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Qatar under construction: A study of the pre-event process of the 2022 FIFA World Cup as an identity construction

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Master of Science in International Relations

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A study of the pre-event process of the FIFA World Cup

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Abstract

Understanding identity through Social Identity Theory (SIT) and international status theory through a constructivist lens, provides an approach for understanding how a small power such as Qatar seeks to construct identity. It seeks to clarify how identity is constructed through emulation of shared norms and values, interactions and practices with a higher status-group.

Hosting sports mega-events such as the FIFA World Cup provides Qatar with an opportunity to initiate favourable attraction despite possessing negative domestic socio-political characteristics. The case study I have chosen to examine is the pre-event planning process of the upcoming Qatar World Cup in 2022. In order for Qatar to prepare for the World Cup, Qatar will invest more than 200 billion USD in infrastructure for the World Cup and have appointed between 500,000 and 1,5 million migrant expats to prepare. It has been highlighted that the migrant expats constructing the required infrastructure are subjected to the violations of fundamental human rights. These findings have alienated Qatar by the West and have led to an outcry for Qatar to lose their hosting rights. By examining human rights reports through a secondary research approach, I will analyse how Qatar's state practices and actions throughout the run-up process for the 2022 FIFA World Cup and their interactions with international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), construct identity. In addition, also seek to understand how this potentially alters their status at an international level. This thesis argues that Qatar's state practices and the interactions with international NGOs challenge and disrupts Qatar's wish to construct a positive and distinct social identity.

Key words: *International relations, social identity theory, status, identity, constructivism, human rights, norms, state actions, Qatar, Amnesty International, ILO, the Human Rights Watch*

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List of abbreviations and acronyms:

CAS: Conference Committee on the Application of Standards

CEACR: Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations

FIFA: Fédération Internationale de Football Association

GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council

GLMM: Gulf Labour Markets, Migration, and Population Programme

ILO: International Labour Organisation

IR: International Relations

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NOC: No-Objection Certificate

QVN: Qatar National Vision

SIT: Social Identity Theory

SME: Sports mega-event

UN: United Nations

WPS: Wage Protection System

1.0 Introduction

Can football transform a small state into a big player within global politics? In current literature surrounding the foreign policy objectives of small(er) states, these particular states are characterised as vulnerable and inadequate. They are described as lacking the power to exert any distinct influence amongst foreign political affairs. Nevertheless, small states are increasingly becoming more critical and consequential actors within the international political realm. According to Neumann and de Carvalho (2015), status is considered to be a core motivator of a state' domestic and foreign policies in the global political society (Neumann & de Carvalho, 2015: 1). However, as small states are increasingly playing a more significant role in the international society, Neumann and de Carvalho state that the conquest for an elevated status and a changed social identity is to be considered a key motivation behind how small powers act in relation to other actors (Ibid, 1).

In the past two decades, the small Gulf state of Qatar is one of the small powers that challenged its theorised political potential. Despite its small native Qatari population of no more than 313,000 (in 2019), Qatar has now become the third-largest oil producer globally and has shown prominence in positioning itself as a crucial peace mediator amongst various groups and actors in the Middle East (Brannagan & Rookwood, 2016: 175). The rapid economic development of Qatar provided the state with a rare opportunity to rise forward as a crucial regional diplomatic actor. Due to the rapid elevation of Qatar, the country has seen an increased need to elevate the construction of the whole state. One critical event which helped boost the radical transformation of Qatar was when they acquired the rights to host the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup in 2022, in 2010. Cornelissen (2014) contends that the hosting of such a sport mega-event (SME) gives an emerging power such as Qatar political power utilised by the state or its governing bodies in order to establish a sense of validity to its peers (Cornelissen, 2014: 1294). Furthermore, she argues that hosting an SME provides a state such as Qatar with a sense of power to display a specific image to the outside world (Ibid, 1294). In addition, Cornelissen highlights how hosting an SME provides the hosting state with an opportunity to challenge or make alterations to an already existing identity narrative of the hosting country (Ibid, 1302). According to Exell and Rico (2013), Qatar's identity narrative is nowhere to be seen as their narrative has been highjacked by Western scholars (Exell & Rico, 2013: 670). Moreover, they state that Qatar's narrative has been built on Western scholars' pre-existing perceptions on how the Qatari identity is supposed to look like (Ibid, 671). Since Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad took power, one of Qatar's primary goals was to challenge the pre-

existing Western identity narrative of Qatar, but also to establish a new social identity for themselves. Hence, as Gray (2013) observes, Qatar also wants to utilise the upcoming World Cup as a tool to further distance themselves from the other Gulf countries, and the Arab *Other* identity narrative (Gray, 2013: 228).

The public announcement made by FIFA in the late of 2010 to award Qatar the rights to host their first-ever football World Cup (in 2022), represents the rapid political and economic development that helped position Qatar to be a critical actor within its region, and the world. The announcement gave Qatar a more significant incentive to invest in real estate and development projects which would play into their modernisation project. In order for the Qatar to prepare for the upcoming World Cup, it is estimated that between 500,000 and 1,500,000 million migrant expats are needed in order to finish up the preparations (Ganji, 2016: 222). The decision of giving Qatar the hosting rights has been highly criticised from all corners of the world. About two years after it was decided that Qatar was to host the 2022 World Cup, Qatar came highly under criticism from international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch in regard to the horrific conditions Qatar's migrant workers experienced. It has been highlighted that the foreign workers working at the World Cup infrastructure have been subjected to human rights violations such as forced labour. If such violations were to continue, Qatar's first-ever World Cup would be recalled as a human rights failure, which would work against Qatar's wish to construct a positive identity in the eyes of the world.

This thesis will examine Qatar's wish to construct a new identity by employing status theory and the theory of social identity within International Relations. This paper will examine and elaborate on how the pre-event process of the upcoming Qatar World Cup in 2022 is playing a crucial part in shaping Qatar's social identity amongst its international peers. The pre-event process stands as a critical event for Qatar as their actions are being seen and judged by its international peers. Qatar's drive for a new social identity is dependent on being recognised by a different actor, because a state's identity and international status is only legitimate if it is deemed attractive by an actor of a higher status group. A state's identity is established in relations to other actors, and according to Katzenstein (1996), actors with a given identity are expected to behave according to universally acknowledged social norms (Katzenstein, 1996: 5). In order for Qatar to construct a more positive social identity, their actions and values need to be either similar to the status group they do want to enter or deemed attractive enough by a

higher status member. Departing from a constructivist understanding of identity and international status, I aim to connect Qatar's pre-event actions/practices and their interactions with the West, to a wider discussion on an understanding of identity-seeking and status-seeking of smaller powers. Hence, this thesis will approach Qatar's pre-event process by answering the following research question:

How does the run up of the Qatar 2022 World Cup construct identity and potentially alter their international status?

This thesis contends that the actions that Qatar has taken since they acquired the rights to host Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) football World Cup in 2022 has been critical in constructing identity for the Qatari state. The pre-event process of the upcoming, and first-ever, Arab World Cup in 2022 is a continuation of Qatar's search for a new and unique positive social identity. By drawing on social identity theory, international status theory within International Relations, in this thesis I will argue that Qatar's actions and state practices throughout the pre-event preparation process disrupt Qatar's wish to construct a new, positive and unique social identity.

1.1 Outline of thesis

This thesis is divided into six main sections which will structure the arguments to help answering the proposed research question. In chapter 2.0, I will present some of the existent studies on status theory. In the following chapter, chapter 3.0, I present the conceptual framework, namely Social Identity theory (SIT), and situate the conceptual framework within a constructivist understanding of identity and international status. The following chapter, namely chapter 4.0, presents the thesis's methodological approach and I will be arguing for the methodological choices that were made throughout the research. I do so by accommodating better justification to why certain choices were made and provide reflection surrounding the research process. In chapter 5.0, I will present the case study, specifically the pre-event process of the Qatari World Cup and conduct the analysis. The chapter starts by situating the dominant identity discourse on Qatar in the first sub-section. The following sub-section will move the discussion on to how the state of Qatar has challenged the dominant *Arab other* identity. Here I will lay out the various aspects of how Qatar has tried to distance themselves from the pre-existing identity narrative as an Arab state, but also by distancing themselves from its Middle Eastern neighbours. In the latter part of chapter 5.0, I will shift the focus towards the main part of the case study. Here, I will lay out the criticism Qatar has gotten from international NGOs such as Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch surrounding human rights

violations on their imported workforce. Simultaneously, I will also be discussing reports that suggest that the state of Qatar has made certain alterations to their judicial practices surrounding the treatment of their migrant workers. The last sub-section will discuss the findings up against the conceptual framework provided in chapter 3.0, along a portion of the remarks made by a segment of the literature displayed in chapter 2.0. Chapter 6.0 concludes the findings made throughout this thesis and I will reflect on how this paper has contributed to the study of small powers, how a small power is seeking to elevate its social identity and to the field of International Relations.

2.0 Linking status and identity through sports in international relations

There are numerous sports mega-events such as golf tournaments and Tour de France happening across the globe every year. However, neither of the latter examples measure up to the football World Cup. Further, it is possible to contend that all sports mega-events mainly serve as an arena where one gets to enjoy sporting success and experience public joy. Nevertheless, such mega-events serve a greater purpose than success and for public consumption. It is possible to argue that sports mega-events have vital functions in international politics such as affecting a state's identity, power and international status (Buarque, 2015; Hough, 2008). Status and international recognition have been employed to describe and investigate significant events such as foreign policy issues and conflicts, in the global political sphere. Despite the increased focus on status as an analytical approach in International Relations, scholars from different paradigms have studied status differently. In this chapter, I will explore the concept of status, how it is defined and how states seek status in international politics. The chapter is divided into three sub-sections. The first sub-section will focus on the definitions of status. This will be followed by a sub-section on how different powers seek and perform status. I will briefly discuss how great powers seek or perform status before I move on to discussing how small states seek out status and international recognition. The final sub-section of this chapter will discuss the various aspects, and previous case studies, of how sports and hosting sports mega-event could affect the recognition other states may give a host state. This final sub-section will also provide a foundation for the conceptual framework, and work as a base for the case study of this thesis.

2.1 What is status?

Classical scholars from the IR school, realism, Hobbes, Machiavelli and Thucydides proclaimed that status is essential. For these realist scholars, status is relevant as a nation can either gain or lose political influence bound by their perceived image by the rest of the global community (Rehnson, 2017: 8-9). Gilpin (1981), a neoclassical realist, believed that status instead of power is the daily currency of international relations (Gilpin, 1981: 31). It is commonly understood that status matters because the higher the status a nation has, the higher the chances are for it to achieve its interests. This is why power also matters when understanding status from a realist perspective. In the realist school of thought, realists emphasise the consequential role status and international recognition embodies as the agent of power (Morgenthau, 1963: 93). As status acts as a proxy of power, this has made status as an analytical perspective valuable for realist scholars. This is because realist scholars such as Morgenthau

and Gilpin understood status as an agency states could utilise to interpret and convey power. In the matter of realist thought, a state's power policies were concerned about maintaining its power, attain higher economic and security objectives, and demonstrate its capabilities (Ibid, 93).

In international politics, status is commonly understood as "a state's 'standing, or rank, in a status community', which, in turn, is related to 'collective beliefs about a given state's ranking on valued attributes'" (Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira & Neumann, 2017: 2). As the latter point displays, there are various ways one can understand status. For instance, status can be perceived as something positional, meaning that 'status' conjectures a classification in relation to other significant actors (ibid, 2017: 2). Further, the latter dimension implies that one needs to identify so-called reference groups which have significance to an actor in order to analyse the status of a state. A secondary way of understanding the relevant concept is that status is perceptual. By suggesting that status is perceptual, it entails that status is what other individuals (nations) think of the self and other individuals. Lastly, status can also be assumed to be something social, or as Weber (1979) understood it, status is heavily dependent on social recognition (Weber, 1979). Renshon (2016) argues that of the positional, relational and social aspect of status, the relational and social dimension implies that a state can acquire higher status through what he characterises as "the visibility or publicity hypothesis" (Renshon, 2016: 32). What this hypothesis entail is that a state obtains higher international status if their actions are either recognised by other states or if its consequences are visible to see (Ibid, 32).

A different explanation of the latter points is that status means either membership in an explicit club of various actors/states, or on the other hand, the respective position in such a club. Probably one of the more recognisable clubs within global politics is predominantly cited as *the Great Power Club*. This *Great Power Club* consists of acclaimed driving forces within international relations, namely states such as the United States and China (Larson et al., 2014). Thus, status can be interpreted as the circumstance of taking a seat in the social hierarchy. By being acknowledged as something social, status is utilised to deal with the identities that are established amidst the process of occupying a place within the hierarchy.

In the context of this thesis, I will understand status as an intrinsic aspect of the identity paradigm instead of status as a sole resource of analysis (Ward, 2020). According to scholars such as Lindemann & Ringmar (2016), identity is best presumed to be "as claims about who

one is in relation to others" (Lindemann & Ringmar, 2016; 7 in Ward, 2020: 166). States act out their various identities in order to be seen by other actors. Further, recognition within the international system is crucial as 'identities' are accompanied by doubtfulness (Ward, 2020: 164-165). An identity paradigm incorporates a set of different elements to it such as cultural resources, language, norms, geographical locations and religious beliefs (Ibid, 165). Aspects such as cultural resources and religion make claims regarding an individual or a state's position within a social hierarchy.

2.2 How do states perform or seek status?

Neumann & Carvalho (2015) note that "status-seeking refers to acts undertaken to maintain or better one's placement" (Neumann & Carvalho, 2015: 5). Furthermore, Rehnson (2017) and Neumann & Carvalho have pointed out, status, along with interlinked concepts such as recognition, honour, prestige, has been under-examined for the most period of the lifespan of IR. Moreover, the acknowledgement of the importance of status is based (almost) entirely on great powers, states such as the United States, and not in relation to the smaller powers, such as Norway and Qatar. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between *great powers* and *small powers*.

2.2.1 Great powers

Hans Morgenthau incorporated the concept of status within the realist framework by contending that the most powerful states in the international system outline how global political affairs go about. In addition to allowing us to examine the setup of the code of conduct of international relations (Volgy, Corbetta, Grant & Baird, 2011: 3). Furthermore, Morgenthau argued that a nation's international status was identified by its material capacities (Ibid, 3). Within this conventional perspective, great powers have significant onset to resources, and also access to the market of moral authority.

Great powers are one of many instances of a specific status group in the international system. However, because great powers play a significant role in the international system and arguably exert the most influence in the current global order, they are considered as immensely interesting to IR scholarly. Predominantly, the changes in a state's international status amidst similar peers is something that realist scholars comprehend as the *zero-sum game*. The zero-sum game is a situation which occurs when the relative gain of one state is equal to the relative

loss to another state (Snidal, 1991: 702). However, David Lake (2009) argued that a great power could obtain and expand its status amongst its peers without downplaying other members of the same status group (Lake, 2009: 338). Lake characterised this occurrence as a *club good* (Ibid, 338). How one can define this particular group of states, varies from discipline to discipline. Nonetheless, specific characteristics are universally understood. Such characteristics include a state' capability to act as a sovereign unit as a result of its enormous military, economic and political resources. Further, as Volgy, Corbetta & Rhamey (2013) notes that other characteristics include that great powers are measured by "an unusual amount of status by policy-makers of other states within the international community" (Volgy et al., 2013: 62). Other aspects include that a great power plays a critical role in maintaining global peace and are seen as self-sufficient with a vast amount of resources in comparison to lesser powers (Nayar & Paul, 2003: 31).

