

Global Dreams, Local Nightmares: Migrant Workers and the Cost of the 2022 Qatar World Cup

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Abstract

The 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar sent shockwaves around the world as global media reported on the plethora of human rights abuses that had taken place since November 2015. Yet, despite initial public outrage, the voices of objectors were quickly muffled by the lights of Stadiums Lusail, Al Janoub, 974, Ahmad Bin Ali, Al Thumama, Education City, Khalifa International, and Al Bayt. This article explores the impact the 2022 Qatar World Cup had on the inequalities of migrant laborers in a globalized economy primarily as a theoretical essay. I endeavor to draw on World Systems Theory to argue that the 2022 Qatar World Cup was not merely an anomaly, but a systematic form of labor extraction that occurred within the microcosm of Qatar 2022. This will show that (1) the case of Qatar should be viewed as a microcosm of World Systems Theory, and (2) the globalized economy allowed for the exploitation of migrants through complicity and lack of regulatory oversight.

Keywords: mega-sporting events, migrant workers, labor migration, kafala system, Qatar World Cup 2022, world-systems theory (WST), migrant labor exploitation

1. Introduction: Migrant labor, structural dynamics, and World Systems Theory

The 2022 FIFA World Cup will be remembered for generations for either of the following: (1) the capturing of the public imagination in fulfilling what many saw as Messi's "fairytale ending" and (2) the violation of human rights abuses towards workers involved in the construction of the World Cup. This article centers its focus on the latter. As Qatar embarked on the immense effort to construct seven new stadiums for its hosting of the World Cup, and one city, Lusail, it relied almost entirely on the estimated figure of 500,000 to 1.5 million migrant workers employed in construction, who were entirely responsible for the tournament's infrastructure (Ganji, 2016). These same migrant workers mostly came from Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines—countries of the Global South that provided an estimated 1.5 million laborers over the course of the 2022 World Cup, since its 2010 inception (Unison, 2015). The criticisms of global

media fell mainly on the Kafala system of employment in Qatar, which legally bound workers to their employers, restricted their movement, and denied them basic protections. Despite the claims of the Qatari Government in 2017 to reform labor rights, work done by independent media suggested that the reforms undertaken by the Qatari government were “woefully inadequate and poorly enforced” (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Similarly, research into Qatar (Hughes, 2025) found that attempts at reforming the minimum wage proved unsuccessful; a combination of lack of responsibility, delay in issuing payments, and complicity of employers made it entirely unsustainable for the average worker to sustain their own standard of living and support a family at home.

The significant size of the migrant worker population in Qatar has much to do not only with Qatar’s domestic construction needs, but also with Qatar being an important destination for migrant workers from the Global South who seek to improve their standard of living. A report into the events of 2019 in Qatar (Human Rights Watch, 2020) found that the 2 million-strong migrant labor force of Qatar comprised around 95% of all labor workers in Qatar. This is a deep-rooted issue, not just related to Qatar’s domestic needs in construction, but more significantly due to broader global structures that dictate the movement of migrant workers. With third-world countries frequently relying on remittances to subsidize a percentage of GDP, Qatar’s attractive destination led to a mass influx of workers from a combination of agencies in home countries, and a need for low-skilled laborers. In the past few decades, several migratory flows have emerged, one of which Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2003) suggest is the major route involving the migration from Southeast Asia to the oil-rich Middle and Far East (p. 6). Insights into Nepal’s GDP (The Global Economy, 2025) showed that remittances accounted for 26.89% of Nepal’s GDP in 2023; remittances, or non-commercial money transfers by foreign workers, in Nepal were significantly higher compared to the world average of 5.13% based on data from 174 countries. Similarly, in Bangladesh, Farhana and Mannan (2024) state that 21.9 billion dollars were officially recorded as being sent through remittance channels, highlighting the dependency on the outsourcing of migrant labor. The recruitment of said migrant workers was done mainly through private recruitment agencies, with many paying illegal recruitment fees (Jackson, 2023).

