

Nation Branding Through a Mega-Event: A Case Study of Qatar 2022

Naeem Ahmed

Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa in partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the
Masters of Arts degree in Human Kinetics

The School of Human Kinetics

Faculty of Health Sciences

University of Ottawa

© **Naeem Ahmed, Ottawa, Canada, 2020**

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nation branding process deployed by a host country organizing committee. Three research questions helped guide this study: (1) How does the organizing committee see the opportunity of hosting a sport-mega event (SME) as a nation branding tool? (2) What aspects of the FIFA World Cup (FWC) do people working with the organizing committee believe, create such nation branding opportunities? (3) How do event organizers leverage a nation branding legacy from the FWC? A single case study was built using 1,669 document pages, and nine semi-structured interviews and data were thematically analyzed. The study investigated relevant organizational documents and the event organizers' perspectives to determine the nation branding processes. Results revealed the organization's approach to nation branding involved assessing their external image, creating a country narrative based on the population's characteristics and values, and depicting a unique identity by showcasing their cultural heritage to increase the attraction of the nation brand. Findings highlight that nation branding through the FWC requires the LOC's strategic coordination through nation brand stakeholders, nation brand ambassadors, important organizations as well as the leadership of the nation in order to build brand equity.

Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been possible without the incredible support received throughout my academic endeavor. First and foremost, I'd like to extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Eric MacIntosh, for accepting me as his student, and for his patience and guidance that he provided throughout the two years. I could not have asked for a better mentor. I would like to extend my appreciation to my two committee members, Dr. Benoit Seguin and Dr. Milena Parent, for their support and feedback. I would like to thank each participant from the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy who took their time out to share their experiences with me. In closing, this thesis was completed during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and without the constant morale support of my family and friends this journey would not have been as successful.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Purpose Statement.....	5
Chapter 2: Review of Literature	6
Nation branding	6
Sport mega-events and destination image.....	9
Soft Power Diplomacy	12
Chapter 3: Methodology	17
Case Context	19
Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy	22
Data Collection	24
Document Analysis	24
Interviews.....	25
Interview Guide	25
Participant Sampling.....	26
Participants.....	27
Data Analysis	28
Research Quality	30
Chapter 4: Results	32

Document Analysis	32
Branding.....	33
Potential Legacies	40
Semi-structured Interviews	45
Branding.....	47
Events.....	64
Opportunities.....	67
Nation Branding Process.....	72
Chapter 5: Discussion	75
Hosting Opportunity	75
Nation Branding Processes	83
Qatar's Unique Identity.....	87
Nation Brand Stakeholders	89
Co-branding through Nation Brand Ambassadors.....	94
Supreme Committee's Media Strategy	96
Nation Brand Leadership	97
Qatar's Soft Power Approach	98
Comparing Nation Branding in South Africa 2010	101
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	105
Theoretical Contributions	107
Practical Contributions.....	108
Limitations and Future Directions	109
References.....	111

Appendix A.....	129
Appendix B	131
Appendix C	134
Appendix D.....	135
Appendix E	138

List of Tables

Table 3-1: List of participants interviewed from the SC.....	28
Table 4-1: Potential legacy initiatives developed by the SC.....	44
Table 4-2: Development of themes from the interviews.....	45
Table 4-3: List of essential stakeholders for nation branding.....	57
Table E-1: List of documents gathered for data collection and analysis	138

List of Figures

Figure 3-1: The location of Qatar in the Middle East region	19
Figure 3-2: Timeline of key events since Qatar won the bid	23
Figure 4-1: Tree map of family codes from document analysis	32
Figure 4-2: Nation branding process	74

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The hosting of sport mega-events (SMEs) has witnessed an increasingly apparent politicization of sport within the last three decades for both developed and emerging countries (Grix & Houlihan, 2014). Mega-events in today's age have two prominent features: they are considered to create significant consequences for the host destination, and secondly, they attract extensive media coverage (Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006). Roche (2000) defined mega-events as "large-scale cultural (including commercial and sporting) events, which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal, and international significance" (p.1). Being awarded the rights to host a mega-event is seen as an opportunity for the country to build and develop its infrastructure to accommodate the tourists and for the long-term development of the country (Smith, 2012).

Major or large-scale sporting events can also be classified as mega-events "if they have an international market and are organized by a special 'authority'" (Byers et al., p.103). The FIFA World Cup (FWC) and the Olympic Games are examples of such mega-events that draw people's worldwide attention (Roche, 2000). Such mega-events have a wide range of varying short and long-term consequences for the host nation (Jago et al., 2010). In sports management literature, hosting SMEs' advantages have extensively been discussed (Leopkey & Parent, 2012; Solberg & Preuss, 2007). Potential positive outcomes of hosting include multifaceted legacies ranging from political, infrastructural, temporal to place specific as long as the legacy planning is included from the offset (Hartman & Zandberg, 2015; Ritchie, 2000).

Hosting SMEs such as the FWC and the Olympic Games have increasingly been recognized as powerful instruments for image enhancement and provide exceptional branding opportunities for a nation (Berkowitz et al., 2007; Higham & Hinch, 2009). A widely used

understanding of branding is that of Keller (2003) who suggested: "Branding involves creating mental structures and helping consumers organize their knowledge about products and services in a way that clarifies their decision making, and, in the process, provide value to the firm" (p.8). In the case of the nation, branding would provide value to the host country. Whether academics label it as reputation management, public diplomacy, national identity, Merkelsen and Rasmussen (2019) suggest such undertakings can be classified as nation branding.

Joseph Nye, an American political scientist, devised the term "soft power" back in the 1990s. While States have initially deployed "hard power" with the use of military force or monetary rewards, soft power is "the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion" (Keohane & Nye, 1998 p.86). Mattern (2005) argued that the premise that hard power is the only useful tool in the world of politics has eroded. Wang (2006) implied that "national reputation is unquestionably an instrument of power" (p.91). Nations have always been and continue to be interested in how the international eyes perceive their brand to be (Dinnie, 2008). Notably, hosting of SMEs appears to provide national government occasions to enhance their soft power, mainly as it boosts citizen pride, attracts tourists, and provides a platform to showcase culture (Grix & Houlihan, 2014).