If we take our focus away from the more conventional realist IR framework towards more pluralistic approach, that is the so-called English School, we see a different perspective on what role great powers play in the international order. Conventionally, one could characterise great powers by their immense resources. Alongside core aspects of the international society such as the balance of power, global diplomacy, Australian born Hedley Bull (2002) took the definition a step further by characterising great powers as key actors towards this system. As mentioned, the conventional definition of great powers incorporates their great military and economic resources. Bull incorporated the latter aspects, however, he integrated the aspect of social integration as a necessary aspect to the definition of great powers (Bull, 2002). The status as superior states are acknowledged by smaller states, so in this sense, Bull argues that great powers are seen as "powers recognised by others to have, and conceived by their own leaders and peoples to have, certain special rights and duties." (Ibid, 2002: 196). One could argue that Bull's approach to status started from the opposite point of the realist understanding of status. The realist approach to status is concerned with the structures that would assist nation-states to grasp and illustrate one's power and its power in relations with others. Conversely, the English School would rather focus on what a state did when they obtained a greater power. In particular, the English School would take a great interest in what role great powers would take on in order to be perceived as major powers with a critical role in the international system.

Despite great powers having a central role in maintaining the international system due to their resources, their status does not provide a holistic understanding of status. Status can also be

achieved through the presentation of oneself within the international system without having to rely solemnly on resources. Therefore, I now turn to understanding how small powers pursue status in the international realm, and the importance this can have on our understanding of global politics and thus, also how status is conceptualised.

2.2.2 Small powers

It has been noted that theoretical approaches within international relations have mainly been focusing on the function great powers play in the international system. However, an increased interest amidst IR scholars notes that the role of smaller powers play should be emphasised more progressively. Baxter, Jordan & Rubin (2018) argues that small powers can play a critical role amidst global alliances, transnational institutions and much more (Baxter, Jordan & Rubin, 2018: 192). Access to the acclaimed 'great power club' is considered not possible for such smaller powers, however, acceptance to status as a middle power is more attainable. As a result of this, socio-political literature has seen a growth of literature claiming that smaller powers "punch above their weight" in the sense that such states involve themselves amidst rigid diplomatic issues and act as a conflict mediator (Ibid, 2018: 192). The status aims of smaller powers are considered to be double-edged. According to Wohlforth et al. (2017), smaller powers pursue a standing rank in one or several networks of identical states. Second, smaller powers may seek out recognition from greater powers as either useful allies or as practical subsidisers towards the international system (Wohlforth et al., 2017: 530). By being considered as not significant, smaller states have the difficulty of being acknowledged, and thus, they run the risk of going unheeded. So, how do smaller states seek status? Under particular conditions, smaller powers, along with middle powers, will seek out recognition and international status in the manner of the morality dimension. By seeking status along the dimension of morality, smaller states do not compete for the recognition as a great power (Røren, 2019). However, they aim to be acknowledged as a good power. Small and middle powers do not challenge great powers, they try to relate and aim for a standing either just beneath, or parallel to the current hegemon. By gaining recognition or the status as a good power will then result in smaller powers to recognised by the greater powers and share the spotlight alongside them as well. One example of seeking status along the morality dimension is the small-good power Norway.

In a materialistic approach, Norway is thought to be a small state with an estimated population of 5.328 million. Despite its small-scaled population, Norway is commonly examined and compared to with middle powers, such as Canada. In comparison with great powers such as the

United States, Norway lacks considerable military power. Instead of increasing its military resources drastically to match higher powers, Norway chose to follow the path of a peacebuilding approach in order to gain a better reputation worldwide (Røren, 2019). Back in 2009, president of the United States (POTUS) 44, Barack Obama stated: "Norway punches above its weight" (The White House, 2009). This can be understood as public recognition of Norway's status in the global system. Factually, one can state that gaining status is one way to gain power. Weber (1978) argued that "social honour, or prestige, may even be the basis of economic power, and very frequently has been" (Weber, 1978: 927). Small states do not try to contest with great powers in the sense other great powers would do. "Smaller powers would generally aim for a position just below them; alongside the hegemon (...) by showing how useful one can be" (Neumann and De Carvalho, 2015: 16). One of the aspects Norway sought international recognition was, and to this day do, through their liberal foreign policy approach. Taking a crucial role for global peace and security in excess of what other states may have anticipated in relation to one's military resources and geographical size, is a way Norway has sought higher reputation and international status as a good power (De Carvalho and Lie in De Carvalho and Neumann, 2015: 59). According to De Carvalho and Lie (2015), Norway's liberal approach to peace and security has to be understood in three ways, notably that Norway has identified as a peaceful nation and that the state has become increasingly aware of the benefits such a stance offers (Ibid, 60).

In contrast to great powers, small powers are highly inspired to be recognised, to be seen in the spotlight and gain gratitude by their efforts in the international system (Pedersen, 2017: 3). In comparison to great powers, a small power such as Norway suffer from status insecurity, thus their quest for higher status amongst the international community is a central motivator behind their everyday policies. Further, the status-seeking strategies of smaller states may even take different forms of more powerful states, as the more conventional approach to seeking status may not be an option for states such as Norway. So, which alternative channels are taken to achieve status? How do these states make themselves known?

2.3 Pursuing Status Through Sports Mega Events

In the mid-1980s Trevor Taylor wrote an essay, in which he argued that IR scholars were overlooking the role of global sports events in political affairs. Taylor claimed that that modern sports and events, such as football, had become globalised and therefore should be examined (in Allison & Monnington, 2002: 106). According to Kobierecki (2013), contemporary, modern

sport can be understood as an exhilarating occurrence as it surfaced approximately 150 years ago (Kobierecki, 2013: 49). It was estimated that more than 900 million people were watching the opening ceremony of the London Olympic back in 2012, and Poland's most viewed broadcast was the football game between Poland and Greece in the European Football Championship 2012 with 15 million people watching the match (Ibid, 49-50). Football has become a global commodity that has attracted international business as a result of its global reach and its endless marketable prospects. Further, athletes of various sports acquire large sums of money through the advertisement of products, and vis-à-vis governments can make a profit of such popularity. Thus, the increased popularity amidst sports could, therefore, not be missed by the political sphere. The growing popularity led various scholars and important individuals to note that global sports can play a crucial role in affecting societies and nations across the globe. The United Nations (UN) released the interagency committee report *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goal* back in 2003, which stated that the "nature of sport is about participation. It is about inclusion and citizenship." (Maguire, 2011: 1011). Further, it states that if "applied effectively, sports programmes promote social integration and foster tolerance, helping to reduce tension and generate dialogue. The convening power of sport makes it additionally compelling as a tool of advocacy and communications" (Ibid, 1011). Such claims made by the UN in relation to how global sports can impact economic and political concerns are major. That raises the question on which role modern sports play as a crucial approach for identity and international prestige. Cha (2016) argues that sports establish a sense of emotion. Further, Cha notes that by winning or losing in an international sporting event creates a purifying occurrence for a nation (Cha, 2016: 141).

In recent years, emerging countries such as Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRICs) have become more pertinent to current global politics and have become more established within the latest IR literature. Their economic growth and their growing influence across the globe, as an alternative alliance to Western influence, have given these states a position of relevant international actors (Stephen, 2014: 913). Moreover, accommodating sports mega-events have increased as a strategic diplomatic tool to countries such as Brazil, China, South Africa and Qatar (Grix & Lee, 2013: 521-525). For instance, hosting a sports mega-event such as the World Cup does facilitate emerging actors with conditions which can initiate favourable attraction despite possessing negative domestic political characteristics. Grix & Lee (2013) argues that the political benefits a nation get from hosting a sports mega-event is as significant as the

economic privileges (Grix & Lee, 2013: 525). Therefore, one could argue that the political gains may as well be the principal rationale for bidding/hosting for the World Cup. Of the few IR scholars focusing on the strategic utilisation of mega-events by nations, Grix & Lee (2013) builds their argument on Joseph Nye's concept soft power to better comprehend a nations motivation back of hosting a sports event. By using Nye's concept of soft power, Grix & Lee seeks to demonstrate how the concept is utilised to display the best version of the hosting nation' identity to gain attraction from other states from a different status rank. Potter (2009) argues that a nation aspires to captivate other states by with events that establish "a favourable impression and increase understanding among foreign audiences" (Potter, 2009: 51 in Grix & Lee, 2013: 528). Furthermore, based on the work of Roche (2002) one can understand a sports mega-event as "large-scale, cultural (including commercial and sporting) events, which have dramatic character, mass popular appeal and inter-national significance" (Roche, 2002: 1). Hence why individual nations strive to host such an event (Ibid, 1). The soft power and public diplomacy approach emerged in sports scholarly in the late 2000s and early 2010s, and since this emergence, these conceptual approaches have been utilised comprehensively (Manzenreiter, 2008). Further, Grix & Lee (2013) have argued for the link between cultural resources and the policy of attraction. According to them, if the link between the two is factual, hosting a sports mega-event can be apprehended as a crucial aspect of a country's soft power/public (sports) diplomacy.

As stated already, one of the potential and critical advantages of hosting sports mega-event is the display of culturally shared values through football, by the host nation. This is not a fundamentally new concept in IR, as Nazi-Germany hosted the first genuine sport mega-event back in 1936. As a result of the shared universal values in global sporting events, the hosting state can, therefore, increase their appeal, or status, by displaying that they not only share the universal values but also celebrate their cultural values.

In their article, Grix & Lee (2013) discusses Brazil to emphasise the utilisation of soft power as an instrument to better understand developing states' incentive fronting sport mega-events. They argue that the states that are believed to have a more unattractive political image are those who benefit the most from hosting such events. For nearly two decades now, Brazil has been introduced as one of the new emerging powers in IR, and towards 2011, the Brazilian economy overtook UK's position as the sixth's largest economy in the world (Buarque, 2015: 1300-1303). By exploring the World Cup in 2014 and the summer Olympics in 2016, Grix &

Houlihan (2014) displayed how soft power was applied as a soft power strategy through the attraction and communication dimensions (Grix & Houlihan, 2014). Further, they showcase how Brazil used the sports mega-events as an exercise of their soft power for other actors to socialise with Brazil. Predominantly, a nation-state will view hosting of a sports mega-event as a public diplomacy tool which could help boost its soft power (Buarque, 2015). What this means is that a country can portray themselves in a different light, on a global scale. These two sports mega-events would operate as an extended public diplomacy (soft power) strategy to increase its visibility internationally and enhance the Brazilian image as an emerging country. Thus, one of public diplomacy's core goals is to explain foreign policy issues of a state, rather than its transnational diplomacy issues (Buarque, 2015; Grix & Houlihan, 2014). The 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany is an excellent example of this. It was found that Germany utilised the SME as a public (sports) diplomacy tool to distance themselves further from their stained reputation from the Second World War, but also to establish a more positive social identity (Grix & Houlihan, 2014). Hence, by studying the use of soft power through sports mega-events, we can observe how it is used as a strategy to obtain or elevate a state's status within the international realm.

As mentioned earlier, international status is not a fundamentally new concept to the study of IR. Status can be perceived "as a state's 'standing, or rank, in a status community', which, in turn, is related to 'collective beliefs about a given state's ranking on valued attributes'" (Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira & Neumann, 2017: 2). Further, scholars such as Gilpin (1981 believed that is the daily currency of international relations (Gilpin, 1981: 31). Status matters to most, or all states. However, Neumann and de Carvalho (2015) suggest that the conquest for higher international status is a core motivator behind the foreign policy approach to smaller powers (Neumann and de Carvalho, 2015: 1). Considering the vast differences between the different states, that being the differences of territorial size, military-, economic-, and political resources, status and how a state seek status is approached differently. A smaller power lacks the same influence and resources a major power obtains, so its status-seeking strategy will contrast the strategy of a great power. Scholars such as Potter (2009) and Grix & Lee (2013) have argued that a favourable path a state may seek to elevate its status, is through hosting of a sports mega-event. For instance, Buarque (2015) showcased how the emerging power Brazil used the 2014 FIFA World Cup as a public diplomacy (soft power) tool in order to obtain a positive and unique international image by showcasing their uniqueness. Thus, hosting a sports mega-event such as the football World Cup provided an emerging state such as Brazil with the

opportunity to showcase their worth to the international society, which could affect their status. Therefore, I argue that, in similar terms, Qatar will be trying to elevate its social identity (and status) through the upcoming World Cup in 2022. Status in this context is perceived as a part of the identity paradigm, and whereas states perform their different identities in order to be acknowledged by other actors. The World Cup does provide Qatar with such an opportunity. However, one has to start with the pre-event, planning phase (preparatory process) as Qatar's actions and interactions throughout the process will shape its social identity. Hence, I now turn to Social Identity Theory.

3.0 Conceptual framework – Social identity theory (SIT)

In 2009, David Kang and William Wohlforth released their paper, *Hypotheses on Status Competition*, on a conference which stated that focus on status and international recognition needed to revolutionise (Kang & Wohlforth, 2009). Similarly, Kang & Wohlforth (2009) displayed that unipolarity has limited the physical need for military conflicts between states. However, emerging powers will in some instances still be displeased with the current situation as humans and states are sensitive to their relative standing in the global hierarchy. Their position will always stand as a fundamental driving force for how a state behaves (Kang & Wohlforth, 2009: 29). Even more, they stated that "under certain conditions, the search for status will cause people to behave in ways that directly contradict their material interest in security and/or prosperity" (Ibid, 35). This particular contradiction suggests that the scholarly focus on international status is shifted from its conventional Realist approach to a more critical framework. Amongst the scholars that proposed to replace the material motivations for higher international status, was Wohlforth (2009) and Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira and Neumann (2017). They drew inspiration from Social Identity Theory (SIT), which focuses on a social psychological description of how states behave on a transnational dimension (Wohlforth, 2009; Wohlforth et al., 2017). Furthermore, SIT gives a more holistic overview of why and how a group forms their collected identities (Clunan, 2013). Applying SIT to international relations theory, SIT identifies how and what role the interrelationship between the self and the other effects in characterising international status and identity. Hence in this section, I will focus on social identity theory. The chapter will be divided into three sub-sections, where I will explore critical aspects of the conceptual framework. The first sub-section will discuss the core characteristics of SIT. In the second sub-section, I will dive into some of the critical identity management/status-seeking strategies that SIT provide. Here I will lay out some of the known identity management/status-seeking strategies that have been suggested and go into detail of those who are relevant to this study. In the last sub-section, I will tie the chapter together and situate SIT and the relevant identity management strategies in international relations theory.

