting successes and honoring the capabilities of the host country (*FIFA, 2018, pp. 1*). The attractiveness of sports and the appealing aspect of mega-events can be used by democratic or authoritarian leaders in countries to enhance their international reputation (*Boykoff, 2022, pp. 42*). Although, sportswashing is a tool only used by political leaders, it can be argued that Infantino is a pawn of the Qatar regime when he heaps praise on the World Cup and the organizing host country. A successful World Cup benefits FIFA financially and Qatar in terms of sportswashing.

5. Discussion & Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent Postcolonial patterns could be identified within FIFA´s rhetoric in the context of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar of 2022. This study has identified findings of Postcolonial patterns in the discourses when analyzing Infantino as a representative for FIFA. Additionally, former FIFA presidents used similar discourses in the context of previous controversial World Cups, which illustrates how this phenomenon has occurred previously. This however, does not confirm that Postcolonialism is instrumentalized as a part of the FIFA organization. Rather, it illustrates how Infantino is using terms and discourses which can be found in the literature of Orientalism and Postcolonialism, which highlights the relationship between the West and the Orient. The authors can only speculate on the fact whether he does this for the sake of the oppressed people or for his and FIFA's personal gains. The results of this study indicate that Gianni Infantino emphasizes the Western perception of Qatar and the Gulf region. Moreover, he highlights the Western superiority over the Orient and at the same time changes the focus back to Europe regarding similar issues of the past, a classical example of whataboutism. Indeed this idea originates from the works of Edward Said and Orientalism, how the Western world in today's Postcolonial era still exert control over the Orient.

This thesis has provided a deeper insight into the relationship between Postcolonialism and sportswashing. The authors demonstrated, in the selected discourses by Infantino, how the Postcolonial rhetorics could benefit the hosting country of a widely criticized World Cup. A normative stance could explain how the accusation of sportswashing is mostly a Western concept targeted at non-Western countries, the theory of Postcolonialism provides arguments to challenge the Postcolonial world order and how the Orient is portrayed in the West. The authors learned the complexity when using the concept of sportswashing, as it is to some extent perpetuates Postcolonial structures as it allows the West to criticize and oppress the Orient in their way of conducting sporting events, arguing that they are not suitable hosts. Conversely, it can be argued that all sporting events contribute to some extent to sportswashing regardless of the host country. However, if the World Cup in Qatar of 2022 is a case of sportswashing, then FIFA plays a part to deflect attention away from the controversy. Despite not being a political actor, FIFA can facilitate Qatar's sportswashing ambitions by utilizing its influential role. Also, the arguments in

accordance with whataboutism also serve as a tool to deflect attention from the criticism. It is possible to identify how Infantino, depending on his agenda, repeatedly represents the Orient in his arguments against the West. Spivak (*1988, pp. 70f*) points out that it is essential to critically examine how the voices of the silenced subalterns are represented. Even though Infantino may be perceived as a hero by certain people, representation practices, according to Said (*1979, pp. 20-21*), rather ensure continuous Western dominance over the Orient.

A limitation of this study is that the study only focused on Gianni Infantino as a representative for FIFA. This showed only one aspect of the rhetorical use of FIFA and more analysis objects could have been added to give a broader understanding of the organization. One more limitation is the frequency of codes. By following the frequency, the authors could possibly have missed quotes which might have been of use for this study. Also, the study is referring to whataboutism, whose practice has not been recognized or upheld in a court of law, and as a consequence, it has been completely neglected within academia (*Borrelli K., 2019, pp. 315-316*). In spite of its limitations, the study certainly adds to the understanding and identification of patterns of Postcolonialism and sportswashing in FIFA's discourses when addressing the FIFA World Cup in Qatar of 2022.