2. Literature Review

Research into the Qatar World Cup has mainly explored the facets of migrant exploitation that took place under the Qatari Government. Scholars such as Ganji (2016) posed the question of reform to the World Cup, viewing the event as both high risk and opportunity; while there was a significant chance of reform, there was an equally likely chance of the event turning into a human rights disaster. Data from The Global Economy (2025) and Migration Policy Institute (Farhana & Mannan, 2014) highlight the remittance-based economies of Nepal and Bangladesh, key actors in the Periphery who contributed significantly to the World Cup project. Data taken from the International Monetary Fund (2025) helps strengthen the argument that Qatar should be considered a Semi-Periphery nation as in Wallerstein’s WST. Reports from Gulf Labour Markets and Migration (2017, 2023) went further in exposing the ethnic disparity between workers who undertake physical labor. Furthermore, the data exposes the dominance of non-Qatari workers in the labor force, which reveals the stark demographic imbalance and the structural reliance on foreign labor. Interestingly enough, research from 2015 had already raised warnings about the potential for human rights abuses in the Qatar World Cup, with the “migrant workers...highly vulnerable to trafficking and forced labour” (Worden, 2015, p.40). As confirmed by NGO reports, attempts to reform the labor system in Qatar were minimal, and despite supposed government intervention, a view in hindsight makes clear that such reforms did not take place. On the other hand, findings from 2017



made clear that “both IOC and FIFA...do not require that host countries have reputable human rights records” (Henderson, 2017, p.369).

In recent times, FIFA has come out with the FIFA Peace Prize, and since the process of determining the winner remains shrouded in mystery, one can only assume that the prize is simply a scapegoat for advancements in human rights action. Similarly, with the kickoff for the 2026 World Cup being less than 300 days away, it remains to be seen whether FIFA can uphold its promise of an effective human rights policy, as in line with its mission statements.

Grosfoguel (2002) highlighted the utility of analysis by WST: “Independent republics in the periphery live the crude exploitation of the capitalist world-system.” While existing literature has looked at imbalances between migrants and Qatari citizens in the context of the World Cup, this paper serves to add to existing literature by analysing the 2022 World Cup through the lens of WST, providing Qatar 2022 as a case study for potential future MSE’s.

Thus, the literature review maintains relevance by allowing the paper to explore the nuances of understanding Qatar 2022’s impact on both the economy and the people actively contributing to the building of the event. By exploring the World Cup in this way, the hierarchical economy of Wallerstein’s WST becomes apparent in its exposition of both global and local power imbalances.

3. Methodology

Intending to examine migrant labor in today’s globalized economy, I draw on Immanuel Wallerstein’s World Systems Analysis to explore the dynamic between semi-periphery nations—in this case, Qatar—and Periphery nations, who supplied labor to Qatar for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. While this essay remains primarily theoretical, I still aim to analyze the objective evidence from Qatar 2022 to argue that the exploitation of migrant laborers was far from an anomaly.

The empirical evidence employed in this paper has been selected from NGO reports, journals, academic articles, and contemporary media pieces. In particular, evidence pertaining to migration channels from Southeast Asia is prioritized; data sets from amnesty reports, scholarly literature, and annual reports are also considered.

The theoretical basis for this paper rests on Wallerstein’s premise that Peripheral countries are being exploited by those in the Semi-Periphery and Core, suggesting that wealthy countries benefit by taking advantage of labor from the latter two types of countries. However, it is important to note that Wallerstein recognized the minimal benefits to Periphery and Semi-Periphery nations provided by participating in this form of economy. In this type of global economy, multinational corporations such as FIFA and host nations(in the case of Qatar) can extract the most value out of the system. I argue that the migrant exploitation exposed in the 2022 Qatar World Cup was not merely an anomaly but a deep-rooted and systemic pattern of global labor extraction, sustained, namely, by the unequal relationships between the Core, Semi-Periphery, and Periphery nations.

4. Organization

The rest of the article will be organized as follows: The section titled “The Role of Migrant Labor in Building the 2022 FIFA World Cup” will analyze the trends of migrant workers who built the World Cup. “Understanding World Systems Analysis” aims to explore the relationship between the so-called ‘feeder’ states of Southeast Asia and Qatar, as well as



the role of the multinational body, FIFA, regarding the migrant labor market and the dependency of Periphery nations on Semi-periphery nations like Qatar. Moreover, the section will aim to explore the role of the 2022 Qatar World Cup as a case study within the broader dynamics of labor market globalization. The "Mechanisms of Exploitation in Qatar" will elaborate on the Kafala system and its role in migrant labor during the 2022 Qatar World Cup. Furthermore, this section will analyze the methods of migrant exploitation, including but not limited to: passport seizure, unsafe working environments, and international complicity. Finally, the Conclusion section will summarize the key discussions within the article and outline potential research areas for the future.