3.1 The theory of social identity

The theory of social identity was first brought into existence by Henry Tajfel during the 1970s, and since its introduction, the theoretical approach has been considered as one of the significant theories within social psychology. Since SIT was introduced to the world, the primary focus of social psychologists in relation SIT has been on the rational and inherent causes of bigotry amidst individuals of the same group/society (Oldemeadow & Fiske, 2010: 425). Tajfel (1978)

and Abrams and Hogg (1980) contend that SIT as a theoretical framework asserts that bigotry and discrimination are fuelled by how groups are dependent on a positive and unique identity (Abrams & Hogg, 1980: 2-4; Oldemeadow & Fiske, 2010: 425-426). Further, they argue that this drive is also controlled by the status relationship amidst groups (Ibid, 2010: 425-426; Ibid, 1980: 2-4). In other words, the theory of social identity is considered as "a social-psychological account for intergroup relations" (Ward, 2017: 823). SIT has been frequently used by scholars such as Wohlforth (2009) and Wohlforth et al. (2017) to perform empirical investigations of different groups/states' course of actions. Further, other scholars such as Larson (2017) argue that SIT gives means to investigate and point out how foreign policy issues are heavily influenced by identity and status concerns (Larson, 2017: 2). Thus, one of the core assumptions of Tajfel's theory is the understanding of a social identity. The principle of a social identity was constructed with the intention of creating "non-reductionist social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes which focuses on the articulation of psychological and social processes" (Israel and Tajfel, 1972 in Abrams and Hogg, 1990: 2). How individuals categorised themselves psychologically, and by elevating themselves were understood by Tajfel to provide how a group articulated itself both privately and publicly, its own special form. This special form gave birth to conditions of "depersonalization, ethnocentrism and relative uniformity" (Abrams and Hogg, 1990: 2-3).

The theory of social identity is defined and characterised by various scholars, however, one of the core ingredients of Tajfel's theory which runs universally is the definition of social identity. A social identity is understood as the self-perception as a member of a larger group or society (Tajfel, 1972: 31). Along with the knowledge of belonging to a particular social group, Tajfel (1972) adds that the definition of a social identity incorporates "…emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (Ibid, 1972: 292) Also, Turner (2010) contend that the process of social identification could be referred to a practice that states that individuals place/relocate themselves amidst a network of social categorisations (Turner, 2010: 18). Thus, Hogg and Adams (1988) state that SIT heavily relies on dependable principles which concerns the essence of individuals, the society and the interdependence they share (Hogg and Adams, 1988: 14). Further, the theory of social identity maintains that civil society is constructed by a set of social categories that rank as power and status associations in relations to other individuals or societies. Such social categories raise the arguments towards the separation of individuals in conformity with someone's nationality, race and class. Additionally, Hogg et al. (1988) suggest that status and power relations indicate that there are certain social groups

amidst the society that obtains higher power, social status and more (Ibid, 14). Social categories do not endure by being disconnected from other categories. Rather, they only exist when they are in relation to other categories. In other words, in order for us to understand who is rich, we need the contrast category that defines who is poor.

Tajfel's theory of a social identity is based upon three so-called cognitive (mental) processes in which individuals undergo in order to establish how their intergroup and the outgroup is characterised. According to Hogg and Abrams (1988), the first cognitive process which makes up SIT is social categorisation (Hogg and Abrams, 1988: 19). This is the process of which individuals are embedded into social categories in order to for us to better understand how our social world functions (Ibid, 19-21). This process allows the society to establish an identity of an individual based primarily on the group it belongs to. What this process does for individuals or actors, is rationalising the perception of others. Social categorisation is considered to be crucial for humans to function as this process serves to structure the infinite possible variables in the world (Ibid, 19). Further, the general outcome of social categorisation is the emphasis on the similarities *the self* shares with other individuals from its intergroup. In addition, the process puts emphasis on self-stereotyping, which emphasises the differences between the self and the various outgroups (Ibid, 20-21). Overall, the categorisation process is seen as the process that converts individuals into an intergroup.

The second mental process that makes up Tajfel's theory is social identification. Social identification implies the process of being able to identify oneself as a member of a group (Ibid, 24). Moreover, this cognitive process is built upon a specific understanding of *the self*. The self-identification process gives an account of how self-evaluation and self-representation are subjectively accessible for all those who seek clarification (Hogg & Abrams, 1988: 24-25). For instance, by identifying with an intergroup, individuals or actors will act in such a way they presume the members of that particular intergroup should act. A key influencer into Tajfel's theoretical concept is Festinger's (1954) theory of social comparison amidst individuals. This is considered as the final of the three processes an individual undergoes.

Festinger's conceptual framework states that individuals predominantly have a built-in drive to look upwards the social ladder by comparing oneself with similar peers, or those who are considered to be slightly better than that particular group in relation to applicable socio-economic aspects (Abrams and Hogg, 1990: 3). The social comparison theory authorises

individuals to assess their abilities, their opinions and their experiences. Abrams et al. (1988) make a note that if an intergroup unique and favourable identity is to be maintained, the intergroup need to differentiate themselves positively on a set of different dimensions, from an outgroup (Abrams and Hogg, 1988: 23).

A social identity is considered to be *the self*, which is displayed to other individuals, or in this context, to other actors. As mentioned, the identity of an individual or an actor develops over time through interactions and relationships with other outgroups. Amongst some, Hogg (2016) argues that a fundamental rule of SIT is that individuals are energised to maintain a positive attitude towards themselves (Hogg, 2016: 9). Additionally, how one invests into its intergroup displays how an individual's self-esteem is directly associated with its position amidst its intergroup (Ibid, 9-10). Due to that fact, the self-evaluation of one's positive intergroup self-perception in comparison to the relative outgroup will lead to a unique and positive social identity. However, when evaluation of its intergroup is not an option, individuals and actors seek out to employ strategies that could help elevate its social identity and international standing.

3.2 Seeking to elevate one's identity and status

Tajfel (1974) and Turner (2010) contend that a group of individuals may utilise what can be called an *identity management strategy* in order to establish a more unique and encouraging identity (Tajfel, 1974: 65-67; Turner, 2010: 18-19). Any particular group of people within a society may want to seek out a better standing in the social hierarchy by either attempting to join a greater status-group or challenge the current hegemonic group. The various strategies a group may utilise to adopt or elevate its identity and status, however, such strategies are regulated by so-called subjective belief structures (Hogg, 2016: 7). How a particular group of individuals, or a state, chooses to strategise, depends on how transparent the elite groups are thought to be and how stable the status hierarchy is (Larson, 2017: 4). Scholars such as Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira and Neumann (2017) have identified a set of identity/status-seeking strategies by drawing on the work of Larson and Shevchenko (2005). They describe three distinct identity/status-seeking strategies one may utilise in order to elevate one's international status and its identity (Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira and Neumann, 2017: 5). The three strategies identified are namely *social mobility, social competition* and *social creativity*.

The first strategy, *social mobility* strategy, argues that a group will look to a higher status group to obtain a membership to the higher status group by emulating both its values and its behaviour. In other words, an individual might consider itself unsatisfied and disenfranchised from its group, and thus try to seek out the more dominant force (Larson, 2017: 4). As Tajfel (1978) notes, an intergroup may also try to establish itself as the superior hegemon in order to pass in the social hierarchy, however, it will as Tajfel suggest, eventually lead to the intergroup lose its unique identity (Tajfel, 1978: 93-94). This particular strategy states that those who utilise it would have to adapt to the norms and values of the higher status group if those individuals would like to enter the elite group. For instance, a second-generation immigrant in Norway may seek out this particular strategy in order to escape its current socio-economic situation. Moreover, this second-generation immigrant may seek out a university degree or a well-paid career in order to be perceived as a member of a higher social class. This is to be seen in the eyes of the society as a member of a prestigious status group rather than being acknowledged as a member of a lower ethnic status group. The social mobility strategy was pointed out by Tajfel and Turner (2010) as the only one of the three strategies best suited for an individualistic analysis. The core goal of the individualistic social mobility strategy is to magnify an individual's self-perception and identity without disregarding the status of his/her group (Jackson, Sullivan, Harnish & Hodge, 1996: 241). Identity management strategies which focus primarily on individuals incorporate authentic and psychological means for individuals to acquire a positive social identity (Ibid, 241). To illustrate the authenticity dimension, if an individual notices an opening in a higher status group and seize the opportunity, it will leave its toxic ingroup. Psychologically, an individual may abandon their toxic ingroup by using a set of different sub-mobility strategies. Jackson et al. (1996) note that such sub-strategy suggest that an individual may disidentify itself from its intergroup and increase their values with a higher status group (Jackson et al., 1996: 241).

A second approach in which ingroups may attempt to seek out a higher social identity is through what Ellemers and Haslam (2012) considered to be a conflict which is constructed so members can challenge the current status quo (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012: 5). This approach is known as a *social competition* strategy, and in some instances, understood as a *social change* strategy. If the status hierarchy is considered to be insecure and confines an elite status group operate within is resistant to lower status groups, such lower groups may attempt to obtain an equal amount of status as the hegemon, or even surpass it, with social competition (Tajfel, 1978: 51-52; Bettencourt, Charlton, Dorr & Hume, 2001). One can understand the status hierarchy as illicit,

or unjust, and it could be acknowledged as open to social change. In addition, Tajfel (1978) strengthens this claim by suggesting that "a combination of illegitimacy and instability would become a powerful incitement for attempts to change the status quo" (Tajfel, 1978: 52). Thus, this identity/status-seeking strategy is more about the relative gains a group can obtain from the process, not the absolute gains. In terms of international relations, social competition is predominantly conveyed by states in order to obtain control over geographical areas or display military superiority over other states.

The third and final identity/status management strategy identified by Larson and Shevchenko (2005) is *social creativity*. Fundamentally, social creativity can be seen as a set of different rational strategies which ingroups may use to minimise the impact their weakening status has on them. Larson et al. (2005) take Bull's (2002) argument that the status as a great power is considered legitimate when it is recognised as a significant power by the international community and argues that social creativity is a new and useful strategy. Scholars such as Larson (2017) and Gries (2005) have noted that social creativity is not aiming to change or disrupt the whole status system, but to amplify a group's status and thus enhance the members of that group more satisfied with their identity/status (Larson, 2017: 5; Gries, 2005: 238-243). In that sense, utilising the social creativity strategy incorporate processes such as reconstructing negative self-images into positive images. Moreover, Larson and Shevchenko (2005) noted that the creativity strategy includes the social process of where contemporary international norms and institutions are constructed which highlights the inherent differences between the lower status group with the more established powers (Larson and Shevchenko, 2005: 74). In order to succeed with social creativity, it is argued that the dominant hegemon needs to recognise the alternative value dimension of the lower status group as attractive and also acknowledge whether the lower status group (smaller power) meets the requirements to be seen as a superior state.

In terms of more recent IR literature, the social creativity strategy has been utilised in order to explain how a nation-state elevate its soft power dimension through raising awareness of new global norms and enhance their diplomatic negotiating. Soft power was originally introduced by Joseph Nye back in the 1990s, and he defined it as something that occurs "when one country gets other countries to want what it wants . . . in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants" (Nye, 1990: 166). Soft power is considered as the binary other to hard power. In sum, soft power can be understood as a nation-state' capability to attract

other states and institutions through the power of their ideas, values and norms, and its ideology. In a sense, this aspect of power correlates to a country's cultural aspects, social systems and more. According to Hanes and Andrei (2015), the soft power concept is founded on four distinct power dimensions, political-, cultural-, educational-, and diplomatic power (Hanes & Andrei, 2015: 32). Nye furthered his definition of soft power in his 2004 book by suggesting that soft power is "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments" (Nye, 2004 in Brannagan and Guilianotti, 2015: 706). However, Nye has in later years admitted to the scrutiny around his definition, and thus stated that aspects of power such as military resources and economic resources, may lead to enhanced attraction. As a result, Nye redefined his conceptualisation and stated that soft power could be understood as "the ability to affect others to obtain preferred outcomes by the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuasion, and positive attraction" (Nye, 2011: 19). The base goal of soft power is to construct the political programme in a way that state A's 'soft power resources' seem attractive enough for state B to duplicate them, and thus, state A manages to reconfigure state B's power resources without displaying any 'hard power'. A state's soft power capabilities heavily rely on three resources, namely its culture, political norms and values, and its foreign policy approach (Nye, 2008: 96). In the context of global political affairs, these resources emanate from the values and beliefs of how a country perform its particular culture (Ibid, 95). Further, an instrument of a soft power foreign policy approach is understood to be diplomacy and culture (Hill, 2016: 158). Hill (2016) states that diplomacy is seen as the embodiment of people in relation to preserving one's self-interests within international politics (Ibid, 158). Scholars such as Anholt (2006) and Fan (2008) argue that public diplomacy is an outlet for soft power of which states utilise in order to pursue nation branding with a particular focus on the political identity of the relevant state (Anholt, 2006; Fan, 2008: 147-148).

As mentioned, soft power is generally understood as a way of getting what a nation wants through the attraction, rather than through coercion, of other states. However, one has to take into consideration that the attempt of acquiring soft power, does not automatically translate into attraction. One could contend that the seeking soft power could lead to harmful exposure, or what Gallarotti (2010) and Brannagan and Guilanotti (2018) calls soft disempowerment (Gallarotti, 2010; Brannagan and Guilanotti, 2018). In his work, Gallarotti (2010) discusses soft empowerment in terms of it "can raise the influence of nations" (Gallarotti, 2010: 49). Soft power, instead of hard power prompts deliberate obedience (Ibid, 51). However, he notes that soft disempowerment is a concept one has to consider when discussing and pursuing soft power

as influence founded purely on compassion and benevolence, is fragile. The pursue of higher international recognition and standing in the social hierarchy can weaken states. Gallarotti categorise this occurrence as the *power curse* or as Brannagan and Guilanotti characterises it, *the soft power-soft disempowerment nexus* (Ibid, 2010; Brannagan & Guilanotti, 2018: 1145). In the context of hosting a sports mega-event, the effects of soft disempowerment can be reputational harm and, thus, decrease the authenticity of a state (Adams & Robinson, 2019). For instance, Russia experienced reputational damage to its hosting of both the Winter Olympic in 2014 and the FIFA World Cup in 2018 concerning their poor human rights track record (Ibid, 2019). The potential risk for harmful exposure, which will lead to a loss in attraction, could end in the host nation lose more than they could gain from the sports mega-event (Higham, 1999: 84).

To summarise, scholars such as Turner (2010) have identified that individuals may utilise a set of different identity management strategies in order to establish a more unique and positive identity. Wohlforth et al. (2017) drew inspiration from the revolutionary work of Larson and Shevchenko (2005) and identified three distinct identity/status management strategies, namely social mobility, social competition and social creativity (Wohlforth et al., 2017). Scholars such as Larson (2017) contends that the three strategies have been frequently linked to the use of soft power as a status elevation strategy. However, as Gallarotti (2010) and Brannangan and Guilanotti (2018) have displayed, one has to take into consideration that elevating its identity and international status through soft power may have an opposite effect. In other words, it should be thought of as a soft power-soft disempowerment nexus.