In line with Nye's (2004) concept of soft power, it is clear that political heads are concentrated on promoting their country, as attractive nations can affect the international environment from a broader perspective. An increase in tourism and foreign investments is an obvious measurable benefit associated with having a positive image (Jago et al., 2010). Hence, policy-makers of nations have shifted their interest towards the branding of a nation, to foster success in tourism, trade, business, diplomatic and cultural relations with other member states (Zhao & Latshaw, 2009). Especially within the case of emerging nations, that is, becoming an

industrialized nation by achieving higher industrial capacity (The Law Dictionary, 2019), this seems to be driven by political and business motives seeking to position the State among the world's elite and exhibiting the competency and talent of the nation (Krzyzaniak, 2018). As countries utilize a place branding strategy through platforms such as architecture, international relations, and culture, sports have also become a vital tool for many nations (Richelieu, 2018; Yu et al., 2012).

Yu et al., (2012) support "Chalip and Costa's (2005) general theory that special events can be an extension of a destinations brand and can be promoted as certain features of destination brand" (p.47). States seek to go further than just branding by using a SME as part of a soft power strategy to increase their presence on the global stage (Grix et al., 2017). National governments are now aware that sports are no longer a niche cultural institution, but rather a vastly crucial foreign policy tool (Murray, 2013). Hence due to the emotional appeal of sports, its ability to communicate and reach a broad audience and the prospect of forming a bond of confidence between the sender and receiver, in the case of sporting events the nation and its potential customers (e.g., businesses, investors, visitors, and citizens; Anholt, 2003; Misener & Mason, 2009).

Although nation branding and soft power are often held as separate capabilities, significant relations exist (Fan, 2008). While soft power is a tool for shaping attitudes, perceptions, and interactions amongst nations, branding serves to sell a nation's image and identity locally and globally (Brannagan & Guilianotti, 2018). Nation branding can be an effective instrument for cultivating soft power of a country (Fan, 2008) Therefore, nation branding through sport cannot be seen through a single lens but needs a broader analysis,

including examining the role of sports diplomacy and soft power play. They are both interlinked to serve a common purpose for the State (Nauright, 2013; Grix, 2012).

While academic interests are growing in the subjects of sports diplomacy and nation branding, researchers need to focus their attention on emerging nations and the strategic use of branding through sports, especially as they continue to bid for and succeed on such occasions (Rein & Shields, 2007). Qatar is one such identified 'emerging' nation linked to utilizing a sports diplomacy tactic through the hosting of FWC 2022 (Richelieu, 2018; Rookwood, 2019). Qatar's involvement in international sport has been embraced by the government to improve their diplomatic relations and create their mark on the world stage (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015; Grix & Brannagan, 2016; Zeineddine, 2017). Rookwood (2019) conducted a case study spanning from 2011 to 2018, investigating the perception of Qatar's soft power and nation branding. The study concluded that the practitioners working on the nation's brand have a significant role in planning the FWC 2022. However, the current literature has not examined what this role is and what strategic processes are being used. Hankinson's (2010) thematic review of place branding literature stated the need to "include not only the positioning of images, but also the role and development of brand identities that form the basis of brand communications" (p.311). Brand identities is how the brand explains to their consumers who they are (Keller, 2008). Hence, by examining these processes, we can reveal insights into the nation brand's development for an emerging country like Qatar, which does not have a well-established brand image.

Current research from academics in sport policy, politics and tourism indicates a rise in event bidding from emerging nations like Qatar, with a focused effort to display a desired image/identity (Cornelissen, 2010; Haut et al., 2018; Knott et al., 2017; Lee, 2010; Lee 2014). However, research is scant on determining the processes to which a nation hosting the event can

leverage such desired outcomes. This literature gap is surprising considering more emerging cities/nations continue to bid for such SMEs.

Consequently, this thesis argues that studying the nation brand development process is an essential consideration within hosting SMEs. The increased interest from emerging nations to host sporting events provides a critical discussion related to the processes and potential benefits derived from successfully staging events. There has been minimal research explicitly looking at the process of nation branding before hosting SMEs such as the FWC and its practical implications in sport management and sports event organizing. As Qatar had explicitly stated utilizing the FWC 2022 for image change the local organizing committee (LOC) being the event planners can play a central role in nation branding for such occasions. Moreover, the LOC could provide direct knowledge of the strategic use of nation branding through such an event as their direct involvement with the planning and delivery of the SME. This thesis addresses explicitly the pre-event planning stage for the host organizing country for the FWC 2022.

Purpose Statement

Thus, this study aimed to investigate the nation branding process deployed by a host country organizing committee. The study investigated relevant organizational documents and event organizers' perspective to determine the nation branding processes. The specific research questions addressed in this study were threefold:

1. How does the organizing committee see the opportunity of hosting SME as a nation branding tool?
2. What aspects of the FWC do people working with the organizing committee believe create such nation branding opportunities?
3. How do event organizers leverage a nation branding legacy from the FWC?

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Nation branding

The branding definition has covered many other areas outside of consumer markets, including places (including cities, destinations, and countries) (Hanna & Rowley, 2008). The subject of nation branding is still a recent discourse, with the term 'nation brand' coined in 1996 (Anholt, 2010), though widely used in its application. Many cities, nations, and regions have built their nation brand, are working on it, or considered it. However, there is a lack of research comprehensively dealing with the subject (Anholt, 2007; Govers & Go, 2009; Stock, 2009). Since nation branding is the main focus of this thesis, hence understanding how countries act as brands will help answer our research questions further. Although there may be uncertainty over whether a country is seen as a brand, Kapferer (2012) stated, "whether they like it or not (countries) act *de facto* as a brand – a summary of unique values and benefits" (p.2). Branding can be universally applicable to various products such as physical goods, services, online services, retailers, sports, arts & entertainment, ideas, and even geographic locations (Keller, 2008). Keller (2008), through his research with brand practitioners, identified reputation and awareness as characteristics achieved by branding. A brand needs to stand out in the consumers' minds by being distinct. However, the brand generators' concern is that, in reality, the consumer ultimately decides to perceive or believe in that distinctiveness (Peterson, 2006). Hence, this is of particular importance for nations branding, where pre-existing national stereotypes may already be established and thus difficult to change (Dinnie, 2016).

