

Sarah Muhanna Al-Naimi

Abstract:

The 2022 World Cup and the Post-Colonial Narrative Examined (Sarah Al Naimi and Thomas Bonnie James)

This paper seeks to examine the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and the Post-Colonial narratives associated with Qatar's attempt at identifying itself out of the frame of modernity set by the West. Sports diplomacy is the device that Qatar is utilizing to delineate issues of post-colonial narratives induced by Orientalism and from the stereotypes influenced by the West about the Muslim world. The essence of Orientalism is based on the apparent dichotomy between the Western sphere and the Eastern sphere (Kolluoghlu-Kirli, 2003). The first realm is depicted as superior, while the other is portrayed as inferior.

This paper explores through the lens of Post-Colonialism Qatar and its recent run of hosting international sporting events mainly dominated by the West (Al-Naimi et al., 2018). An example of these championships is the 2022 World Cup. In 2010, FIFA awarded Qatar the bid to host the 2022 World Cup (Al-Naimi et al., 2018). Hence, the paper will elaborate on the views and perceptions of the colonizer and the colonized from the aforementioned perspectives. The post-colonial perspective signifies how the colonized communities construct their "self" in juxtaposition to the "other" imposed by the colonizer (Amara, 2011).

This paper sets a unique narrative as it provides a dialectic about carving national identity through Sports diplomacy. Qatar, in recent years, has been aiming to show its distinctiveness from countries (GCC countries) with which it shares religious, social, historical, and linguistic aspects. Moreover, Qatar is endeavoring to reframe the post-colonial narrative. Alarabi emphasizes the dense connection between post-colonialism and orientalism (Al-Naimi et al., 2018). This relationship influenced the narrated division between the West (colonizer) and the Muslims' world (colonized) relationship between the colonizer (more modern, dominating, and civilized West) and the colonized territory (less civilized, conventional, and dominated East). An attempt is made to understand how Qatar has been trying to propel cultural diplomacy as a facet of the aforementioned via the soft power approaches.

The paper identifies how Football as a sport is used to understand the historical narrative. This is achieved by focusing on language. Language is examined for its function as an influential device where it juxtaposes the other and analyzes what the 'other' deliberate and deciphers about the self. Moreover, it understands what the West cogitates of the East's "Non-Western," Muslim perceptions and the emerging interactions.

The paper analyzes literature, specifically from foreign media of British origins and their coverage of Qatar and the upcoming major sporting tournament, to gain an insight into the post-colonial and orientalist narratives. The investigation functioned as a counter-narrative and defiance in contradiction of the dialectal coercion employed in the British Media (the Guardian and the Sun) that indicates the interpretation of Qatar solely as an affluent state without cultural facets, merely prospering from its abundant hydrocarbon energy resources.

Bio:

In 2012, Sarah Muhanna Al-Naimi obtained her first MA in Public Policy from HBKU. Her thesis in Qatar's Mediation Policy in the Islamic World investigated Qatar's foreign policy in 1995-2011 with a particular focus on the mediation policy. In 2022, she obtained her second MA in "Global Diplomacy" program in SOAS. Her thesis analyzed the power of small states in sport with a focus on Qatar as a case study. In Jan 2020, she started her PHD in "Gulf Studies" in Qatar University. Her academic and research vocation is to explore Qatar's foreign policy, demonstrate how non-traditional tools enabled branding Qatar's image regionally and internationally. In addition, Sarah is currently working as a researcher at the Diplomatic Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She published some articles in the "Diplomacy" Journal which is published in the Diplomatic Institute. These articles are about the role of sport on Qatar's foreign policy and the relationship between NGOs and foreign policy