3.3 Situating Social Identity Theory within IR

The application of Social Identity Theory within the context of this thesis is based upon the constructivist assumptions concerning foreign policy being combined to characterisations of identity. Further, this thesis asserts that the political front of Qatar is run by its psychological need for a positive collective self-esteem and merit logic to construct a unique, coherent state identity. This, in turn, will help shape Qatar's international interests and how they behave in the global community. The SIT framework gives grounds for constructivist scholars to understand and explore international status through the social-psychological lens and how this lens argues how different individuals establish a collective group identity. Further, the theory of social identity provides the grounds for the demand for a positive self-perception which is fundamental to elaborate on how and why people individually and collectively seek to enhance

their international status. In addition, SIT stresses the importance of the self and the other in interpreting international (social) status and how this translates in a state's behaviour in relation to others.

The constructivist school of thought emerged after Onuf (1998) coined the term and it rose as "a constructive response to the challenge of the post-movement, in particular [rejecting] the 'slash and burn extremes' of some [radical] post-modern think" (Onuf, 1998: 20). A basic tenet of the constructivist conceptual framework is that one understands the world as socially constructed. This means that the assumptions about the world are established through the continuous process of social interaction and practices. Wendt (1999) argued that there were two fundamental aspects to constructivist thinking. He argued that "the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature" (Wendt, 1999: 1).

Another core aspect to constructivist thinking is the understanding of identity. Constructivist scholars contend that a nation-state can possess more than one distinct identity. These multiple identities are socially constructed through interactions and practices with other actors. The identity of a particular state is represented as the state' understanding of themselves (Wendt, 1999: 1-2). Another central aspect to constructivism and SIT is social norms. One of the reasons why social norms is a crucial aspect SIT is because a social identity is displayed through normative behaviour (Hogg, 2016: 11). Social norms are generally understood as "a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity" (Katzenstein, 1996: 5). A nation-state with a given international standing and identity is anticipated to act according to those social norms attached to its status and identity. The latter notion is rooted within the belief that there are certain behaviours which are considered more acceptable and attractive than other behaviours.

As mentioned, the application of SIT is situated within constructivism. The constructivist approach is founded on the notion that reality is socially construed. The interest of a state is therefore socially constituted, instead of being predisposed by nature. Further, rather than focusing on international status amongst states as a zero-sum game, or in an instrumentalist perspective, utilising the social-psychological conceptual framework of SIT situated within constructivism to explore identity (and status), opens up room for various ways of exploring

how a state behave in order to establish a more positive and unique identity (and status). The constructivist approach in this thesis attempts to integrate the core aspects of social psychology with a more constructivist emphasis on the necessity of social norms and values in constructing political structures and collective identities. Seeking to elevate one's unique collective identity (and international status) is, therefore, to be considered relational and intersubjective as it is dependent on a counterpart to recognise its changed identity.

4.0 Methodology

One could argue that all methodological choices are founded on a theoretical framework. Bryman (2012) highlights this by stating, "theories that social scientists employ to help to understand the social world have an influence on what is researched and how the findings of the research are interpreted" (Bryman, 2012: 5). Hence, this chapter starts by exploring the choices related to methodology and how the collected reports are analysed for this thesis, are all constructed in a way to demonstrate how Qatar's pre-event process has implications on its search for a new social identity. Further, it will also showcase how Qatar's actions throughout the pre-event planning process potentially alter their international status.

In this chapter, I will elaborate and clarify the methodological approach this thesis follows. Moreover, this chapter will deliberate over the choices that were made during the collection of data, go into depth into the thesis' research strategy and thoroughly discuss the case study through desk research. Following the latter section, the discussion will move towards a deliberation on the validity and reliability surrounding the preferred data collection approach. The next sub-section will discuss the strengths and limitations of the approach(es) used before the discussion will be finalised with the ethical considerations surrounding the data collection.

4.1 Research design

4.1.1 A Qualitative Approach

This paper is following what many know as a qualitative research design characterised by a focus on non-numerical data. Qualitative research can be defined as "an approach that allows you to examine people's experiences in detail by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews (…), content analysis (…)" (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020: 10). Furthermore, a qualitative research design process can also be understood as a process shaped by a conceptual framing, in this context, the understanding of identity and international status theory, that informs the choice of a case (Qatar's run-up process for the World Cup in 2022) and data collection strategy. Bryman (2012) identifies six steps that a qualitative research design follows. A qualitative research design starts with the researcher generating their opening research question(s) in order to recognise how they will approach the upcoming study (Bryman, 2012: 384). The second step suggests that a researcher will then explore the topic at hand and establish the areas that are considered to be of interest (Ibid, 386). The following, and third step, identified by Bryman is the collection of relevant data. This step is followed by the

interpretation of the data that has collected. Consequently, this leads to the fifth step, which states that when one has interpreted one's data, the researcher will construct their conceptual and theoretical framework. However, as stated, I established a conceptual framework prior to the collection and interpretation of data. The final step is where the researcher will summarise and make the concluding remarks surrounding their findings and result(s) (Bryman, 2012: 386). This type of hierarchal research framework is commonly utilised in qualitative studies. However, like most things, including research, a researcher will move back and forth between certain steps, and I would argue that such a movement will find a place between step three and five.

At the first stage of collecting data, the researcher's primary focus will be to explore literature and establish a grounded background for the case study prior to the researcher establish their preferred conceptual framework (Ibid, 386). In the context of this thesis, it was important and helpful to establish the theoretical and conceptual framework prior to collecting a vast majority of the data. Establishing a conceptual and theoretical framework prior to this process can play an effect on how I characterised applicable information for the case study. Furthermore, an already establish theoretical framework allows me to examine data and other information sources through a specific lens which stands as central to the comprehensive study (Yin, 2018). In similar terms to the latter point, the pre-established theoretical and conceptual framework, SIT and international status theory helped assist the collection of the relevant data. Further, it allowed for a sustainable deliberation and contemplation regarding this thesis' core objective(s) and its research question(s). The collection of information and data sets, as well as the process of interpretation, will be discussed later on in this chapter.

This thesis aims to characterise an alternate approach to examine Qatar's wish and psychological need to seek a positive and distinct social identity and a higher international status. By exploring Qatar's wish to elevate its identity (and its international status) through SIT and international status theory I seek to both break down and illustrate how and why the upcoming FIFA World Cup in 2022 is an essential event for Qatar to invest in. In addition, I seek to elaborate on how the process leading up to the World Cup, the pre-event planning, can serve as either a positive or a negative force for the Qatari social identity.

4.1.2 Case Study

I have approached the topic of this thesis by using a case study research design. I have chosen to use a case study approach as a case study opens different routes for a researcher such as myself to discoveries, while it also identifies the reach of it (Swanborn, 2012: 1; Berg & Lune, 2012: 325). Therefore, it is necessary for the researcher to define the favoured case study approach before the study starts as it will play an instrumental part in picking out the relevant data (Berg & Lune, 2012). The core reason for why the case study approach was a preferred method is because its capability to unwrap different approaches a researcher can discover and characterise the range of the case study. Furthermore, by utilising a case study approach, it will assist the researcher to characterise a topic's limitations and the topic's strongest areas.

Berg & Lune (2012) and Yin (2018) state that there are three distinct approaches a researcher can follow when they are designing their study (Berg & Lune, 2012: 337; Yin, 2018: 8-13). The three designs are: *explanatory, exploratory* and *descriptive* (Ibid, 337). Of the three case study designs, I chose to follow Berg & Lunes understanding of a descriptive case study. According to Berg and Lune, by utilising a descriptive case study approach, "the investigator presents a descriptive theory that establishes the overall framework for the investigator to follow throughout the study" (Ibid, 338). By establishing a conceptual framework before the data collection, it will allow the researcher to examine which of the aspects that are identified, as the most applicable to the study. For this thesis, the descriptive case study approach has been chosen to investigate and examine Qatar conquest towards a reformed social identity and higher international status, and what role the pre-event steps Qatar is taking in order to prepare for the World Cup in 2022 play in constructing their identity. With a pre-established opening research question and having the theoretical and conceptual framework already worked out before the collection of data/information, it assisted me in identifying the sort of data that could benefit the analytical section of this thesis. As I am conducting an analysis on Qatar's pre-event preparation process of the World Cup in 2022, I needed to identify sources that examined Qatar's actions after the state acquired the rights to host the World Cup. Furthermore, I also needed to identify sources which indicated judicial reforms/institutional change within Qatar. With the help of SIT and status theory, I could then interpret how the social interaction between Qatar and the West helped construct an identity for Qatar.

4.2 Gathering data

The process of collecting information is embodied as the central objective of a study. In social sciences, there are many approaches one can utilise in order to collect data for a research project. Some of these approaches are considered to be more a structured approach. A structured approach means that a researcher clearly defines what they need for their study in advance in order to identify "and designs research instruments to implement what needs to be known" (Bryman, 2012: 12).

Throughout the process of working on this thesis, one primary data collection method has been utilised. Upon reflection surrounding what type of data collection method was most suitable, it was decided that a low-cost collection technique would be beneficial. Thus, I chose to utilise what is known as a desk approach, or in other words, a secondary research approach. As a sampling strategy, I chose a purposive sampling approach which states that the rules of the sampling are in line with the researcher's core objective(s) and research questions (Ibid, 418). By following the guidelines of this particular sampling approach, it allowed me as a researcher to establish which areas within all the available information would be most beneficial to examine (see section 4.2.2).

4.2.1 Desk research

As a core source of data and relevant information, the collection and sampling of various sets of documents were concentrated on a set of guidelines which would assist me in constructing the various chapters and its sub-chapters found within this thesis. The desk research strategy used in this thesis follows Bryman's (2012) understanding of the generic purposive sampling strategy. This approach, according to Bryman, can be understood as a strategy with guidelines that are preoccupied with the types of information and data needed to answer the proposed research question(s) (Ibid, 422-423). As the generic purposive sampling strategy is concerned with finding the most suitable pieces of information in order to answer the research question, I identified specific sets of documents that needed to be accumulated for me to deliberate upon my proposed questions.

Firstly, I have collected academic literature, official government documents and news articles that explore how Qatar has tried to construct a social identity. The second strain of literature that I have identified surrounds the pre-event preparation process for the 2022 Qatar World Cup. Such sources include Amnesty's 2013 *The Dark Side of Migration*, which takes on Qatar's

migrant expats that have been recruited to build large infrastructure projects for the upcoming World Cup. The report provided by Amnesty International investigates how Qatar's state practices allow for employers within Qatar to take advantage of its migrant expats. This publication is carried out by researchers sent out by Amnesty who conducted interviews with migrant workers from the World Cup construction sites. Furthermore, they made visits to labour camps, had meetings with official governmental representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior (Amnesty International, 2013: 11-12). I argue that the first-hand publication like this stands as critical to the case study and my analysis as it provides me with insight on how Qatar's judicial system and their state practices regarding the treatment of its migrant workers. I have also used a similar report published by the Human Rights Watch. Researchers sent out by the Human Rights Watch to conduct first-hand research where the focus was on the inhumane conditions the migrant workers experienced.

The documents that have been collected through the process of both preparing for writing this thesis, through desk research, can all be described as secondary sources. The sources collected throughout this process are academic publications, news publications, publications made by NGOs and governmental publications/statements. If I, as a researcher, manage to deliberate and assess the quality and credibility of the secondary sources that I am using in this thesis, the utilisation of them should be easy-going. The assessment of the secondary sources could arguably start by examining who published said source before the researcher move onto the actual source itself. The researcher should look into whether an academic publication is peer-reviewed or not. Besides, if one is using a policy document as a part of one's research, the researcher should examine if the policy document is recognised as an official document by a legitimate institution, and lastly, one should use one's common sense while doing research. Throughout the entire thesis process, I have attempted to use peer-reviewed academic publications, and when possible, utilise academic literature from well-established scholars from their disciplines on a topic that I have brought up during this thesis. When discussing status theory in chapter 2.0, one of the sources I relied on was published by the well-known Benjamin de Carvalho & Iver B. Neumann. Iver B. Neuman is a Norwegian political scientist, social anthropologist and researcher. His background lies within political science and international relations and is famously known for incorporating identity in the study of international politics. The book published by de Carvalho & Neumann on small states seeking status is a highly valued publication as it stresses that status is also a critical element for smaller powers such as Qatar.

I see this as a significant contribution to chapter 2.0, and this thesis, as both authors are highly valued scholars within their respective areas.

When utilising documents as a source of data, there are certain, necessary steps one has to take in order to assess the quality of the acquired documents (Ibid, 544). Bryman draws attention to Scott's (1990) criteria of assessment which incorporates four distinct steps, namely *authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning* (Ibid, 544). The first step, authenticity, states that the researcher has to ask whether the findings one make are authentic, whereas the second criteria, credibility, states that the researcher has to make sure that the findings are exempt of any blunders (Ibid, 544). With the third criteria, representativeness tasks the researcher to ask whether the findings are representative, or general, meaning that it is a reoccurring piece of evidence. The fourth criteria, which is meaning, asks the question of whether the findings are easy to understand (Ibid, 544). Throughout the process of collecting sources and specific segments of information, I have tried, to my best ability, to follow these four criteria. For chapter two and chapter three, I relied on academic publications from scholars with the academic experience of working with status theory, the theory of social identity, sports (football) in International Relations and social psychology. In the background section, I tried to utilise academic literature that covered Qatar. However, where such sources could not provide sufficient background information, articles collected from news organisations were used in order to contextualise the topic, while understanding that news articles are not as reliable as academic literature. For the analytical chapter, a variety of sources have been used. For instance, official Qatari governmental reports and statements such as the Qatar National Vision 2030, news articles and academic literature have all been used to support parts of the analysis. The Qatar National Vision 2030 is a guideline or a roadmap for the State of Qatar, guiding the state to become a more sustainable and advanced society. The National Vision of 2030 stresses that the further development of Qatar is dependent on the number of migrant expats they have and that the state has to provide a high standard to all of the individuals living within Qatar (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008). I consider Qatar's National Vision to be a good source to use in order for me to examine and display the type of social identity the state want to display.

4.2.2 Thematic analysis

The understanding of how a state such as Qatar seeks to construct its identity and international status illustrates how I established my analytical framework, which I then applied to the case

study of Qatar's run-up for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Furthermore, the method I utilised to analyse the data from the sources provided by the NGOs Amnesty International, the Human Rights Watch and the ILO was to carry out a thematic analysis (Bryman, 2012: 580). Through the thematic analysis, I was able to identify and interpret data from the sources published by Amnesty, the Human Rights Watch and ILO which I could then utilise to examine how the actions of Qatar in the run-up process contribute to my understanding of identity and international status. To establish this, I created a two-column note in my notebook, where I wrote down some key themes which I would look for throughout the texts. These themes included key terms such as human rights violations such as forced labour and freedom of movement, migrant expats/foreign workers and legal reforms within Qatar. I also included the conceptualisation of how small states seek status. I looked for reoccurring themes or topics when I read through the sources and highlighted those sections I perceived to be relevant to my study of Qatar. In order for Qatar to construct a positive social identity, I argue that state practices and actions regarding the treatment of their migrant expats need to change. Therefore, I also looked for similarities or differences within the different reports, which could help me identify whether any judicial reforms had been made within Qatar (Ibid, 580). This ended with me producing five documents of notes and some quotes from the texts which displayed where the areas of interests would be within my case study.