A fundamental similarity between nation branding and the broader branding theory indicates that the brand needs to be carefully created and strategically managed (Knott et al.,

2017). Likewise, this similarity is highlighted by the definition proposed by Fan (2010) who stated, “nation branding is a process by which a nation’s image can be created, monitored, evaluated and proactively managed in order to improve or enhance the country’s reputation among a target international audience.” (p.101). Dinnie (2016) separated the nation brand image from the national brand identity. A nation's identity comprises of crucial components: such as language, political regime, history, architecture, literature, food, and drink. Sports can also be portrayed to the desired audience through various means such as sporting achievements, famous personalities, branded exports, and tourism experiences (Grix & Lee, 2013). This identity results in developing a subjective image (nation brand image), which is perceived by either the domestic or international audience. Anholt (2003) defined the activity of nation branding as “...determining the most realistic, most competitive, and most compelling strategic vision for the country, and ensuring that this vision is supported, reinforced and enriched by every act of communication between the country and the rest of the world” (p.11). This definition describes nation branding as a strategic vision that showcases the whole image on the international stage. Although the understanding of the nation brand has developed, acknowledged and is utilized, there is still debate about applying 'branding' to nations (Anholt, 2010). As researchers simply perceive nation branding as “basically the application of marketing techniques to reshape the international opinion of a country” (as cited in Krzyzaniak, 2018, p.500). Besides, those who agree that a nation can be branded have no agreement about the best way to do so. Simonin (2008) argued that “the relevant question today is not whether to pursue nation branding, but rather how to do it right” (p.20). Anholt (2004) states branding is simply not just creating a logo and slogan, with very little depth behind it and minimal link to the nation's long-term growth plans, and little to no government backing, failing to establish in the minds of the 'audience.'

Also, awareness of this audience and how they perceive the brand is as relevant as the shared intent between the various stakeholders (Anholt, 2004). Instead as Anholt (2010) argues, "branding is not about communications but about policy change" (p.11)

The nation's reputation and image are differentiated from the nation brand within the literature (Simion, Buocovetchi, Dumitrescu 2017). Simion et al., (2017) states, "the difference between the image/reputation of a nation and the nation brand is that the first can be formed without specific actions directed to this end, while the nation brand is the country's image arising as a result of the efforts made in this respect by the country" (p.18). According to Anholt (2010), "national reputation cannot be constructed; it can only be earned" (p.6), he further suggests three means through which a state can work on their reputation. Firstly, the country should assess the image of their nation from the eyes of the nation-states that matter most for their interests through a scientific and analytical method, secondly collaborate with the local stakeholders openly to develop a national strategy and narrative that is also authentic to the nation's populace, thirdly in order to remain at the forefront of global attention and admiration; the State needs to engrave innovation in all its policies and sectors. Hankinson (2010) stated that a nation's brand is not controlled or owned by a sole organization but instead requires collaboration between organizations in the private and public sectors. Thus, controlling and leading a nation's brand may become a challenge as brand stakeholders have to work together to deliver the results needed.

Moreover, in a study that examined the relationship between the stakeholders and effective place branding through sport, it was noted that all stakeholder groups must have clear and comprehensive brand leadership and brand alignment (Knott & Hemmonsbeay, 2016). Understandably, studying how brand stakeholders collaborate is essential for an effective nation

brand development process. The brand's leadership and control are of the most frequent challenges found in the place branding literature. A significant challenge in the politics of destination branding is issues relating to who is responsible for developing the brand theme and making the decision on the brand (Pike, 2005). A strategy is defined as "the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations" (Johnson et al., 2008, p.3). Like corporate organizations, there is a need for nations to have a long-term vision and direction. To excel in areas of interest, "strategic decisions must be made regarding the nation-brand's direction" (Dinnie, 2008, p.220). Therefore, it is pertinent to investigate the brand stakeholder relationships and understand the decision-making process that addresses how/who makes the ultimate brand decisions, and who sets the strategic direction.

Sport mega-events and destination image

A great deal of research has investigated the influence of major sport events on the country image (Ritchie & Smith, 1991; Kim & Morrison, 2005; Smith, 2006; Heslop et al., 2010; Lee, 2010; Harris & Lepp, 2011; Lepp & Gibson, 2011; Nadeau et al., 2011; Armenakyan et al., 2012; Bodet & Lacassagne, 2012; Fullerton & Holtzhausen, 2012; Grix, 2012; Heslop et al., 2013; Knott et al., 2017; Rookwood, 2019). Although the research is assessed from various disciplines (e.g., international relations, economics, and tourism) there is limited knowledge in regards to how to utilize the SMEs for destination branding in the sport management domain, specifically, the role of the host organizing committee can play. One of the most powerful ways to use sports for nation branding can be associated with organizing sporting events, especially SMEs. Although the positive impacts that can be associated with such events are questionable, there is no doubt that a host country for such occasions gets the international spotlight on them

before and during the Games (Preuss, 2007). Such mega-events' successful delivery and producing gold medals are increasingly acknowledged to be a highly visible and potentially positive signal to other countries (van Ham, 2001). SMEs can offer a host nation or city the opportunity to gain international visibility and provide means of "putting themselves on the international map" (Grix & Brannagan, 2016, p.257).