5. The Role of Migrant Labor in Building the 2022 Qatar World Cup

This section aims to build on the existing literature surrounding the demography of migrant workers in Qatar's construction industry, with a central focus on the 2022 Qatar World Cup in particular. The project was a result of not only a decade of planning and meticulous city design, but also one of hard labor by the thousands of migrant workers who moved to Qatar in the hopes of finding a better life for themselves and their families. I aim to delve into the infrastructure demands that were required in the construction of the 2022 Qatar World Cup, and how this directly correlates with the role of migrant workers in Qatar. This issue is especially prevalent, as will be shown, since Qatar itself had nowhere near the capacity to undertake such a huge project from its own population.

The 2022 Qatar World Cup led to an unprecedented infrastructure boom, with workers needed for the construction of hotels, stadiums, roads, restaurants, and the like. The role of migrant labor in building the Qatar World Cup can be traced back to the period 2012-2015, shortly after the announcement of Qatar's winning bid in 2010. Already a key destination for migrant workers—predominantly male laborers—research into the demography of Qatar found that Qatar's population increased by an astounding 35% between 2010 and 2015 (Gulf Research Center, 2017). The gargantuan project, which was estimated by Standard Chartered Bank at up to 72.5 billion dollars (Gulf News, 2018), called for a dramatic influx of labor, which Qatar did not possess among its own workforce. Given the limitations of Qatar's own population in extracting workers, the Qatari Government turned to the countries of the Global South to source labor. It came as no surprise that the migratory flow of these same workers came predominantly from countries in the Global South in Southeast Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. This reliance on foreign labor was not coincidental; rather, it underpinned the key method of Qatar's preparation strategy for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The intentional selection of countries whose economies were predominantly remittance-based, as in the case of Nepal and Bangladesh, led to foreign workers who would be incentivized to work harder to send remittance packages home. Qatar's migrant laborers were responsible for the building of seven new stadiums and one city, Lusail. Research into Qatar's working demography (Gulf Migration, 2023) found that of the laborers in Qatar who worked under the sector title "Craft and Related Trades Workers", only 0.47% were Qatari; of the total 551868 workers, only 2634 were Qatari, with 0 Qatari women, compared to the 826 non-Qatari women. Based on this empirical evidence, it is clear that the construction sector of Qatar at the time was not only made up almost fully by migrant men, but also fully dominated by migrant women when examining the work done by women in this sector.

This trend of migrant workers in Qatar is hardly surprising. Since the late 1960s and 1970s, the construction industry within the wealthy Arab nation's oil sector has been predominantly made up of migrant male workers. To put this into perspective, by the numbers, people from the same aforementioned countries make up just over 50% of Qatar's total population. When examining the demographics of Qatar, it is clear that the population is dominated by migrants from



Southeast Asia and North Africa, comprising around 78% of the population. With the rapid expansion of the Gulf states, migration to Qatar has become increasingly attractive for young workers in the construction industry to attempt to better their living conditions. A report into the migrant workers controversy, Mills (2022), found that the 2022 Qatar World Cup alone brought a 13.2% increase to the population of Qatar; faced with the immediate need for migrant workers to construct the infrastructure required for hosting the tournament, migrants from Southeast Asia flocked to the Arab state. While publicly available sources for the precise demography of construction workers concerning their age ranges or education are limited, they would likely have been young to middle-aged men. Due to the harsh working conditions, older men would likely have struggled significantly.

The countries from which the majority of the migrant workers for the 2022 Qatar World Cup came were limited to Southeast Asia or North Africa. This paper focuses on the migratory flow from Southeast Asia to Qatar, namely, with the countries of India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines.

It is clear to see the relationship between Qatar, FIFA, and Southeast Asia/North Africa as being directly applicable to analysis through Wallerstein's WST. The global chain between migratory flows from Southeast Asia/North Africa to Qatar is directly mirrored in the extraction of resources from the Periphery to the Semi-Periphery and Core in WST. While this section has provided empirical evidence to substantiate the argument, the next section will outline how exactly Qatar 2022 fits into and exacerbates the inequalities found in WST.

6. Understanding World Systems Theory

This section outlines the key concepts associated with World Systems Theory and develops this into an analysis specifically for the 2022 Qatar World Cup. Originally introduced as a concept in 1974, Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems Theory argued that the world should be viewed as a single hierarchical economy. Within this said economy, countries would be divided into the core, semi-periphery, and periphery. The role of the multinational organization FIFA is somewhat ambiguous within this theory, so this paper considers that FIFA is a detached body responsible for the oversight of its own events.