5.1 Future research

Firstly, this would be a fruitful area for further work to use this methodological approach to further investigate other themes which potentially could be identified within FIFA's discourses. This could be complemented by using other theoretical frameworks to enable a broader perspective of what rhetorics FIFA is using. Secondly, these findings suggest several courses of action for further questioning the legitimacy of the concept of sportswashing and also problematizing this concept in the context of different power relations. This could be accomplished by looking at other international sport organizations such as the Olympic committee. Lastly, a natural progression of this work is to analyze the discourses of the critics of the World Cup by conducting a thematic analysis in a similar way to this study. For example, the statements of influential Western countries with regards to the World Cup in Qatar could be analyzed by searching for Postcolonial tendencies.

7. Reference list

Electronic sources:

Bans-Akutey, A., Tiimub, B.M. (2021). *Triangulation in Research*. Academia Letters, Article 3392. Retrieved: 11/04/2023
Available online: https://doi.org/10.20935/AL3392

Bettine, M. (2021) Chapter: *FIFA, BRICS, and the Soft Power Discourse: Analysis of the World Cup in South Africa, Brazil, and Russia*. Football and social science in Brazil, Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 193-204. Retrieved: 27/03/2023.
Available online: 10.1007/978-3-030-84686-2_12

Borrelli, K. (2019). *Between show-trials and Utopia: A study of the tu quoque defence*. Leiden Journal of International Law 32, 315–331. Retrieved 02/05/2023
Available online: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156519000074

Boykoff, J. (2022). *Toward a Theory of Sportswashing: Mega-Events, Soft Power, and Political Conflict*, Sociology of Sport Journal, 39(4), 342-351. Retrieved: 29/03/2023
Available online: https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2022-0095

Brannagan, P. M., Giulianotti, R. (2018). *The soft power–soft disempowerment nexus: the case of Qatar*. International Affairs, 94(5), 1139–1157. Retrieved: 27/03/2023.
Available online: https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiy125

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using thematic analysis in psychology*. Qualitative Research in Psychology,3, 77–101. Retrieved: 11/04/2023
Available online:

Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014). *The Use of Triangulation in Qualitative Research*. Oncology Nursing Forum, 41(5), 545-547.

Retrieved: 11/04/2023

Available online: https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1188/14.ONF.545-547

Chadwick, S., (2022) *From utilitarianism and neoclassical sport management to a new geopolitical economy of sport*. European Sport Management Quarterly, 22:5, pp. 685-704. Retrieved: 28/03/2023

Available online: https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2022.2032251

Cornelissen, S. (2004). *"It's Africa's Turn!" The Narratives and Legitimations Surrounding the Moroccan and South African Bids for the 2006 and 2010 FIFA Finals*. Third World Quarterly, 25(7), 1293–1309. Retrieved: 10/04/2023

Available online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3993811

FIFA. (n.d.). *Host Country*. FIFA.com. Retrieved: 06/04/2023. Available online: https://www.fifa.com/fifaplus/en/articles/hostcountry-en

FIFA. (1978). Official FIFA-report: *World Cup 78*. Retrieved: 07/04/2023

Available online:

https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/64937b8b9ade4fc4/original/dl5ast4g6ugbcblpz9yc-pdf.pdf

FIFA (2018) *FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, at G20 summit*. Retrieved: 07/04/2023

Available online:

https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/7e5d167208439c1d/original/gum06wkig0qvkb8pk7rg-pdf.pdf

FIFA (2022a) *FIFA world cup Qatar 2022: FIFA president press conference - Transcript*. FIFA. Retrieved: 06/04/2023.