4.3 Checking for Validation

Same for quantitative research design, the integrity of a qualitative research study can be determined with regards to the acknowledgement of both validity and reliability (Leung, 2015). According to Leung (2015), the conceptualisation of validity within a qualitative research design is understood as acceptability and the suitability of the acquired data, process and research tools (Ibid). Bryman (2012) states that one has to consider two distinct sets of validity, namely, internal and external validity. Firstly, he states that internal validity is predominantly accountable with whether or not the argument the collected information is a good fit with the conceptual ideas the researcher has established during the data collection (Bryman, 2012: 390). Internal validity has been argued by LeCompte and Goetz to be a core asset to a qualitative research approach, mainly as this type of validity stipulates an increased degree of scientific integrity amidst what has been discovered and the conceptual approaches one has used in his/her study (LeCompte and Goetz in Bryman, 2012: 390). As mentioned, the second type of validity introduced by Bryman is external validity. According to Bryman, external validity should be considered to be focused on the capacity to oversimplify the results of a study

exceeding a set social context (Bryman, 2012: 47). However, as Bryman has noted, in many qualitative research designs, one is looking at a small-scale study, which is unique in many ways (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, I aimed for Bryman's understanding of internal validity.

4.4 Strengths and Limitations

This sub-section will take on some of the key strengths and limitations to the research approach that have been used throughout this thesis. As stated, this thesis is taking a qualitative research approach through the use of a descriptive case study. Moreover, I am approaching the analysis through secondary sources. Bryman contends that there are a variety of advantages to secondary analysis in the sense that it is costs less and is time-efficient (Bryman, 2012: 312). As the collected sources were either available via the library and the e-library (e.g. through oria.no), therefore, I acknowledged that a field-based data collection should be avoided. Having a less costly approach has provided me with additional time to interpret the collected data.

Looking beyond some of the mentioned strengths, one has to take into consideration that to any research design and study, limitations will follow. As secondary sources are already collected by someone else, it is expected that those who collected the data themselves will know the data better than I. Thus, the risk of me not being a hundred percentage familiar with collected data does impose as a limitation. Since I predominantly rely on already collected information regarding state practices in Qatar from international NGOs such as Amnesty International and the Human rights watch, I have no direct control over where the NGOs collected information from, from who they interviewed, how they collected it and what they have chosen to leave out of the research.

Similarly, despite certain limitations, secondary analysis is a viable research approach and provides a new opportunity for a researcher to analyse data by applying the theory of social identity and status theory, that has not been previously studied. This could result in new, exciting revelations and interpretations of already existing data. Thus, by exploring written sources, it gives me a chance to re-examining a vast segment of substance to deliberate upon and re-evaluate.

4.5 Ethical Considerations of secondary research

In all types of settings whilst doing research, one is encouraged to take certain steps in order to remain ethical towards oneself, and the data one is presenting and analysing. In some settings during the research process, the process may establish tension amidst the objectives of the study. Such tension may give rise to a generalisation that may harm others (Orb, Eisenhauer, Wynaden, 2000: 93). Ethical principles are a set of guidelines for any researcher that want to conduct a study. Ethics in research stands for doing good, such as protecting the rights of participants to maintain its confidentiality and privacy. Moreover, it is about avoiding the possibility of harming participants (Ibid, 93). Dale, Wathan & Higgins (2012) notes that at first glance "secondary analysis may appear to bypass all the ethical issues that arise at the data collection stage of a study." (Dale, Wathan & Higgins, 2012: 13). They argue that researchers utilising secondary sources may not encounter the same research responsibilities as those who conducted the primary research. However, the analysts may acquire most of the same responsibilities the primary researchers followed, such as maintaining the confidentiality (Ibid, 13). Furthermore, I argue that good practice is a crucial aspect in relation to the ethical use of the collected data. In other words, good practice means that I was certain that the data I used for all of the distinct sections were used correctly. Good practice of data encouraged me to be critical of the sampled data meaning that I double-checked where the data was collected from, who sampled it and whether there were any biases within the data. In order for me to check the reliability and validity of the data, I tried to my best ability to find two or more sources that established that the source used, was legitimate. Furthermore, all sources utilised throughout this paper are all properly cited, and all sources can be found in the reference list. In addition, I have sought to let the evidence speak for itself, meaning that I have attempted to stay true to the secondary sources and not modify the collected information to my own interests.

This summarises the methodological and research design process. This process has not only assisted me in identifying what research and sampling design was most suitable to approach the pre-event planning in Qatar, but it has assisted me in making sense of the collected data.

5.0 Analysing Qatar's pre-event process

In order for me to comprehend how the run-up of the Qatari World Cup in 2022 construct a new social identity for Qatar and potentially affect/alter their international status, I present individual narratives and interpretations of shared cultural values and social norms by the Qatari state and international NGOs and the international media in relations to the construction of a new social identity in Qatar. I will examine various practices, namely practices surrounding the treatment of migrant workers within Qatar, how these practices interlink with international understood norms, values and practices such as human rights obligations, and how this intersubjective process constructs identity. The data and findings will be discussed in line with the conceptual framework provided in chapter 3.0, along a portion of the remarks made by a segment of the literature displayed in chapter 2.0.

This chapter is divided into three main sub-sections. In the first sub-section, the aim to understand how Qatar is constructed within international politics. In other words, understand Qatar's present and dominant identity narrative and how Qatar is challenging this narrative. I will do so by looking into what measures the State of Qatar has taken since its independence in 1971 in order to elevate themselves as an international actor. In sub-section 5.2, I will focus on Qatar's World Cup preparations which can be broken down into two periods; 2010-2014 and 2015-2019. These time periods will detail how the outside exterior interpreted Qatar's actions in the preparation process as well as Qatar's response through institutional reforms. In the final sub-section, I will highlight and discuss what Qatar's preparations and strategies to navigate criticism, mean for their identity and status within the international realm.

5.1 Match-preparations - Situating the Qatari identity

5.1.1 The Arab 'Other' as Western Understanding

One aspect that is needed before the final discussion is establishing how Qatar is constructed and perceived within an international political context, meaning establishing the dominant identity narrative of Qatar. The Qatari identity has been through a set of different historical conceptualisations after the state discovered oil. Since the discovery of oil, Qatar's identity has moved from being perceived through an Arab identity lens, a Gulf identity lens and finally a Qatari social identity lens. However, prior to obtaining gas and oil resources, one can characterise the Qatari identity predominantly on its Arabic roots and its religious/Islamic traditions accentuating universal Arab nationalism (Al-Malki, 2016: 242). According to Owen

(1983), the fundamental belief of Arab nationalism was pan-Arab unity (Owen, 1983: 16-17). This pan-Arab unity and the collective identity that followed this unity can be considered to be a fundamental drive force to Qatar's process of constructing a unique identity.

In similar terms as most of the other Gulf nations, Qatar came under the protection of the British empire in 1916, though not a colony, and a part of the Pax Britannica when the Ruler of Qatar, Abdullah Al Thani signed a maritime defence treaty with the British empire (Onley, 2009: 3). With this agreement, Qatar and the other Gulf states fell under British protection (Bahrain, Kuwait, the Trucial States and Oman), and its social status became "British-protected states" (Ibid, 3). The Gulf states were merged into the British dynasty, though the leaders of each state continued to be the state ruler. As the Gulf states lacked a domestic narrative as independent states, it established an urge for a shared connection through a universal culture, language and a shared past. The emerging feeling of a collected Arabian Peninsula gave rise to Arab nationalism as a dominant political narrative within the Arab states.

The Peninsula attracted both interest and displeasure as an economical stronghold who promoted the Arab nationalist identity narrative. Al-Malki (2016) stated that this shared interest between the Gulf states helped establish the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) back in 1981 (Al-Malki, 2016: 242). Further, the GCC was founded upon the strong, shared cultural and religious values amidst the Gulf states, as well as their geographical closeness which assisted more identical values and practices amidst the states (Ibid, 242). During the last quarter of the twentieth century, the Middle Eastern area experienced a political revolution that inherently affected the unique image of the Arabian nationalistic narrative. The various Gulf states confronted a set of challenges such as the rise of radical Islam, which resulted in the Gulf states constructing an alternative identity narrative to its old one.

According to Patrick (2009), the Gulf states established what he called "haweeya Khaleeji(ya)" which is known as a Gulf identity (Patrick, 2009: 31). The collected Gulf identity meant that the GCC states were honouring more conventional Islamic traditions and values while excluding the militant portrayal that was occurring elsewhere in the region (Ibid, 16). For instance, Qatar devoted themselves to Islamic principles, however, they projected more radical educational reforms which opened up a platform for international educational suppliers (Ibid, 16). When the radical Islamic identity was manifested, it ignited most of the Gulf states to

contest the Western Oriental Other narrative that was established. It falls under the idea that the Gulf states wanted to distance themselves from Edward Said's notion of *Us* and *Them*.

In his book *Orientalism*, Said (1978) presents an analysis of the West and the East that can be traced to the European Colonial times. Said argues that Orientalism is a system of knowledge regarding the Orient that has been established by the West (Said, 1978: 25). Orientalism establishes a contrast between individuals enclosed by the Occident versus the Orient, the West versus the East, and the Us versus Them. The oriental system displays how the West sees the Orient as the Other. According to Said, this conceptualisation further the construction of a feeling of otherness and maintains the boundaries between the West and the Arab other.

It is documented that a distinct national identity narrative in the GCC has lacked as it has not been the crucial political aspiration of the Gulf states (Patrick, 2009: 33). However, the Gulf identity fractured with the coup d'état of Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad. Further, the 9/11 attacks and the violent conceptualisation of Islam and the fear of Islam in the West pushed the Gulf states, Qatar included, to reflect on their social identity (the identity of their intergroup). The Arab spring in 2011 initiated even more distance between Qatar and the other Gulf states as Qatar took upon a role as a peace mediator in various interregional conflicts, which was not supported by the other GCC members. Over the two past decades, the identity discourse on Qatar has changed as they opened more up the world and started to reflect upon their domestic identity dimensions. A national identity can be characterised along the lines of its cultural resources, political resources, and its economic resources. Arguably, since the discovery of oil and natural gas, it is possible to argue that the dominant identity narrative of Qatar is of a rentier state (Ennis, 2018). By being perceived as a rentier state suggest that Qatar is well-known for being producers of hydrocarbon, wealthy and being largely dependent on exterior actors to rent their hydrocarbon resources (Ibid, 574).

Griffin (2017) argue that Qatar's identity in an international political context has predominantly been constituted and maintained by the West. Moreover, Qatar's identity narrative, its social identity, is ingrained in the Orientalist discursive practices that can also be found in the West (Griffin, 2017: 171). Arguably, a dominant, historical identity discourse of and on Qatar has been missing. Since Qatar came under the protection of the British empire and they became a part of the Pax Britannica, the identity narrative has predominately focused on a collected Arab/Oriental identity between the Arab states (through Arab nationalism). As the Arab

nationalistic narrative was weakened during the late 1960s and the 1970s, the Gulf identity was established in order to delegitimise the rise of radical Islamic values in Iran. However, given that the elevated influence Qatar play as a regional, yet as a small power in the Middle East, and the Middle East North Africa (MENA) regional order, leaves space to discuss how Qatar is trying to construct a unique intergroup, a new positive social identity.

5.1.2 Establishing a new Qatari identity – Moving from the other to the self

Prior to the 1990s, Qatar was considered an unknown country to many and a remote area within the Arab Gulf region (Fromm & Jünemann, 2019: 1). Qatar's presence in an international context "has been an afterthought of an afterthought in global politics" (Hounshell, 2012: 2, in Fromm et al., 2019: 1). However, when the former Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani obtained the state power from his father Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani in 1995, Sheikh Haman Bin Khalifa Al Thani expressed a desire to elevate its identity and international status through profile building (Ibid, 1). Fromm et al. mention that Qatar's elevated importance amidst the Middle East and internationally is closely interlinked with Emir Hamad's rule from 1995-2013 (Ibid, 2). Qatar's sudden rise in an international political context "is often hailed as the exception to the rule of the traditional 'hedging' nature of Gulf-styled diplomacy" (Wright, 2011: 310, in Fromm et al., 2019: 2). For instance, since the early 2000s Qatar, much like the small (good) power Norway, established themselves as an active peace mediator. Qatar did so through various conflicts across the Middle Eastern region and in certain areas of the African continent (Kamrava, 2011: 539). For instance, Kamrava notes that Qatar's most notable involvements are in the conflict amidst the Yemeni president Abdullah Saleh and the Huthi rebellion (Ibid, 549). Additionally, Qatar acted as a mediator in a set of different Sudanese conflicts such as the war with South Sudan. Qatar's involvements in different conflicts resulted in Qatar elevating their status as a good power in the Middle East, as well as differentiating themselves from other GCC countries (Kabalan, 2019; Kamrava, 2011).

As mentioned, technical and economic advancements in the latter part of the twentieth century have reconstructed Qatar's position amidst its region as the wealthiest state. In turn, this can be reflected in Qatar's change in international status and given Qatar room to challenge the Oriental *Other* identity narrative. A central aspect to challenging the latter narrative is connected to Qatar's domestic and foreign policy initiatives interlinked with branding the state of Qatar. In particular, nation-branding in Qatar has been increasingly linked to Qatar's cultural diplomacy, where such cultural resources make claims regarding a state's position within the

international hierarchy. At the core of Qatar's nation-branding strategy is *Qatar's 2030 National Vision* (QNV). The 2030 National Vision plan is critical to Qatar's nation-branding strategy in order for them to reach their long-term objectives, along with the other GCC countries. The national development plan was decided upon in 2007 and followed by the ratification by Amiri Decision 44, before it was launched in October 2008 by the current Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. As stated in the 2030 National Vision plan, one of its central objectives at a large-scale is divided into four separate pillars (General Secretariat For Development Planning, 2008: 11). The four developmental pillars are primarily concerned with amplifying Qatar's cultural, economic and political capacity within its region, with especially focusing on the GCC and the Arab League of Organisation of Islamic Conference (p. 20). Two years after the QNV was launched in 2008, it was announced by FIFA that Qatar won the rights to host the football World Cup in 2022. By gaining the rights to the World Cup, it inserted an additional element into Qatar's construction of infrastructure and further economic, political and cultural growth (Ulrichsen, 2016: 65-66). Furthermore, the QVN state that some of the values Qatar want to display is:

- A promotor of international peace as a good power/mediator
- A sense of modernity with a focus on maintaining its core cultural and conventional values and norms as an Arab and Islamic state
  (General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008: 1)

In 2011, the state of Qatar released a supplementary action plan for their 2030 QVN which further emphasises the need to preserve traditional Qatari values while fronting more modern, radical aspects of themselves (Qatar General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2011: 20). The roadmap identifies that the efforts taken to balance a modern society with the preservation of its conventional cultural and religious values/norms, revolves around promoting the Qatari identity through sports and cultural exchanges (Ibid, 20). Qatar's long-term objectives are founded on the assumptions of justifiable future development with a cultural and human development process as the core aspirations in order to reach the wanted social and political status. Qatar's promotion of more modern values suggests that Qatar is utilising a mixture of the social mobility strategy by emulating the values of the West, and the social creativity strategy which contends that Qatar is reconstructing their pre-conceived negative *Other* identity into a more positive and distinctive identity. Therefore, it is possible to contend that Qatar's proposed development plan is founded within Western liberal values.