The study by Custodia and Gouveia (2007) assessed Portugal's cognitive image, hosts of the UEFA EURO Championship in 2004 by the media during the coverage of the event. It confirmed a positive impact due to the power the journalists had and how well they contributed to shaping how the outsiders viewed the nation. The study identified that the media tend to assess the organization's delivery of the event and functional aspects such as support infrastructure as the country's success attributes. Hede (2005) studied Australian residents' attitudes towards Greece, who consumed the media telecast of the Athens 2004 Olympic games. The results indicated a positive shift in attitude towards the country not based on Australians that visited the country but based on the consumption of the media telecast of the Games. The appearance, cultural history, hospitality, and infrastructure were vital segments that aided in Greece's positive perception. It is essential to consider how the nation may be projected in the media in the early stages of event planning to maximize the highest potential of hosting these events (Hede, 2005). Accordingly, it would be a great value to the sports event literature and sport event managers to understand how host organizing committees utilize the media to build their nation brand and if their planning includes processes to exploit the media exposure.

Heslop et al. (2011) studied China's tourist perceptions as the host of the 2008 Olympic Games. They found that perceptions of the nation's image were based on the country's character

and its citizens, and proposed nations should identify issues with the perceived character and build on their citizens' personality as these were the influencing dimensions for the brand.

SMEs help the city or nation construct a place identity and help the hosts seem attractive and unique. According to Gratton and Preuss (2008), the opening and closing ceremonies of such events provide the host with the opportunity to present the "cultural ideas, cultural identity, and cultural products" which act as a condensed cultural show of the host nation (p.1929). Roche (2000) described SMEs as opportunities for a host nation to develop and narrate the "story of a nation" that demonstrates their 'national progress' beside the leaders and people of the nation, the global public will listen to this narration. This description supports the nation branding phenomenon, specifically regarding the nation brand identity, and identifies the nation's heads and citizens as stakeholders in the process.

Additionally, mega-events can enable image change for a brand in imagery and place meaning (Higham & Hinch, 2009). The FWC 2006 provided Germany with the opportunity to disregard their image problem of being 'unfriendly' and 'unwelcome'. Zollner (2016) argued that "No PR campaign could have garnered such an outcome" (p.101). Although the experiences the traveling fans have with the local culture and people are minimal, this limited experience is enough to create valuable memories and help contribute towards the image formation towards the country (Mendes et al., 2011). Grix (2012) studied nine respondents who were either directly involved or had knowledge of Germany staging of the FWC 2006. The author argued that, for countries with a bad national reputation, it is easier to deliberately and intentionally leverage SME to alter their nation's brand. While assessing Germany's use of soft power strategy while hosting the FWC 2006, Grix and Houlihan (2014) suggested the governments strategically planned long-term campaigns were significant in achieving a positive brand image from the

event. Preuss and Alfs (2011) supported the idea that SME's such as the FWC can be used by the host nation to signal to exterior audiences which can help modify the image and the perception of certain aspects of the country.

In a similar vein, Richelieu (2018) noted that place branding is about developing a conceptual framework through sport. The author proposed brand managers to adopt a holistic 'diamond' approach, focused on four dimensions (commercial, economic, social, and sport) that would result in a socio-economic legacy for the host nation (Richelieu, 2018). In addition, Richelieu advanced the idea that the sporting event should be coordinated with an emphasis on three priorities: the economic growth of the community, the promotion of the destination locally and globally, and benefiting the people on a horizontal level (Richelieu, 2018).

Despite the literature mentioned above, research has yet to understand how host cities for such occasions utilize this opportunity, specifically the process enacted by them, to garner a positive brand image. This research area is vital as cities/countries continue to bid for such events to bolster their brand image.

Soft Power Diplomacy

Nauright (2013) suggests that global diplomacy has grown into "shaping international views of nations as sites for business development and tourism" and that mega-sport events are "significant players in public diplomacy efforts" (p.23). To assess the motives of capitalist nations and emerging nations for bidding for such events, one should look at their soft power strategies (Grix & Brannagan, 2016). In the last few years, SMEs have been used as a soft power tool and is evident in the cases of Brazil, China, and Russia. In Brazil's case, the back to back hosting of the FWC 2014 and the 2016 Olympic Games was a bigger plan of the government to provide "recognition and symbolic power in the international arena" (De Almeida et al., 2014,

p.271). Panagiotopoulou (2012) stated that China leveraged the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing as a "platform to demonstrate economic and technological achievements and organizational capacities" (p.2343). The Sochi 2014 Winter Olympic Games were identified as an attempt by the Russian government to "signal its strength in the contemporary international order" (Alekseyeva, 2014, p.159).

Sport offers nations a platform for nations to go head to head in a 'global sporting arms race' (De Bosscher et al., 2006). As mentioned previously, nations utilize sports as a tool to affect the international image of a state. However, to enhance a nation's brand, stakeholders such as the government need to be aware of and employ such forms of sports diplomacy. Sports diplomacy does not only benefit the nation's brand but rather, if employed well, can help mend relations with other States, but also be utilized for communicating direct diplomatic messages to other states. For example, in the 1980 Summer Olympic Games, the United States boycotted the event to protest against the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Mega-events allow the host to utilize their soft power by boosting national pride and communicating a collective identity of shared sporting norms and values (Hilvoorde et al., 2010).

Additionally, hosting these large-scale events can provide nations with unattractive national policies to further appeal to other states (Grix & Lee, 2013). Grix and Lee (2013) give an example of the 1936 Olympic Games, a first of its kind mega-event where the Nazis demonstrated this approach as they tried to showcase their regime to influence the participating nations' attitudes. Generally, respected values such as excellence, respect, and solidarity portrayed by international sporting organizations provide host countries the chance to share the same values and demonstrate them in the framework of their unique manner (Knott et al., 2017

Reiche (2014) argues that short-term measures such as hosting a particular SME are required but not sufficient for attaining soft power. Instead, as Nye (2011) suggests, these long-term partnerships with nations should be based on different measures, including investing in other fields such as culture, education, economics, and politics. They are enablers for global soft power. Chadwick et al. (2020) specify that sports sponsorship has gradually emerged to foster soft power, helping nations create and display their images via sport globally. Likewise, the authors label this attempt from nations as soft power sponsorships, defined as, "contractual relationships between a fully or partly state-owned entity and a property aimed at promoting the attractiveness of the former's country, culture and/or policies, and with the intention of altering the attitudes and behaviors of key target audiences (which may include overseas politicians, decision-makers, as well as customers)" (p.5). Hence, understanding the nations' policies in these other various sectors should indicate the States' attempt to leverage soft power through various other means besides hosting such SMEs.