Available online:

https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/3593b4cb186870f4/original/FIFA-President-Press-Conference-Transcript_Qatar-2022-Opening.pdf

FIFA (2022b) *Gianni Infantino thanks "fantastic" volunteers*. FIFA. Retrieved: 06/04/2023.
Available online:
https://www.fifa.com/about-fifa/president/news/gianni-infantino-thanks-fantastic-volunteers

FIFA (2022c). *FIFA President's Address 2022 G20 Leaders' Summit Bali*. Retrieved: 20/04/2023
Available online:
https://www.fifa.com/about-fifa/president/news/president-infantino-addresses-g20-and-calls-for-ceasefire-during-fifa-world-cup

Hamadi, L., (2014) *Edward Said: The Postcolonial theory and the literature of decolonization.*
European Scientific Journal, vol. 2, pp. 39-46. Retrieved: 07/04/2023
Available online: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/328024387.pdf

Infantino, G. [@gianni_infantino]. (Dec 19, 2022). *A few reflections on what has been the best @fifaworldcup ever. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to an incredible tournament.*
[Instagram post]. Instagram. Retrieved: 24/04/2023
Available online:
https://www.instagram.com/reel/CmW4SrXgcD4/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading

Infantino, G. (n.d. a). *Tonight I am proud – and, I have to say, very emotional. The celebrations seen in Doha today make you realise.* [Post: 4]. LinkedIn. Retrieved: 23/04/2023
Available online:
https://www.linkedin.com/posts/fifapresident_tonight-i-am-proud-and-i-have-to-say-activity-6868287139747049472-i1Wa?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

Infantino, G. (n.d. b). *I had the pleasure of speaking at the Future Investment Initiative – an international investment and innovation forum – this week to.* [Post 123]. LinkedIn. Retrieved: 23/04/2023
Available online: https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6991779418260041728/

Infantino, G., (n.d.c.) After 17 consecutive days of action and 56 matches, we've reached the first 'rest day' of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. [Post 143]. LinkedIn. Retrieved: 23/04/2023 Available online:

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7006182729281069056?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

Keys, B.J. (2019). R*eframing human rights: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and international sport*. In B.J. Keys (Ed.), The ideal of global sport: From peace to human rights (pp. 109–135).University of Pennsylvania Press. Retrieved: 29/03/2023

King, N. (2004). *Using templates in the thematic analysis of text*. In C.Cassell & G. Symon (Eds.),Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research(pp. 257–270). London, UK: Sage. Retrieved: 11/04/2023
Available online:

Madow, L., Jeong, S., & Chen, H., (2022) *Fresh criticism for Qatar and FIFA as the world cup ends on international migrants day*. CNN. Retrieved: 27/03/2023.
Available online:

https://edition.cnn.com/2022/12/18/europe/fifa-world-cup-criticism-migrant-worker-rights-intl-hnk/index.html

Magalhaes, G., L., (2020) 4*0 years after victory: disputing memories over the 1978 World Cup in Argentina*. Soccer and society, Vol. 21, NO. 8, pp. 904-917. Retrieved: 27/03/2023.
Available online: https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2020.1793625

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16(1). Retrieved: 11/04/2023
Available online: https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Rukundwa, L., Aarde, A. (2009). The formation of postcolonial theory. Hervormde Teologiese Studies. Retrieved: 08/04/2023

Available online:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/45681076_The_formation_of_postcolonial_theory

Tobin G. A., Begley C. M. (2004). *Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework*. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 48, 388–396. Retrieved: 11/04/2023

Available online: https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03207.x

Spivak, G.C., (1988) *"Can the Subaltern Speak?" In Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by C. Lelson, and L. Grossberg, 66–111. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press. Retrieved: 10/04/2023

Available online: https://abahlali.org/files/Can_the_subaltern_speak.pdf

Published:

Nye, J.S., Jr, (2005). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. PublicAffairs Books.

Said, E., (1979) *Orientalism*. Random House Inc.

Data and Appendix:

Appendix 1: *Google Sheet illustrating frequency of codes*:

This can also be found here:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13V6xuuTaiL-lGyOwPYZv64phrP5CDQcFBWdu8AEB HYA/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix 2: *Trancripted Instagram & LinkedIn posts*:

Avaliable:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Rgl-kKDf38xg0PilARncCEecT_zNjmDPF6HfyRW0rBY/ edit#heading=h.ycknedvo53bg