Critics of WST often consider the lack of empirical evidence as a basis for attacking the hierarchical macroeconomic model. Furthermore, WST has often been criticized by humanists as being insufficiently attentive to values of knowledge, such as culture and local customs. However, in the specific case of Qatar's relation to the Global South (namely Southeast Asia), there is strong evidence pertaining to the fact that we should analyze the case of the 2022 World Cup through WST.

Wallerstein (1974, as cited in Skocpol, 1977, p.1076) argued that sovereign states were but "one kind of organizational structure among others within this single social system." In the global context of the development of the World Cup, we can clearly see Qatar as one link within WST that connected other states. In the case of Qatar, Kafala is the main system of employment under which migrant workers fall; thus, the use of WST becomes even more pertinent due to its ability to analyze the impact of Kafala specifically on the migratory flow from Southeast Asia to Qatar. We should not view WST as a barrier to analysing the local impacts of migration to Qatar, but rather as a tool which serves primarily to highlight the imbalances of power between migrants from the Periphery and Semi-Periphery and ethnic-Qataris.



World Systems Theory is best characterized by Chase-Dunn and Grimes(1995) as “a power hierarchy between core and periphery in which wealthy and powerful “Core” societies dominate and exploit weak and poor “Periphery” societies. Core countries in WST are characterized by their domination over the rest of the world, whether it be in economic activity, technological development, or trading power. Notable examples of Core countries include the United States of America, Japan, and Germany.

Semi-Periphery countries are those countries that are less developed than Core countries, yet are more developed than those in the Periphery. Semi-periphery countries can be seen as countries that are either declining Core countries, or rapidly industrialising Periphery countries. Typical examples of semi-periphery countries often include South Korea, Brazil, and South Africa. In the case of the 2022 Qatar World Cup, it was the exploitation of migrants from Periphery and Semi-Periphery countries that highlighted the imbalances in power as explained by Wallerstein’s World Systems Theory.

Periphery countries are often underdeveloped, lack strong political power, and rely heavily on the export of natural resources(or, in this case, human labor). Periphery countries include Nepal, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. These four countries were all important expatriate nations when considering the population of Qatar; combined, research into specific expatriate countries found that they make up 36.77% of the total population of Qatar (Snoj, 2014, as cited by Ganji, 2016). Following the rapid growth of Qatar in the period 2010–2022 during its World Cup campaign, it is likely that this number has risen.

While on the whole Qatar has been acknowledged as a semi-periphery nation, its complex background and current economic backdrop make the case that Qatar could potentially sit somewhere between Semi-Periphery status and Core status. Currently ranked third in the world in terms of GDP per capita at the time of writing, there is certainly room for critics to argue against the nation’s classification as Semi-Periphery (International Monetary Fund, 2025). Indeed, the greatest arguments for Qatar’s Semi-Periphery status are twofold: (1) The nation relies extremely heavily on low-skilled migrant laborers from periphery countries, (2) the country’s economy is still reliant on natural gas exports. For analysis through WST, this essay will accept Qatar’s position as a semi-peripheral nation. The dynamic created by the migration of workers from Southeast Asia to Qatar closely mimics the vision of the relationship between the periphery and core as outlined by Wallerstein. While official estimates put the number of migrant workers for the World Cup at over 30,000 (Workers’ Welfare & Labour Rights, 2022), there can be no doubt that the number falls somewhere within the boundaries of 500,000 and 1.5 million as per outside estimates (Ganji, 2016). We should attribute the reasoning behind labor importation in Qatar not only to the limitations of the Qatari population, but also to Qatar’s status as a rentier state. A report into Qatar’s economy (Milipol Qatar, 2025) saw that the reliance on the exporting of oil and gas makes up around 70% of the total national income of Qatar, which enables Qatar to form a social contract where citizens are generally taxed less and benefit from state employment and a strong welfare system. However, what this allows is for the proliferation of physically demanding jobs, such as those involved in the World Cup, to be undertaken primarily by migrant workers.

Thus, migrant workers form a buffer state, where manual work is essential to Qatar’s global ambitions, yet those same workers are hardly recognized and protected by government reform. Throughout the Gulf nation’s history, Qatar has always remained a hub for migrants from Asia and Africa. The 20th century saw Qatar develop as a fishing and pearling port, whereas the discovery of oil in the 1940s catapulted the country to a state where it would no longer be able to rely on the trickle of migrants. What remains key to note is that Qatar has now transitioned to the reliance on a globalised



migrant labor market to sustain the development of its own infrastructure.