In any case, we ought to perceive that wherever there is a chance to assemble soft power, there is a likelihood of 'soft disempowerment'. This term coined by Brannagan and Giulianotti (2015) refers to those instances where instead of attracting people, there is a loss of impact. Apart from the proposed economic benefits hosting mega-events, they also bring uninvited reputational threats that may be joined by soft disempowerment. As mentioned earlier, significant attention can be placed on the host from the international media, labor unions, and different non-for-profit organizations that they might not be prepared for (Chalip, 2006). For instance, during the Formula 1 international motor race in 2012/13, both occasions were dreadful for Bahrain as the sporting stage addressed the protestors' undemocratic administration.

Another example of this was during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, where thousands joined a protest just hours before the opening ceremony. Although the Brazilian government had its solid security strategy already planned for these kinds of occasions, tear gas and rubber bullets were not taken lightly by the international press (Phillips, 2016). The significant spotlight on the host country at this peak period has the potential for the cost of desirability can lead to a damaging image rather than the recognition. Hence, understanding how sport event organizers plan and prepare for such media scrutiny would greatly benefit nation brand practitioners.

Despite the growing industry awareness of nation branding impacts from hosting SMEs, there is a lack of research, including the strategic process of nation brand development (Hankinson, 2010). Considering that the host organizing committee plays a critical role that can leverage the opportunities created by such SMEs, their perspective is lacking. Hence, understanding their perspective of the nation brand's development is well warranted and justifies the need for the present study.

As academics who have studied and researched nation branding, stakeholder collaboration, and coordination are identified as vital to ensuring a successful nation branding campaign (Hankinson, 2010; Knott & Hemmonsby, 2016). However, some gaps emerge regarding brand stakeholder management such as coordination of stakeholders, or the organizational structure for place branding activities (Hankinson, 2010). Moreover, another significant gap is the politics involved in the decision-making processes (Pike, 2005). The critical role of the media for a favorable nation brand has been evident in the literature Knott et al., (2016). However, there is a need to discover what local event organizers can strategize to leverage the media opportunities provided (Lu et al., 2019). Since there is a variance of opinion

on whether 'branding' applies to nations (Anholt, 2010), this case study research can provide further evidence in the nation branding phenomenon that is yet to be fully understood.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nation branding process deployed by a host country organizing committee, through relevant organizational documents and the perspective of event organizers. The following chapter discusses the selected methodology, case study context, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

A qualitative research design was employed to build a case study of The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC). The government established the SC in 2011 to deliver infrastructure and host country planning and operations required for the FWC 2022 (Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, 2020). A case study, defined by Yin (2014) as: "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.23). Merriam (1998a) stated case studies to be valuable as they "focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. They are descriptive in that they produce a detailed, "thick" description of the phenomena under study" (p.29). Through the case study method, an in-depth understanding of SC's planning for the FWC can be examined, providing the opportunity to expose the nation branding process from the event organizers' perspectives.

First, critical organizational documents were collected and analyzed to understand the nation branding processes, followed by semi-structured interviews conducted with members of the SC. Collecting organizational documents helped understand the SC's role, a critical step that detailed not just the operational components but also the vision and objectives. The interviews were essential to dig deeper into the nation branding processes from those involved intimately with the planning. The study received ethics approval (See Appendix A).

This research was conducted using a constructionist epistemology, in which the researcher sees the reality as indefinable, meaning worldly experiences shape the human intellect (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Using the constructivist paradigm, the researcher views reality dependent on the individuals meaning, thus they construct knowledge based on their culture, experiences, and interactions with others. Therefore, the individual's reality can be adapted with new information (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Since this study explored the perspective of nation branding through both document analyses and event organizers working on a specific event, the constructivist epistemology would allow the researcher to view all renderings and perceptions as truthful. As the event organizers would be interviewed before the staging of the event, their perceptions may be presented in order to garner a certain impression of the event and their strategies.

Case Context

Figure 3-1

The location of Qatar in the Middle East region



Note. Adapted version from google maps.

The sovereign State of Qatar, a nation in the Arabian Gulf situated on the Persian peninsula, shares its international borders to Saudi Arabia and shares maritime borders with Iran, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Bahrain. As Figure 3-1 shows, Qatar is significantly smaller in size than Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Small states like Qatar are regarded as having little international exposure and are also viewed as weak actors with limited international influence (Panke, 2016). With a long history under various empires, including the Persian, Portuguese and Ottoman influences, Qatar's last century has seen a drastic change since it became fully independent from Great Britain in 1971 (Rookwood, 2019). Since then, the nation has been governed as an absolute monarchy under the leadership of the Al Thani tribe (Zeineddine, 2017).

Qatar has been a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Established to help provide a stable economic and political climate for national and regional growth in six neighboring countries including Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman, the country has been in a diplomatic gulf crisis since June 2017 (Gengler & Al-Khelaifi, 2019). A calculated land, air and sea blockade led by Saudi Arabia followed by Bahrain and the UAE, cutting economic and diplomatic relations and accusing the host nation of destabilizing the region has been a significant challenge to overcome (Selmi & Bouoiyour, 2020)

In Qatar's case, while it is a small state, it is evident that sport is becoming an essential part of its nation branding strategy (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015). As Dorsey (2014) noted, sports have been used by the country as a soft power strategy to change its international stance, particularly during the past decade. Dorsey (2014) suggested that Qatar aims to instigate an impact on the world stage despite its small size, without military power, and instead by participating in the international community.

Qatar and Sport Events

Leading up to the 2022 FWC, it is essential to acknowledge that sport has had an important role in Qatar's recent years. Specific to Qatar 2022, the government perceives the event's hosting as a catalyst for accelerating improvement nationally and regionally (Grix & Brannagan, 2016). The Qatari Olympic Committee (QOC) states such events are a means of international relations and foreign policy in unity with its aspirations of being 'active around the world as an outward-looking state' (QOC, 2017). Qatar has been active locally and internationally to become the hub of sports by hosting roughly 100 sporting events per year (Yang, 2016). Simon Chadwick, a sports enterprise researcher, describes Qatar's vision to form a

global reputation through football and resembles it to the United States' global recognition strategy through its technological industry (East, 2015).