Due to the rapid development in Qatar (and their small population), the Qatari government stresses the need for expatriate workers in the first pillar of the 2030 QVN. In order to attract the right workers, the QVN state that Qatar needs to promote the right amount of incentives and ensure that institutional arrangements are in order to protect the rights and the safety of their imported workforce (QVN, 2008: 14). Hence, it is necessary to consider what international legal obligations Qatar is bound to as they have stated that they will fulfil its international commitments (Ibid, 20). Qatar became a member of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 1972 and has legislated six out of eight ILO Conventions, five being fundamental ILO regulations (ILO, n.d.). Qatar has ratified the following:

(1) C029 – Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), (2) C105 – Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), (3) C111 – Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), (4) C138 – Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and (5) C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) (ILO, n.d.).

According to Powell (1998), there are three general assumptions regarding human rights in the sense that it is exclusively Western (universalist), cultural objections towards human rights are a non-Western aspect, and that the relativist human rights approach threatens the Western, universalist approach (Powell, 1998: 203). Collectively, these assumptions help construct the Western states, meaning those who follow the universalist approach, as the good states (the self/us), and the non-conforming non-Western states as the bad guys (the Other). Hence, Qatar's commitment to human rights is necessary to consider. Further, as Qatar is a member of the ILO, they are obliged to promote and secure the fundamental human rights. According to the ILO Declaration, Article 2 (2), a member state is acquired to advocate, honour and legitimise aspects of the fundamental human rights. In specific, Qatar has to realise the abolition of any variety of forced and involuntary labour (ILO, n.d.). Qatar is considered to be a signatory member to a set of different UN and ILO conventions. Hence, they are expected to uphold what the West to be perceived universal, international norms and values. According to the ILO, when a state and its government confines itself to global labour standards, that state has committed itself to ensure that any employer respects the rights of its workers by establishing appropriate laws. Once Qatar ratified a Convention from the ILO, Qatar needed to report on any measures taken to prevent human rights violations to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and the Conference Committee on the Application of

Standards (CAS). CEACRs main task is to assist any member state with an evaluation of how that state has chosen to apply a given Convention, either through impartial observation or through a direct request.

A crucial cultural resource of Qatar that has to be mentioned is Al Jazeera. Prior to the establishment of Al Jazeera in 1996, the Middle East lacked a news station that provided highly regarded news to the people (Sultan, 2013). Additionally, the Arab region had long been dependent on Western-Arab speaking media stations such as the BBC to obtain information on precarious political issues. For Qatar, the establishment of Al Jazeera is one of their most significant foreign policy investments. Its importance and reach are noted by Khatib (2013) as she states that Al Jazeera is the first-ever 24-hour running news channel that aired in more than 100 countries and reached more than 300 million people (Khatib, 2013). By creating Al Jazeera, Qatar tried to break down traditional media norms across the Arab region, and consequently in the West as well. By doing so, the media station was able to promote a more pluralistic approach to international news, while also staying separate from the Western approach (Samuel-Azran, 2016). As Al Jazeera has had such a global reach, Qatar has been able to reflect those values that are central to the Qatari society at the same time as Qatar has aligned themselves more with other actor's values, norms and interest.

As mentioned, Grix & Lee (2013), Cha (2016) and Potter (2009) has argued that the use of sports (football) can be considered to be a crucial part of a state's soft power foreign policy approach. States such as Brazil has attempted to use the football World Cup in order to construct a new and positive social identity (Buarque, 2015). The interplay between identity and the use of football through the hosting of a sports mega-event is increasingly playing a significant role in ex-colonial states (Amara, 2008). Amara argues that the use of sports by the Gulf countries can assist in explaining how they are constructing a new identity that is balancing between conventional Arab values and more modern, pluralistic norms and values (Ibid, 69). Again, linked with the reign of former Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and his wish for a different Qatar, Qatar has since the late 1990s integrated sports as a central aspect of their foreign policy strategy used to elevate their social identity and international status. Over the past two decades, Qatar has hosted various sporting events such as international golf tournaments, cycling and the latest one being 2019 World Athletics Championships. By the time we reach the 2022 FIFA World Cup, Qatar has held 28 major sports tournaments since 2004. However, in comparison to the FIFA World Cup, all of the 28 sports tournaments are ranked as a second-tier or lower.

Hosting an SME such as the FIFA World Cup allows Qatar to challenge the pre-existing dominant identity narrative, but it also provides Qatar with the opportunity to showcase Qatar's engagement with hosting international football, which, in turn, is showcasing their desire to perceived as an attractive sporting destination and acquire a positive sports identity. Moreover, investments outside of hosting SMEs have also caught the interest of the international society. Such investments include the purchase of Paris Saint-Germain in 2011 and the corporate sponsorship between Qatar Airways and the Catalan football club FC Barcelona. According to the *Bid Evaluation Report* released by FIFA in 2010, football is the most-watched sports program in Qatar, with it being estimated that 77% of men and 64% of women are watching the games (Fédération Internationale de Football Association, 2010). In addition, the cultural and political media network Al Jazeera run more than 17 different sports channels at the same time. Qatar's increasing interests and investments in a sport like football suggest that they are trying to establish a more positive sports identity.

Qatar's engagement with the international society heightened when it was announced on the 2nd of December 2010 that the 2022 FIFA World Cup rights went to Qatar. Despite that Qatar is familiar with hosting major sports events, many were in disbelief when the announcement of Qatar gaining the rights to host the World Cup was made. Suddenly, the eyes of the entire international society turned to Qatar.

5.2 Kick off - Qatar's pre-event performance
On the 14th of May 2010, Qatar submitted its *Bid Book* that comprises of Qatar's proposed plans for the World Cup. Meaning that the Bid Book incorporated information on future plans on infrastructure, legal conditions within Qatar, and functioning and the construction of everlasting Qatari heritage concepts (Fédération Internationale de Football Association, 2010: 18-22). In addition, Qatar's Bid Book displayed how dense Qatar is geographically and that all of the upcoming football World Cup would be centred around Doha's suburban area. All of this will enable those who participate with availability to all high-end venues and a newly established transportation infrastructure. All the former and latter points together would gain Qatar the rights to the densest FIFA tournament ever and eventually procure the rights to the first-ever Middle Eastern football World Cup.

It has been previously displayed that Qatar's increasing engagement through hosting SMEs is understood their desire to construct a new and positive social identity. However, Gallarotti

(2010) and Brannagan & Guilanotti (2018) has noted that seeking to construct a social identity and elevating one's status could go two ways. Firstly, the process of seeking higher status could either act as a power curse, meaning that a state's actions, social interactions or governmental policies can distance those the host state seek to attract and result in a loss of attractiveness and a negative identity. However, seeking to construct a positive social identity through hosting an SME provides the host state with an opportunity to make reforms and regenerate the negative self-perception into a more unique and positive one. Hence, this sub-chapter will be divided into two separate sections. Sub-section one will discuss the concerns and criticism Qatar received between winning the rights to host the FIFA World Cup in 2010 and until 2014. Sources from different international NGOs such as Amnesty International, the Human Rights Watch and the ILO will be examined to see what evidence there are to support the negative exposure and criticism. Such negative exposure has triggered the Qatari state to evaluate their own actions/performance. Hence, the section will also incorporate data suggesting what reforms/legislations taken by Qatar in the timespan of 2010 – 2014. The second sub-chapter will continue the discussion and look at further international criticism made from 2015 – 2019 as both a response to any actions taken by the Qatari state in between 2010 – 2014, but also how much of the same conditions continued.

5.2.1 Qatar in the spotlight - Negative Critique and the Legal Reforms

As mentioned, the international society was shocked when it was announced that Qatar had won the rights to host the most prestigious sports mega-event in the world, the FIFA World Cup. Numerous claims and concerns were made regarding Qatar as both an attractive and suitable football destination for the World Cup, and questions were asked about the impartiality of FIFA during the bidding process (Panja & Draper, 2020). There are numerous political, cultural, economic and social issues being brought up by the relevant audience, like international NGOs and the West. Furthermore, there is a unanimous understanding that some of the more pressing issues surrounds Qatar's human rights track record. The focus on human rights by international NGOs and the international media, and the way this is portrayed produces a notion of Qatar to the exterior other but also to itself. To further understand the narratives upon which Qatar is being constructed, from the point in which it gained the hosting rights to the continuing preparation that is leading up to the event. In addition to how Qatar is trying to reshape its image and regain control upon how it is constructing itself. I now turn to identify the most contested issues coming out of the run-up for the Qatar World Cup by international NGOs and the international media. At the same time that I highlight the legal

reforms made by Qatar to respond to the critiques that it received. For the sake of clarity, I have divided the critiques and the legal reforms made as a response into two-time frames from 2010 to 2014 and 2015 to 2019.

5.2.2 First half - 2010 - 2014

The first issue that is brought to attention is the lack of football structure in Qatar. Brannagan & Rookwood (2016) argue that one of the general concerns of football supporters and Western media is that Qatar lacks a strong football heritage/foundation (Brannagan & Rookwood, 2016: 174-175). Since its independence in 1971, the Qatari national team has never qualified for the World Cup finals, though Qatar has been a reoccurring participant in the continental Asian Cup in which they won the most recent one in 2019. Upon hearing this criticism, Qatar made sure to commit themselves to build a minimum of nine new stadiums from scratch, overhaul and modernise three of its current football stadiums, all in seven different cities (Fédération Internationale de Football Association, 2010: 8). Similarly, the question of why a country with the proper football structure and heritage in place did not gain the rights to the FIFA World Cup was raised (Brannagan & Rookwood, 2016: 175-176). It has been estimated that Qatar's infrastructure pre-event preparations would cost more than $200 billion and that the construction of stadiums and other types of infrastructure necessitate somewhere between 500,000 and 1,5 million workers (Ganji, 2016: 222). The need for workers and a labour force to create a strong football structure in Qatar has led to a discussion on human rights.

Much of Qatar's rapid development has leaned on an imported workforce from countries in South Asia and the Middle Eastern region. According to statistics taken from *Cultural Statistics in the State of Qatar 2016,* in 2015, the Qatari population was approximately 2,421,055 (including both registered Qatari citizens, and non-Qatari citizens), whereas only 346,211 (14,3%) was Qatari registered citizens (Ibid, 225). About two years after FIFA announced that Qatar was hosting the World Cup in 2022, and two years into the pre-event process, international media and NGOs such as the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International drew attention towards Qatar's infamous *Kafala System* and the treatment of migrant workers. The Kafala system, also known as a Sponsorship system, is a system built on principles of hospitality that sets out specific responsibilities with regards to the security and the care of a state's foreign workers (Bajracharya & Sijapati, 2012: 3). The Kafala system is being utilised by the Qatari government to regulate the flow of labour into its country. Further, the system is considered to be exploitive as it is used to monitor migrant workers as it requires that all migrant

workers have a sponsor (predominantly their employers). Additionally, their employers are responsible for issuing a valid ID-permit and maintain a migrant worker's legal status, which has allowed for the ill-treatment of migrant workers as the system makes the workers dependent on their employers (Ibid, 3-4).

In September of 2013, the international criticism was ignited when The Guardian reported that the current working conditions at the construction sites had led to the death of a large portion of migrant workers in Qatar (Pattisson, 2013a). It was reported that between 2010 and 2013, more than 1200 migrant workers within the infrastructure section died due to horrible conditions (Chen, 2015). In addition, Svenson (2019) from The International Observatory of Human Rights reported that the current labour conditions in Qatar could result in up to 4000 deaths before the first kick of the football in 2022 (Svenson, 2019).

Amnesty's 2013 *The Dark Side of Migration* uncovered a chain of intricated and unlawful contracts, in addition to the customary exploitation of the migrant workforce (Amnesty International, 2013). At the heart of the criticism from Amnesty's 2013 report is the kafala system. The kafala system operates as a sponsorship system in which unethical and immoral companies within "Qatar exert control over their foreign workforce (Ibid, 93). Additionally, the sponsorship system is governed by the Ministry of Interior in Qatar and was played out in the so-called 2009 *Sponsorship Law* (Law No. 04 of 2009). It is highlighted that a single sponsor regulates imported workers. According to the law, this sponsor must also be their employer being a Qatari individual or a Qatari company (Ibid, 93). A migrant worker cannot freely swap their employers/work without consent from their official sponsor (Ibid, 93-94). In chapter three of Amnesty's *The Dark Side of Migration*, they highlighted various routine based abuses within the construction sector. Researchers from Amnesty discovered a set of various discriminatory abuses ranging from the terms and conditions of an immigrant worker employment is different from those the person was promised throughout the enrolment process; monthly salary being withheld and its employers/sponsors not renewing their legal stay, leaving the workers undocumented. Such findings were reflected through interviews with migrant workers. In an interview conducted by Amnesty researchers with a Nepali worker, the worker stated that:

"*We can't go anywhere. If we go to the Embassy, the police could catch us. We go to work in a car, we work, we come back and eat. We watch for the police from the terrace. We walk around on Fridays but have to watch out for the police*" (Ibid, 36).

In similar terms to the 2013 Amnesty report, Human Rights Watch and the International Labour Organisation also found that employers failed to secure their workers their legal stay, resulting in Qatar's migrant expats to be illegal aliens. Researchers from the Human Rights Watch went to the Aspire Zone, a site where on the new stadiums are being built and interviewed seven Nepali workers at this construction site. The group of Nepali workers said that their employer had not paid them their monthly salary for three and a half months (Human Rights Watch, 2012: 72). In addition, it was mentioned that their employers required a payment in exchange for the permission to leave the country (Ibid, 72). Qatar's 2009 Sponsorship Law states that the employer/sponsor of an imported worker is obliged to secure the worker a legal permit within their employment (Ibid, 93; Human Rights Watch, 2012: 38). However, the head of the Labour Ministry's Legal Affairs, Mohammed al-Obeidly, stated that the law prohibits any employer from withholding its employees' passports, but that governmental officials did not monitor this (Ibid, 73).

In an article published by The Guardian, Pattisson (2013b) interviewed a Nepalese worker that emphasised the poor working conditions he and others were suffering. The Nepalese worker said that he came to Qatar thinking that he would gain new experience and make some money (Pattisson, 2013b). He further stated that the migrant expats working at the same facilities endured physical violence from their employers and were mainly perceived as sub-human beings. The Nepalese worker confirmed the same practices such seen in Amnesty's (2013) and the Human Rights Watch's (2012) report, namely the violation of their freedom of movement. The Nepalese worker further stated that:

"*The workers don't move around a lot. They fear being caught (if they do not have an ID card). .... (In the past) the police caught and deported many workers. We don't know under what charges they were deported, (but) around 25-30 workers were deported like this*" (Pattisson, 2013a).

The article blames the State of Qatar to be violators of fundamental human rights and refers to the state as an actor which treat their imported workforce as "bulls that can be beaten mercilessly" (Ibid). The article clearly feeds into the identity narrative *Self/Other* where the West is able to denounce the Arab *Other*. Furthermore, the power inequalities are displayed in

the article showing binary differences along the lines of morality, suggesting, that Qatar is an immoral actor.