The route from Southeast Asia to Qatar is the primary channel for low-skilled migrant workers to enter the Gulf and find work in Qatar, as on a macroeconomic level, a trend has emerged wherein expatriate countries are locked into a relationship with Qatar. The emergence of the globalized economy has led to what Richard E. Lee calls “a hierarchical ordering of multiple centers of power that can unilaterally impose resolutions to struggles among competing interests, but, with maximum legitimacy and efficacy, only within their exclusive geographic confines” (Lee, 2011, p.33). Such is the case of Qatar, where the employment system of Kafala is exclusive to the Middle East. Lee (2011) notes that the expansion of this form of economy has consistently evolved in the past, and is what is happening right now. “The world economy has expanded [a fundamental process in the reproduction of the system] to incorporate fresh pools of cheap labor at the bottom of the wage scale to make up at the system level what has been conceded in local struggles” (p. 34). The “local struggles” in the case of Qatar, amount to an extensive list of benefits which would be a rarity in the West. Qatari citizens benefit from a range of concessions made by the government, including being tax-free in personal income and property, as well as substantial benefits such as free healthcare, education, housing assistance, and preferential government jobs.

In many ways, the World Cup can be seen to have compressed the concept of WST into one event. The so-called ‘core’ components of WST included the multinational body FIFA, sponsors, such as Coca Cola and Adidas; the Semi-Periphery was the host country, Qatar, and the Periphery included the migrant workers who constructed the project.

The 2022 Qatar World Cup provided a lens through which to examine the event as a microcosm within broader WST dynamics. A publication of the annual report of FIFA found that, typical of the WST model, it was FIFA who extracted a record high total revenue of “7.56 billion USD” in the period 2019-2022 (FIFA, 2022). Comparatively, Qatar received only “1.56 billion USD” (FIFA, 2022) despite Lyjak (2023) finding that Qatar spent around “220 billion” on the mega project. Moreover, the sales of sponsorship rights amounted to a “1.795 billion USD” profit for FIFA (FIFA, 2022); except for Qatar Airways, almost all sponsors were headquartered within the Core nations: Coca-Cola, Hyundai, Kia, Visa, and McDonald’s. This case represents not only the domination of the Core economies over the Periphery, but also highlights the intrusion of what are essentially core capitalist businesses into the Semi-Periphery. In a sense, the firms are just another facet of WST within the World Cup; while they shouldered no cost in investing in infrastructure for the event, the global visibility of the tournament allowed for the quick pay-back of costs that were spent on buying sponsorship rights for the event.

7. How the Globalized Economy allowed for Migrant Exploitation during the 2022 Qatar World Cup

The idea of WST assumes that the Core extrapolates as much profit as possible from the Periphery. The rapid expansion over the past few decades of the global economy should be seen as a contributing factor for the exploitation that occurred during Qatar 2022; the exploitation that happened during the World Cup is not a mere anomaly to the Kafala system, but a systemic system of exploitation that has been made possible by globalization.

Research into the World Cup found that Qatar’s bid for the World Cup can be viewed as a soft power play intended to project the nation’s image into the Global Core (Galily, 2025). The World Cup was an event intended to expose Qatar to

the world; in this sense, WST can be applied in viewing the exploitation of Migrant Labor as the extraction of labor from the Periphery (Southeast Asia) to the Semi-Periphery (Qatar).

The mechanisms of exploitation imposed on migrants during the World Cup mirror the exchange that occurs within WST. Despite reforms promised by the Qatari government to change labor dynamics in the run-up to the World Cup, there was little done, suggesting that the promised reforms were all illusory. Kafala, overseen by Qatar's internal ministries, as opposed to labor ministries, effectively tied workers directly to their employers with no chance of presenting litigation against their working environments. By viewing the World Cup through WST, we see the migrants as the Periphery; Kafala all but enabled exploitation to occur, and despite promised reforms, there was little done to solve the exploitation crisis.