With the launch of Qatar Sports Investment (QSI) in 2005, a private entity, QSI has invested locally and internationally and reinvested the revenues back into its portfolio (QSI, 2017). Two of QSI's significant global investments have been towards Paris Saint-Germain and FC Barcelona, two prominent football clubs from France and Spain, respectively. Initially buying a 70% stake in the French Capital club in 2011, they later became the sole shareholders after purchasing the remaining 30% from the Colony Capital and Butler Capital partners a year later (fourfourtwo, 2012). Since the Qatari takeover in 2012, the Ligue 1 club has made its name among Europe's elites by winning the league title six years back to back (Associated Press, 2017). FC Barcelona's £125 million with Qatar Foundation was another massive investment. The first time since the establishment of the club in 1899, a sponsor was displayed on their club jerseys (Associated Press, 2010). Another recent investment that displays the country's financial powers is between the state-owned Qatar Airways and FIFA. The football governing body unveiled the sponsorship deal, which would make the Gulf carrier their Official Partner and their Official airline until 2022. This massive deal for the airline signifies 'one of the biggest sporting sponsorships in the world and the largest in the history of Qatar Airways' (FIFA, 2017). However, Qatar was not the first State to attempt to use soccer sponsorships as a soft power strategy. Krzyzaniak (2018) studied the three Azerbaijan, UAE, and Qatar cases and how states can exploit football kit sponsorships to enhance their soft power. The UAE, through Emirates & Etihad Airways, both state-airlines had realized the possible benefits back in 2004. The research findings suggested that the unbranded states such as Qatar and UAE have profited from such sponsorship strategies. It allows the nation to associate itself with a well-established, reputable

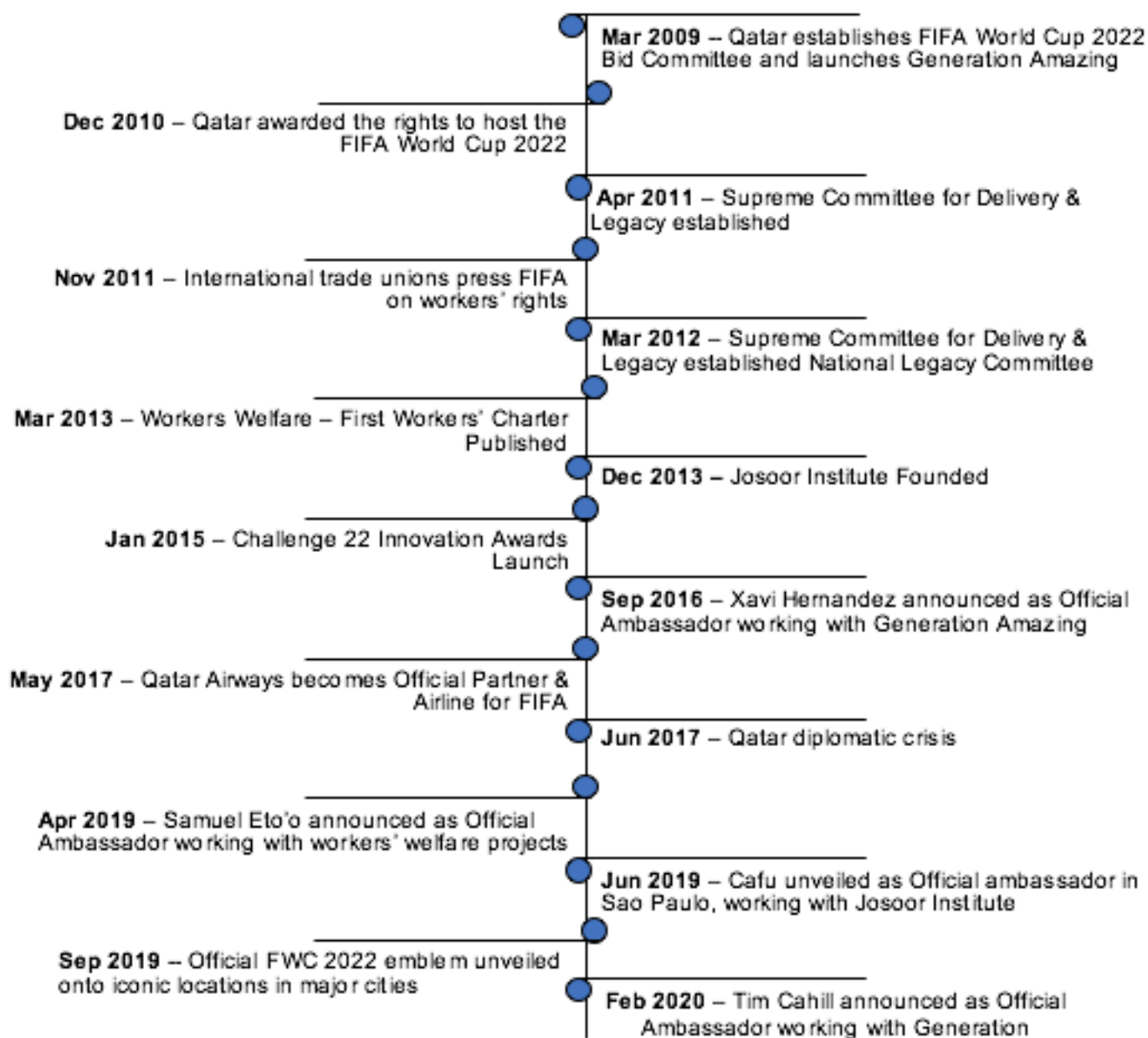
brand, which, in the case of football, are top-level clubs that have massive fan bases (Krzyzaniak, 2018).

Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy

Leading up to the event, it is important to provide critical contextual information relating to the timeline in the history of the SC. Figure 3-2 presents key milestones such as when Qatar won the bid to host the games, the creation of SC, the regional diplomatic crisis as well as the appointment of global superstars as their brand ambassadors. To assist the host nation with all event planning, the government created an official body (i.e., SC) that would be charged with overseeing the planning and development of country operations and dedicated to achieving outcomes such as nation branding. Moreover, a Brand Qatar team within the marketing department was established in 2018 responsible for branding the organization locally and internationally.

Figure 3-2

Timeline of key events since Qatar won the bid



Data Collection

Two data collection methods were implemented for this study; document analyses and semi-structured interviews. Data collection occurred after obtaining ethical approval. The document analysis phase started before interviews being conducted. However, some documents were obtained during the interview phase.

Document Analysis

Merriam (1988) stated that "Documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (p. 118). The contents within the documents were examined and interpreted first to gain a better understanding of the case and develop knowledge related to the nation branding processes. The document analysis from archival material took place prior to conducting the interviews with the members from the SC. The document analysis provided the researcher a better understanding of SC's vision and objectives as well as their planning for the FWC

Marshall and Rossman (1995) proposed that "the review of documents is an unobtrusive method, rich in portraying values and beliefs of participants in a setting" (p.116). The fact that the investigator does not need the participants' cooperation in the gathering and analysis of the document and archival records results in an unobtrusive method (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Yin (2014) stated document analysis complement qualitative case studies well, producing detailed descriptions of an organization, program, or single phenomenon. One of the limitations of using document analysis is that it provides insufficient detail since they are created independently of the research agenda, hence they would lack sufficient detail to answer the research questions (Bowen, 2009). For this reason, the document analysis was complemented with additional semi-structured interviews with organizers working with the SC. Bowen (2009)

advised understanding the deeper meaning from the data being evaluated, rather than merely picking out words and passages. Since the document analysis phase started before the interviews began, specific themes that were evident from the document analysis were added to the interview guide to inquire further within the interviews; this is further discussed in the interview guide's development.

Interviews

The choice of semi-structured interviews was favorable in this study as the respondents have particular experiences with their organization that they would be able to provide their insight. The chosen method for interviewing allowed the interview guide to be framed to aid in the topic of nation branding and to guide the interview, yet "without fixed wording or fixed ordering of questions" (Minichiello et al., 1995, p.65). The interview contents were directed on matters that are prime to the topic area of nation branding. This manner provided the opportunity to focus on the interviewee's subjective experiences and explain their State in detail, as it was significant to them. Additionally, this method allowed the researcher to have the freedom to ask follow-up questions (Doyle, 1994). A semi-structured design was ideal for this study. It allowed the interviewer to stay focused on the questions, inquire the respondents' expertise on those questions, and still provide the investigator the opportunity to clarify specific areas of expertise by the participant.

Interview Guide

The interview guide used in this study (Appendix B) was a modified version of the guide used by Knott (2014), in which the researcher aimed to identify the strategic branding opportunities created by the FWC 2010 post event. Knott's (2014) study questions were rephrased and changed to present tense where necessary for the case of Qatar as the event itself

had not occurred, (e.g., Leading up to 2010, what do you believe were the general expectations of how the event would/could impact Brand South Africa?) the question was reworded to 'Leading up to 2022, what do you believe are the general expectations of how the event would/could impact Brand Qatar. Additionally, based on the gaps in the literature questions such as understanding the stakeholder involvement (e.g., If you could describe the coordination efforts, how does SC coordinate with these multi-level stakeholders to ensure that the strategic nation branding goals are achieved?), the media strategy (e.g., What do you think the broadcast viewers will observe during the event that will promote nation branding?) the decision making (e.g., How important are the SC Board in terms of the strategic decision making specifically in regards to nation branding? were added. During the document analysis phase of the study, the term “innovation” or “innovative” kept coming up in various documents and news articles published by the SC. Therefore, questions were added to the interviews to explore further the theme of “innovation” from the organizers' perspective (e.g., Why do you think there is a specific emphasis on the term innovation regarding the FIFA World Cup in Qatar?).

Participant Sampling

Case studies, as stated by Stake (2000), "draw a purposive sample, building in variety and acknowledging opportunities for intensive study" (p.446). Since the research aimed to provide the organizers' perspective regarding nation branding, purposive sampling was utilized as organizers could be recruited into the study to provide rich, informative data. By selecting purposive sampling, the researcher can gather in-depth knowledge of their selected research area based on the characteristics and qualities represented by the participants (Ritchie et al., 2003). Hence, potential participants were purposefully contacted from the marketing, communication, and legacy department since they were deemed to have knowledge in the nation branding

objectives for the SC. As the document analyses highlighted specific legacy initiatives (e.g., Workers Welfare) relevant to the nation branding process, participants suggested interviewing individuals working on such initiatives. Thus, participants were recruited from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) department.

Participants

Participants were recruited via email (See Appendix C). In total, 18 participants were identified as possible interviewees. These individuals were sent an invitation to participate in the research. A total of nine participants volunteered to take part in the study. Due to the physical distance between the organizers and the researcher, five interviews were done face-to-face, three respondents were emailed the questions, and one interview was done over Skype. The interviews that were done face-to-face were done in the interviewees' preferred choice of location, mostly in participants' private offices or in a booked meeting room within the SC's headquarters. All interviews were conducted in the English language.

All face-to-face and telephone interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed verbatim and sent back to the interviewees for member checking. Participants were made aware of the audio recording before conducting the interviews. Participants were informed to read, sign, and return a consent form before conducting the interviews for ethical purposes (Appendix D). The average duration of an interview was 42 minutes. Data saturation is generally less useful and coherent with reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Malterud et al., (2016) argued that the concept of information power is a better alternative to data saturation especially with the chosen constructivist epistemology. The respondents in this sample that were interviewed had the relevant information to provide related to the nation branding discourse (Malterud et al., 2016).