As we have seen, Qatar acquiring the rights to host the FIFA World Cup has attracted negative exposure from many different corners. It has been highlighted by international media and international NGOs that due to the undertaking of the construction of new football venues, transportation infrastructure and much more, an increase of migrant workers has entered Qatar, and are now facing inhumane working conditions. I argue that the uncovering of the abuse of Qatar's workforce in the run-up process to the World Cup displays what is at risk for Qatar, namely their development of a new, positive social identity and their international status. Due to international criticism, the Qatari government has provided a somewhat vague suggestion on how the Qatari state is planning to face these issues and improve on the conditions of their imported workforce. The head of the organising committee of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, Hassan al-Thawadi, recognised back in 2012 that the construction sector (concerning the construction of new stadiums) in Qatar had issues and stated that "…Qatar is committed to reform" (Al Jazeera, 2012). Moreover, Hassan al-Thawadi assured that the Qatari state would make sure that any company and employer has to ensure that international labour standards are followed and met (Ibid, 2012). Ganji (2016) take a note that some of the reforms Qatar has taken up to 2016, follows a set of corresponding schemes (Ganji, 2016: 246). Of such legal reforms, the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, Qatar's state entity responsible of overseeing the preparations of the 2022 World Cup, published the first edition of the *Workers' Welfare Standards* in 2014 which encouraged that all individuals included of the pre-event process shall be treated with respect, following the universally accepted human rights (The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, 2014; Oxford Business Group, 2016: 61). The Welfare Standards are meant to be mandatory guidelines in which all contractors/employers have to follow. Every second year, The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) have a joint inspection of the implementation of the newly adopted guidelines and are monitoring every step of the World Cup preparations. Section 6 point 6.4 of the first edition of the *Workers' Welfare Standards* take on one of the violations Amnesty, the Human Rights Watch and The Guardian highlighted. In particular, sub-point 6.4 (a) "prohibit the confiscation or retention of the Workers passport or other personal documents by the Recruitment Agent;" (The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, 2014, 9). This could be considered to be a positive change in their highly criticised labour laws. Law No. 4 of 2009, article 9 states that an employer is required to return the passport and/or ID cards once the procedure of issuing a migrant expat's

residence permit (GLMM, 2009). Despite offering new regulations through the proposed Workers' Welfare Standards, it is noticeable that similar provisions were given under Law No. 4 of 2009.

5.2.3 Second half - 2015 - 2019

As argued, criticism by international NGOs and international media resulted in Qatar making judicial reforms. A particular aspect of Qatar that NGOs such as the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International highly criticised was their sponsorship system, Law No. 4 of 2009 (Kafala system). Amnesty and the Human Rights Watch has claimed that the Kafala system is the heart of the labour issue in Qatar and stressed the need for reform. In particular, Amnesty's 2013 report and Human Rights Watch's 2012 report highlighted judicial practices within Qatar that restrained fundamental human rights such as the freedom of movement of Qatar's migrant expats. One of the more prominent issues surfacing within the reports from both Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch was the confiscation of Qatar's imported workforce passports and the non-renewal of their residence permits which rendered them illegal within Qatar, and as noted, in danger of getting arrested.

As a result of significant pressure from the international society with the international NGOs at their heels, the state of Qatar introduced a new and improved judicial practice which would replace the old Kafala system and stand as a replacement for Law No. 4 of 2009. On the 13th of December 2016, the Qatari government answered the international criticism by altering its highly criticised labour law. In the following months of the announcement of changing their labour law, initiatives were starting to be implemented as laws which would bring positive changes to migrant workers. According to the new expat law (labour law), such changes/regulations would secure Qatar's expats a universal minimum wage, establish an electronic wage system, construct a governmental agency with a role to distribute permits of residency for workers and visas. The *norming* of labour rights is further addressed by James Dorsey. In his article *Qatari labor conditions in focus as FIFA debates 2022 World Cup*, he noted that Qatar had indeed responded in a positive manner to international criticism (Dorsey, 2013a). Furthermore, Dorsey stresses that the committee responsible for overseeing the preparations of the World Cup was inspecting the working conditions and published the previously noted *Workers' Welfare Standards*.

Amidst pressure from international NGOs such as Amnesty and the Human Rights Watch, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) involved itself by filing a formal complaint against Qatar regarding violations of Convention No. 29. According to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), the Qatari state had failed to provide and sustain a legal structure which protects the imported workers as it was set out in the ratified Conventions (International Trade Union Conference, 2014). Also, the ILO committee of experts laid out their concerns with the Qatari Law, Law. 04 of 2009, which upheld the Kafala system. During the first weeks of March 2016, a committee from ILO was sent to Qatar to oversee the implementation of the newly adopted Labour Law No. 15 of 2015. The Law No. 15 of 2015 replaced the old labour law, namely the Kafala system (Law No. 4 of 2009), the committee dispatched by the ILO went to evaluate the implementation of this law. The committee noted that Article 22 of the new law allows for migrant labourers to transfer jobs if specific circumstances allow it and that Article 21 gives a migrant expat the opportunity to change their work upon the approval of their current employer, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. However, similar provisions can be found under the former Law No. 4 of 2009 and are therefore not to be acknowledged as a judicial reform (International Labour Office, 2016). However, one aspect of the new expat law can be considered to be a positive judicial reform. Article 21 of Law No. 15 of 2015 does provide migrant labourers to freely change their occupation without the formal consent of their employer at the end of their binding contract, or they can change jobs freely after five years if the current contract does not have a formal ending date (GLMM, 2015). Regarding a state practice that was previously discovered in Amnesty's 2013 report and Human Rights Watch's 2012 report, namely the confiscation of a migrant expat's passport, Law No. 21 of 2015 states in Article 8 that any employer is required to return the passports of a migrant worker when the process of renewing his/her residence permit is completed (GLMM, 2015). However, the report ILO presented displays 168 instances where the passport and the ID card of migrant workers had been reported to the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Interior in 2015, where 40 of the offenders were imprisoned (International Labour Office, 2016: 24). The committee sent out by the ILO did acknowledge that Qatar implemented judicial reforms in order to protect their migrant workers, however, the report found, after meeting up with workers from small enterprises working on the construction of the football stadiums, that even after the implementation of the Law No. 15 of 2015, many of the workers experienced that their passports were confiscated and that their ID cards were not renewed, which left them as illegal aliens within Qatar (Ibid: 24-25).

In similar terms of the formal complaint the ILO filed against Qatar, Amnesty International (2016) examined the new reforms proposed by the Qatari state and discovered several shortcomings similar to the old labour laws. For instance, Amnesty (2016) found that key elements of the old law, Law No. 4 of 2009, was still occurring under the newly adopted Law. 15 of 2015. The 2016 report, section five that a set of different employers did not renew the residency permits of migrant workers, despite the employers being bound by Article 8 of Law No. 15 of 2015 (Amnesty International, 2016; GLMM, 2015). In similar terms to the report published by the ILO, section six of Amnesty's (2016a) report displays evidence of passport confiscation, which was further emphasised in an interview with Shamam, a gardener at the Aspire Zone stated that:

"I remember my first day in Qatar. Almost the very first thing (an agent) working for my company did was take my passport. I haven't seen it since" (Amnesty, 2016a).

Amnesty found that the new law infringed the freedom of movement of Qatar's migrant workers. Article 7 of Law No. 15 of 2015 states that migrant expats had to acquire an exit permit from their employer at least 72 hours beforehand. In regard to Convention No. 29, the committee sent out by the ILO, stressed that "even under the new Law, the employer may object to the departure from the country of the migrant worker, …" (International Labour Office, 2016: 25). Then, the law clearly states that if this request were denied, the migrant expat has the opportunity to approach the exit committee in Qatar. However, through a vast number of interviews done with migrant expats working at Khalifa International Stadium, they found that many of the 132 interviewees had their passports confiscated by their employers and that some of them were denied an exit permit when they wanted to return home (Amnesty, 2016b: 17, 20-21). For some of the workers, this resulted in forced labour. Additionally, some of the migrant expats experienced that their contracts were drastically changed, which meant that they were either paid much less than agreed upon or that the monthly payment was delayed (Ibid). Furthermore, interviews were done with 99 workers at the Aspire Zone where it was found that the households of the labourers working there were poor and that their passports were confiscated when they arrived in Qatar (Ibid, 17).

As mentioned, ILO filed a complaint against Qatar, arguing that the Qatari state had failed to comply with the ratified, fundamental conventions on forced labour and on labour inspections. In 2017, the BBC reported that ILO was closing its case as the Qatari government had pledged

to start the deconstruction of its Kafala system (BBC, 2017). The Qatari state committed themselves to ensure that contracts with an employer are arranged with a legitimate governmental jurisdiction which would prevent a worker's contract was changed (Ibid). Chairperson of ILO's governing body, Luc Cortebeeck mentioned further that the commitment included the establishment of workers committees where the workers were free to elect their own representative (Ibid). However, president of the Workers' Group in the ILO, Catelene Passchier, said to Reuters that these promises sounded nice, but good intentions are not sufficient in an international context (Nebehay, 2017). She stressed the need for actual implementation.

Despite various new legal forms, reoccurring reports from Amnesty International, the Human Rights Watch and the ILO have shown that the same violations of the ratified ILO Convention on Forced Labour (C029) and Convention on Abolition of Forced Labour (C105). However, the ILO (2018) published a news article in 2018 stating that the newly adopted Law No. 13 of 2018 was to replace Law No. 15 of 2015 which regulated the freedom of movement of Qatar's migrant workers (ILO, 2018). Under the previous law, Law No. 15 of 2015, all labourers had to get an approved exit permit from their employer, which has been proved to be halted various times. With the new law, Law No. 13 of 2018, migrant expats will be able to leave Qatar freely (Ibid). The chief of the ILO Project Office for Qatar, Houtan Homayounpour, expressed that "The ILO welcomed the enactment of Law No. 13, which will have a direct and positive impact on the lives of migrant workers in Qatar" (Ibid). He further stated that this judicial reform was to be considered to be a critical milestone in Qatar's process of changing their labour landscape. Dr Issa Saad Al Jafali Al Nuaimi, the Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, stated in the same article that this judicial reform was a continued step in the correct direction in integrating and ensuring that all migrant labourers were protected and that their labour conditions were following international standards (Ibid).

On the 16th of October 2019, the International Labour Organisation in accordance with the State of Qatar announced to the world that Qatar was proceeding with extensive labour reforms to its highly criticised labour market (ILO, 2019). The Council of Ministers of the State Qatar collectively authorised new laws and regulations with the intention of terminating its Kafala System. For instance, such regulations would allow Qatar's migrant expats to freely change their jobs, without the permission of their current employers. Before the new labour reforms, migrant workers in Qatar had to go through a no-objection certificate (NOC) that had to be

accepted by their employers (ILO, 2019). In addition to the latter initiative, the Minister of Interior in Qatar passed a ministerial order that disbanded the requirements a worker had to pass in order to exit Qatar. It is believed that these are some of the necessary steps taken by the government in Qatar to end the sponsorship system. In Human Rights Watch report, it displays an overview of crucial events happening in Qatar, 2019, and it was noted that besides the ending of the Kafala System, that the Council of Ministers of Qatar constructed a new law that promoted a non-discriminatory minimum wage (Human Rights Watch, 2020). This legal initiative is considered to be the first of its kind in the Middle Eastern region. The ILO Director-General came out and praised this decision and noted that "The ILO welcomes these reforms and recognizes the commitment of the State of Qatar to transforming its labour market. These steps will greatly support the rights of migrant workers, while contributing to a more efficient and productive economy." (ILO, 2019).

These types of legal initiatives display that Qatar is willing to stay true to its modernisation project by attempting to distance themselves from narratives interlinked with the dominant *Other* identity narrative. However, whether the reforms have resulted in positive, acceptable changes within the working conditions of Qatar's migrant workers are yet to be seen. Cautious optimism surrounding the new state practices has been shared by many. For instance, Amnesty International's Deputy Director of Global Issues, Stephen Cockburn stated that Amnesty would be following closely regarding the implementation of the new legal guidelines as previous legal reforms did not shield migrant workers from exploitation (Sadek, 2019). Then, how has these state practices, the norming of labour rights, and actions taken by Qatar since they acquired the rights to host the World Cup, with the interactions with the West, constructed identity?

5.3 Additional time - A *new* and *improved* Qatar?

This thesis examines how the theory of social identity can be connected to current international political issues, in specific, how the run-up for the 2022 Qatar World Cup is constructing identity and potentially affecting their international status. As noted, the construction of a new social identity and the process of altering one's international status is socially constructed in relations with other actors. According to Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira & Neumann (2017), status is intersubjective meaning that states consider themselves in relation to other states (Wohlforth, de Carvalho, Leira & Neumann, 2017: 2). Further, status can be considered to be a social aspect as it is heavily dependent upon social recognition by other actors (Weber, 1979). As status can be considered to be a social aspect, status is used to address state identities which

are constructed within the international hierarchy. In addition, from a constructivist lens, the identity of a state is considered to be constituted by its norms, values and its culture (Alexandrov, 2003: 34). Furthermore, constructivist scholars such as Wendt argue that nation-states pursue social norms not only because they are of interest to the state, but also when those social norms are intertwined within their state identity (Ibid, 34-35). An action or a practice will be deemed as illegitimate or unattractive when a social norm becomes perceived as conflicting with the identity a state wants to display (Ibid, 35).

Over the past decades, Qatar has moved from being an unknown state of being a country of interest to international media, academia and global politics. Since its defence partnership with the British Empire back in 1916 and the discovery of oil, the Qatari identity has gone through a set of different historical conceptualisations. The Qatari identity has predominantly been perceived through two collective identity lenses, namely as a part of the Arab Peninsula and as a Gulf state. However, since the coup d'état of the former Sheikh of Qatar, Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani had a desire to elevate its identity and international status through profile building through modernising Qatar while maintaining its traditional Islamic values. During his reign, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani managed to establish Qatar as a peace mediator in various regional conflicts. Further, nation-branding in Qatar has been increasingly linked to Qatar's cultural diplomacy. Through the 2030 QVN, the Qatari state expressed the desire to transform "Qatar into an advanced country by 2030, capable of sustaining its own development and providing for a high standard of living for all of its people for generations to come" (QVN, 2008: 2). Additionally, a crucial part of Qatar's identity management since the late 1990s has been the utilisation of sports mega-events. As the FIFA World Cup in 2022 is the first-ever World Cup in the Middle East, one can consider this as the meeting of the West and the perceived Oriental Other. Bhabha (1994) suggest such a meeting is between the prior colonial powers and the previous colonised states, establishes a "Third Space of enunciation" (Bhabha, 1994: 37). Following Bhabha's *Third Space of enunciation*, the moment Qatar acquired the rights to the World Cup, it established a *Third space* which is characterised by the differences between the West and Qatar. The *Third space* has allowed for the outside world to investigate and interact with Qatar and the actions they have taken. Considering that a state acquires a more positive social identity and an elevated international status depends on the recognition of other actors, the social interaction in this *Third space* has allowed Qatar to interact with the West that either legitimise Qatar's new social identity or delegitimise it.