The relationship between Core actors and the Periphery during the World Cup highlighted the hierarchical relationship between different facets of WST. As previously argued, Sponsors headquartered in the Core, such as the USA and Japan, benefited hugely from the World Cup at the expense of the migrant workers who labored from the bottom to build the mega project. The position of sponsors as a third-party group detached from the building of the World Cup allowed them to dodge criticism from global media, as well as distance themselves from the exploitation that occurred in the construction of the event. There is no doubt that sponsors were able to extract brand value from the record "5 billion viewers" of the duration of the World Cup, more than 50% of Earth's population (FIFA, 2022). International complicity from sponsors and FIFA made it all the more easy for exploitation to happen on the ground for the sake of finishing the project in time. The combination of a lack of regulatory oversight from the Qatari government and international complicity should be seen as ultimately the root cause of the exploitation crisis in Qatar.

8. Conclusions

As demonstrated by the previous sections, the concept of WST is still very much alive today, if not more than ever. The unbalanced relationship between the Core, Semi-Periphery, and Periphery was highlighted by the 2022 Qatar World Cup, where Qatar became a vessel for WST to play out. Migration to Qatar has long been a contentious issue, and the rich Gulf nation has profited hugely from the work of migrants in the past. From its inception as a small fishing and pearling town to the ultra-luxury heart of the Gulf today, migration has and will continue to play a huge role in the development of Qatar. In viewing the World Cup through the lens of Wallerstein's WST, it quickly becomes clear that the Qatari Government is not singularly at fault for the exploitation in the build-up to the World Cup. Bodies of the Core, such as sponsors, extracted maximal value through brand deals with the semi-periphery (Qatar), who exploited the Periphery, or migrant workers. As outlined above, a combination of International Complicity and lack of oversight was a contributing factor to the crisis that occurred before and during the World Cup.

While many criticize the use of WST as both a model and a form of analysis, it becomes ever clearer that the concepts of WST, which Wallerstein set out in the 1960s, are very prevalent today. Examining the world through this lens allows analysis of specific migratory flows, such as the route from Southeast Asia to Qatar, and the analysis of the primary actors within the World Cup. This article's empirical section outlines the remittance-based economies of Nepal and Bangladesh, and the systematic extraction of value that occurs within the migration route from Southeast Asia to Qatar.

This article provides only an introduction to Qatar's need to maintain migration, and argues that not only is the



population too small to sustain such a high capacity of work, but that the work of migrants is essential to maintain the 'buffer state' between migrants and ethnic-Qatari citizens. The section 'How the Globalized Economy allows for Migrant Exploitation during the 2022 Qatar World Cup' explores not only the main method of exploitation in Kafala, but also how this exploitation is consistently ignored and profited from by actors in the Core.

Analysis through WST alone, while helpful in explaining global migration patterns in a broad overview, suffers from a lack of specificity in understanding ulterior motives for migration to Qatar. This article's attempt to analyze Qatar 2022 through WST has provided a broad theoretical overview of inequalities of both micro and macro scale when investigating dynamics between actors during the World Cup; in particular, analysis by way of WST has been beneficial in its understanding of the hierarchies of said actors.

Further critical work on WST should investigate the 2014 Brazil World Cup or the upcoming 2026 North American World Cup. In the wake of using WST as a form of analysis, it may be interesting to investigate the difference between the events of Qatar, as a Semi-Periphery country, and North America, as a Core region. Such research could explain the difference between the use of migrants in a deregulated country like Qatar and an area with stricter legislation, in the case of North America. In examining the views of critics who believe WST ignores cultural and local customs, further examination of the 2026 World Cup could test the limits of WST and possibly amalgamate WST with other concepts, such as the Global Commodity Chain (GCC). By examining the 2026 World Cup in relation to the 2022 World Cup, we may see a difference emerge in the hierarchy of the global economy, where WST exposes how a host in the Global North relies far less on migrant exploitation, but possibly still produces inequalities in the form of corporate dominance and consumption patterns.

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Author Biography

Lachlan Tanhe is a student in his penultimate year in High School. The focus of the paper centers on the Qatar World Cup as it captured the imagination of the global audience, and provides an effective case study to use the lens of World Systems Theory. Lachlan is interested in History and International Relations, and intends to study either subject at a University level.

Mentor Contribution Statement

Dr. Ida Danewid is a social and political theorist based at the University of Sussex.

Lachlan conceptualized the piece, conducting research and analysis to formulate an argument for his submission. Dr. Danewid was responsible for facilitating conversations with Lachlan, which provoked deeper thought into his topic, and provided academic guidance in the form of suggestions on his initial manuscripts.