A focal point of criticism since the awarding of the hosting rights to the FIFA World Cup in 2010, Qatar has faced negative exposure from many different corners from the West. The findings display that the central theme of the criticism surrounded poor labour conditions on the infrastructure projects in the pre-event process leading up to the Qatar World Cup. International NGOs such as Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch reported between 2012 – 2019 on a series of human rights violations in Qatar, more explicitly surrounding the violations of the migrant expats. The findings provided by the international NGOs provided a further foundation for Western media to establish, or in this context, build on the dominant identity narrative Qatar is trying to contest. For instance, in Mahmood, Lamble and Kelly's (2013) news article which addressed that the Qatari state disregarded the human rights violations during the three first years of the run-up process (Mahmood, Lamble & Kelly, 2013). Their understanding of Qatar's inactions is representative of the human rights reports as it represents the manifestation of the existing dominant identity narrative of Qatar. The argument here represents an Oriental, Western approach which contends that Western liberal values are constricted within regional boundaries must not cross European borders and into an area where the uncivilised individuals are. The findings suggest that there is a perception that outside of the West, in this context, Qatar, that actions that have been taken correlate with modern slavery and even racial discrimination. This follows Powell's (1998) notion that cultural objections against human rights are predominantly non-western, which suggest a backwards cultural progress. This, in turn, displays that the binary self-other oriental narrative is still at large. The West is constructing Qatar by suggesting that it is a state that is guilty of exploiting migrant expats which would not occur in the developed West. Furthermore, references made by the West has included phrases such as "modern slavery", "labour abuse" and "violence". This proposes a familiar, yet hidden theme where the finger is pointing towards a Muslim country which stands as guilty of breaches and ill-treatment which is assumed to not be found in the West. Further, in an article published in the Guardian, it was highlighted that the International Trade Union Conference stressed that Qatar's public response to international pressure on the human rights violations was "weak and disappointing" (Osborne & Gibson, 2013). Hence, the underlying message is that Qatar's action for normative change is inadequate, which, in turn, amplifies the Self/Other binary discourse.

Qatar has been under the loop since it gained the rights to host the World Cup, and through a universalist approach to human rights, one could argue that the criticism is somewhat deserved. However, as Qatar faced a major drawback after winning the rights, evidence has shown that

Qatar has tried to answer the criticism by making judicial reforms within Qatar. The infamous Kafala system has been the heart of international criticism, and as showcased, the Sponsorship system has allowed for the abuse of workers. The case study has displayed that, after international criticism, Qatar did not ignore the increasing issue. Qatar started to reopen discussions and various channels of communications to address human rights violations raised by international NGOs. Arguably, Qatar did so in order to reconstruct their negative social identity displayed by the West. For instance, the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), a national advisory human rights body in Qatar, published a draft of various guidelines for migrant expats housing conditions at the construction sites of the World Cup stadiums (Oxford Business Group, 2016: 61). This draft incorporated new a standard that concerned housing for the migrant workers and access to medical care. In addition, the Qatari state introduced the Wage Protection System (WPS) in 2013 and came into effect in 2015. This system, as mentioned, aims to guarantee that all migrant labourers receive their monthly salaries on time. Further, in October 2015, the Qatari government announced the new Kafala system which included new regulations that stated that any migrant expats wanting to leave their current position and the country were allowed to do so. However, a migrant worker would have to apply for the permission to leave three days in advance to the Ministry of Interior. If the application is denied, the worker will be given the opportunity to file a formal complaint to the newly established grievance committee. In addition, the reports have displayed that migrant labourers have not been able to change jobs if wanted, but the new guidelines state that any migrant expats can change their occupation at the end of their contract. The latter change is manifested within the global discourse on development, where ethical principles of individuality regulate socio-cultural behaviour within Qatar. This falls in line with the identity management strategies Larson and Shevchenko (2005) characterises as a social creativity strategy and a social mobility strategy. By utilising the social mobility strategy, a state has to adapt to the preferred norms and values of a higher status group if the state wants to enter an elite group. Through social creativity, a state will self-reflect and try to reconstruct their negative self-images into more positive self-perceptions. In the context of this paper, I have considered human rights as social norms, which in a constructivist understanding is considered to be "a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity" (Katzenstein, 1996: 5). In order for Qatar's new social identity and international status to be legitimate, Qatar's actions and practices is dependent on a counterpart to recognise its changed identity.

As Qatar has been more aware of its own social and political position within the Gulf region and its position with its GCC neighbours, I contend that the pre-event process to the World Cup in 2022 has up to this point, been a critical operation to the construction of a social identity. An increasing collective understanding shared by Brannagan & Giulanotti (2015), is that the use of football acts as a medium for states, in this context, Qatar, to either construct a new social identity or reconstruct the current one (Brannagan & Giulanotti, 2015: 708). The critical challenges for the State of Qatar since it acquired the rights to host the World Cup in 2022 has been surrounding issues of state practices/policies, namely adapting international standards/social norms into domestic law formulation. As we have seen, a national, institutional adaptation of international perceived norms such as human rights are a slow-paced process. Since Qatar acquired the rights to host the FIFA World Cup and incorporated the SME as a critical event to their identity construction, reports from the ILO, Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch criticised Law No. 4 of 2009, the reformed Law No. 15 of 2015 and Law No. 13 of 2018. The implementation of the Law No. 15 of 2015 and Law No. 13 of 2018 which replaced Law No. 15 of 2015 was highly criticised by the international NGOs and Western media to be more of the same judicial reforms that already was in place. In order for Qatar's new social identity to be acknowledged, the actions of Qatar throughout the pre-event process has to be perceived as attractive to the perceived audience. Despite seeing efforts from Qatar to make normative institutional change through what Hogg & Abrams (1988) calls a social-identification process, the overwhelmingly negative exposure and data displaying that Qatar's effort to *modernise* or construct a new, more liberal social identity, has worked against them. Out of fear of losing the hosting rights to a different state, it has become clear that Qatar has started a reconstruction process, which is controlled by its rationality. Human rights NGOs and the ILO has debunked Qatar's identity management strategies by establishing that the new legalisations mainly lie within liberal rhetoric as they found the continuous ill-treatment of Qatar's migrant workers.

Further, Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch' reports sparked a massive interest in Western media. Through the findings in human rights reports, Western media have stressed that the circumstances surrounding the treatment of migrant workers are not appropriate to the hosting state of the FIFA World Cup. Thus, these findings have led to Western media to call for Qatar to lose its hosting rights. For instance, in an ABC article, the article problematised the treatment of migrant workers working on the construction sites in Qatar (ABC, 2014). The article stressed that Qatar is at risk of losing the FIFA World Cup if

they do not show actual progress in providing a better protective legal framework for their migrant workers (Ibid, 2014). Similarly, the Daily Hive (2017) highlights allegations surrounding the mistreatment of migrant workers within Qatar that adds to an extended list over major concerns referring to Qatar's appropriateness as a suitable host (The Daily Hive, 2017). Hence, the case study displayed how Qatar's search for a new and positive identity and an elevated status, was disrupted by the West.

Human rights NGOs and Western media constructed Qatar based on its domestic behaviour surrounding the treatment of migrant workers. As seen in section 5.1.2, Qatar tried to construct a new identity by distancing itself from the dominant Arab Other identity narrative. Qatar did so by promoting more pluralistic values through *Qatar's 2030 National Vision*, positioning itself an active peace mediator and with an increased engagement with international sports (football). However, the reoccurring criticism has displayed that the West is questioning the identity Qatar is trying to reflect. The West and media outlets such as The Guardian have constructed Qatar as a state where human rights violations occur and has questioned Qatar's suitability as a host. This displays a power dynamic at play where the West still, to an extent, is a co-producer of Qatar's identity. As a result, Qatar's identity and international status stands as fractured, but unchanged.

6.0 Penalty shootout - A *reformed* Qatar?

This thesis has explored Qatar's search for a unique social identity and an enhanced international status through Qatar acquiring the rights to host the FIFA World Cup in 2022. The issue at hand has been approached by responding to the following research question: How does the run-up of the Qatar 2022 World Cup construct identity and potentially alter/affect their international status?

By situating myself within a constructivist understanding of identity and SIT, I have examined institutional practices and actions between Qatar and the international system. Furthermore, I have explored how interactions between Qatar and the West advances our understanding of identity-seeking and status-seeking smaller powers. Status in this study was understood as a positional, perceptual and social aspect. In other words, to acquire a higher status, the actions and the value system of a state has to be recognised as attractive by other actors. Hence, status is not created in a vacuum by itself, but is rather established in relation to others. Status has been understood as an intrinsic part of an identity paradigm, and not only as a sole resource of analysis. Furthermore, identity was understood as the perception of *the self* that is showcased to others. Moreover, social norms and values are critical to constructing identity, as social norms are understood as "a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity" (Katzenstein, 1996: 5).

The socio-political actions taken by Qatar since they obtained the rights to host the FIFA 2022 World Cup, back in 2010, has played a critical role in constructing an identity and potentially altering their international status. The pre-event process of the upcoming, and first-ever, Arab World Cup in 2022 is a continuation of Qatar's search for a new and unique positive social identity. Since former Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani obtained the state power from his father Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani in 1995, Qatar has taken several measures regionally to become a more prominent actor within the international hierarchy. Prior to obtaining the rights to the World Cup, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani openly expressed a wish to elevate Qatar's identity and international status through profile building. Amongst the crucial actions Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani has taken, cultural diplomacy has to be considered to be a critical component to their modernisation project. Arguably, at the core of the former Sheikh's profile building process, we can see that the use of sports, has been a critical tool. Furthermore, it is necessary to keep in mind that Qatar is not unfamiliar with hosting sports events. However, an

SME as the first-tier FIFA World Cup gives Qatar the possibility to challenge the dominant identity narrative upon which it has been produced.

Based on reports provided by international NGOs such as Amnesty International, the Human Rights Watch and the ILO, in this paper, I discussed how the understanding of judicial laws and practices within Qatar is constructing identity and affecting their international status. I have highlighted which of the judicial legislation and practices within Qatar and the pre-event preparation process that are considered to be unattractive to the relevant audience.

What does all of this mean for the construction of a new social identity within Qatar and their international status? Throughout the research process, it has become clear to me that the challenges to Qatari judicial practices throughout the pre-event preparation process are to be considered a disruptive event to Qatar's search for an elevated social identity. The reoccurring issues surrounding Qatar's handling of violations of migrant workers are initially reproducing the dominant identity narrative held by the West. The reports have shown that the judicial practices regarding migrant workers are working as a double-edged sword against Qatar's effort to construct a new social identity and an elevated international status. The reports have displayed reoccurring criticism, showed the persistent problems within Qatar despite reports such as the *Workers' Welfare Standards* offering improvements to their legal system. This pattern suggests that there have been minimal changes to Qatar's judicial framework. Qatar has tried to emulate more liberal values by offering a more protective framework for its migrant workers that focuses more on the individual by providing more individual freedom. These changes reflect a normative, institutional change in Qatar. Qatar altered its state practices by implementing legal practices and norms/values that are more alike Western states. However, Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch reported that the same violations still have occurred under the new legal framework. Thus, Qatar offered a more liberal rhetoric in their national practices, but the analysis displayed that these changes only lie within words and not within actual implementation/practice. I find that these minimal institutional alterations follow a mixture of Tajfel's identity management strategies social mobility strategy and social creativity strategy. In order for Qatar to acquire a positive social identity, they would have to emulate both the values and the behaviour of the West. The case revealed that after coming under increasing criticism, Qatar tried to self-evaluate through the social identification process by altering its institutional behaviour.

Furthermore, the analysis suggests that Qatar's current identity and international status stands as unchanged. However, this does not mean that Qatar's actions throughout the pre-event process have taken its toll on their quest for a positive social identity and an elevated status. For instance, I have found that Qatar's *good power* status has been challenged by their actions throughout the pre-event preparation process. Qatar ratified six key human rights Conventions in 1972, meaning that they emulated more Western liberal values/practices. Further, they positioned themselves as a morally good power through peace mediation in regional conflicts. The case study showed that the ill-treatment of migrant workers has damaged their reputation as a good power. Practices such as the lack of issuing exit permits, legal stay permits, and the denial of moving to a different employer without the consent of their current employer, all impede with the international responsibilities Qatar has undertaken by ratifying ILO Conventions No.29 and No.105. Qatar acquired its good power-status through international engagement, but Qatar's domestic behaviour throughout the preparation process left its status as a good power fragile. The analysis has revealed that the findings follow Powell's (1998) notion of cultural objections against human rights. Qatar's infringements of fundamental human rights have displayed throughout the analysis that the binary self-other oriental narrative is still at large. The West is constructing Qatar by suggesting that it is a state that is guilty of exploiting migrant expats which would not occur in the developed West.

SIT and international status theory situated within IR was a useful analytical lens in this case study as it revealed how Qatar's identity is established through interactions with the West. In particular, SIT was useful as it assisted me in understanding that rather than acquiring a new positive social identity and an elevated international status, Qatar's performance in the preparatory process has only reinforced the dominant Arab *other* identity narrative. By every institutional change Qatar offered, international organisations found the same violations all over again. Understanding identity and status through this lens has displayed the complexities of how social identity is constructed in the international system. For instance, the construction of identity and an elevated international status depends on the constructed interpretations the outside creates when encountering Qatar in Bhabha's *Third space*. SIT has demonstrated how and what role the interrelationship between the self (Qatar) and the exterior (the West) play in constructing identity and international status. Further, it has displayed that Qatar's search for a new social identity is constituted in socio-cultural interests, instead of solemnly material interests. Additionally, SIT has helped me identify how Qatar's identity and status-seeking politics could be considered as a two-dimensional contest. I have found that the Qatari state is

preoccupied with a national contest of how to define their new social identity, while at the same time being concerned with displaying what this new identity requires to the international community. The case study and the analysis showed how Qatar as a host for the upcoming World Cup has tried to alter their domestic behaviour in relations to the treatment of their migrant workers. The fear of losing the rights to host the World Cup and the fear of being remembered as a state that allows human rights violations, have displayed how Qatar's reconstruction process is controlled by their rationality. The social creativity identity management strategy in SIT is a strategy controlled by the rational thinking of an intergroup (Qatar) where the intergroup recognise the negative identity it possesses and reconstructs this into a more positive identity. The two-dimensional identity and status-seeking politics Qatar is performing displays how Qatar's (in)actions on a domestic level affect their international good power status.

To conclude, I argue that the findings have displayed that hosting an SME such as the FIFA World Cup has motivated a conversation between the perceived Self and the Other into more liberal reforms within Qatar. The more recent reports suggest, despite violations still occurring, that Qatar has implemented new labour reforms which will, in theory, favour their migrant workers. An open discussion between the West, in this context, international NGOs and the ILO, and Qatar, may make it easier for Qatar to enter into the predominantly Western-dominated liberal social norm club. The adaption of new judicial reforms suggests that Qatar is slowly adapting to the values and the behaviour that the West deem to be attractive and more acceptable as a World Cup host. The fundamental question of domestic institutional change stands as important to Qatari authorities as the international society has called for Qatar to lose the hosting rights. If the same violations continue, will Qatar's (in)actions have an everlasting effect on their identity and international status?

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