Table 3-1

List of participants interviewed from the SC

Pseudonym	Job Title
Respondent One (R1)	Economic Legacy Manager
Respondent Two (R2)	Host Country Operations Senior Officer
Respondent Three (R3)	CSR Manager
Respondent Four (R4)	Communications Director
Respondent Five (R5)	Legacy Analyst
Respondent Six (R6)	Head of Audience Development
Respondent Seven (R7)	Legacy Senior Officer
Respondent Eight (R8)	Marketing & Communications Officer
Respondent Nine (R9)	Brand Executive Director

Data Analysis

To manage and sort the data-set collected, data analysis was conducted with the aid of NVivo 12. This program enabled the researcher to work efficiently, especially with large amounts of text, which may require complex coding schemes (King, 2004). NVivo 12 is a qualitative data analysis software that allows collecting, organizing, analyzing, and visualizing data. For this study, a reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyze both the document and interview data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Wagner et al., (2012) suggested this approach allows the researcher to identify themes or patterns from the collected data and provides the flexibility for the researcher to select how they may want to engage with the data (Braun et al., 2016). In this study, reflexive thematic analysis as an approach was useful in examining the documents

and the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences between the two while generating several insights on the nation branding processes.

Braun and Clarke (2006) provided a six-step systematic process for coding data: (1) Familiarization of the data, (2) Generate initial codes, (3) Search for themes, (4) Refinement of developed themes, (5) Defining and naming themes, and (6) Reporting. Although the steps are in a systemic order, Braun et al., (2016) highlight that researchers can jump back and forth with the steps as the thematic analysis is a repetitive process. In reflexive thematic analysis, codes are never finalized, in the sense that as the researcher was deeply engaged in the data set, coding became more interpretive as the codes were not viewed from a surface level but rather viewed with their implicit meanings, hence codes were often merged, renamed or deleted (Braun & Clarke, 2019) Firstly, the documents were inductively (open) coded and grouped into categories. Categories representing similar meanings or keywords were selected and generally used as codes, with new codes emerging as the documents were analyzed. A first-order code was developed to help identify the greater meaning of that section analyzed (e.g., diplomatic relations, innovation, perception). Once patterns were starting to be identified upon rereading the codes, second-order codes were generated (e.g., event leveraging, brand identity, and brand impact). After all the documents were coded and analyzed, higher-order themes were generated (e.g., branding, potential legacies, tourism). From the 1,669 pages of the 16 documents, two higher-order themes emerged: *Branding* and *Potential Legacies*. The list of sourced documents along with their number of pages can be found in Appendix E.

Interview transcripts were then analyzed. Firstly, inductive codes were identified to denote keywords or phrases. This step enabled the sense-making of the data by interpreting their meaning and values that respondents assigned to the nation branding phenomenon (e.g., modern

Qatar, stadium legacy, stakeholder relations). Moreover, this enabled searching for like meanings, the generated grouping of like meanings, and refined those groups based on Braun and Clarke (2006) steps. Once higher-order themes were identified, Knott's (2014) deductive codes were compared, and specific codes were reworded or reorganized as they better reflected the higher-order themes (for example, the second-order code 'stakeholder relations' was reworded to 'stakeholder coordination'). The generic themes identified by the document analysis aided in the development of themes from the interviews. As Table 3 notes, four recurring higher-order themes were generated from the interviews: Branding, Events Opportunities, and Tourism. Table 3 also shows the progression of coding from first-order codes to higher-order themes. While coding the data, to ensure the validity and reliability of the modes of the analysis process, memos in quotation annotation were used in NVivo 12. Also, to increase the credibility of the findings, peer debriefing with the thesis supervisor was used to analyze the codes (Houghton et al., 2013). Similarity or differences in the interpretation contributed to the analytical process, and in some cases, specific codes were revised after review.

In order to address the purpose of the study, based on the analysis from the documents and interview results, a model outlining the nation branding process was created (see Figure 4-2). To enhance trustworthiness, the model underwent several revisions through constant comparison of the data as well as feedback discussed with the thesis supervisor.

Research Quality

The principal researcher in the study had completed an internship with SC before undertaking this research project. The internship period was for three months from July - September of 2016, three years before data collection, and was not connected to the present study. However, this period of opportunity to be involved in the organization allowed the

researcher to understand the organization's context and build trust with the members that Lincoln and Guba (1986) refer to as prolonged engagement for enhancing the credibility of the research. In order to increase the trustworthiness of the data collected, member checking was utilized to allow the respondents to review their interview transcripts for accuracy. Peer debriefing was also adopted by the researcher, as the research supervisor was updated regularly throughout the research project, which provided opportunities to review the research report and discuss findings and discrepancies.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Document Analysis

The Figure 4-1 below illustrates the development of coding. Five second-order codes were categorized under the Potential Legacies theme: event leveraging, economic legacy, environmental legacy, tangible and intangible legacy. Similarly, under the higher-order theme of Branding, four second-order codes consisting of brand identity, brand impact, brand stakeholders and destination branding were coded. First-order codes (e.g., Innovation, Modern Qatar, Hospitality) were grouped into a second-order code such as Brand Identity. The size of the branches (i.e. rectangle) also illustrate their prominence, for instance the event leveraging branch is significantly larger than environmental legacy.

Figure 4-1

Tree map of family codes from document analysis

Potential Legacies		Branding	
Event Leveraging	Economic Legacy	Brand Identity	Brand Impact
Hosting Legacy	Environmental Legacy	Brand Stakeholders	Destination Branding
Tangible Legacy			

Branding

The Branding theme is presented in relevance to what the higher-order code encompassed from the documents analyzed: Brand Identity, Brand Impact, Brand Stakeholders, and Destination Branding.

Brand Identity

The organization conducted a research study/analysis early on following their initiation in order to understand the existing global perceptions of Qatar:

The SC undertook a large-scale research project aimed at determining attitudes towards Qatar's hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Nineteen thousand surveys were conducted, either face-to-face or online, and 72 focus groups between six and eight people were convened. Also, 144 key influencers were interviewed to understand their perspective on Qatar. Naturally, this included the feelings of critical stakeholders in government and business in positions to determine their countries' or companies' investment priorities. (SC Legacy Book, p.23).

The researcher was able to gain access to the report of this study. The study was conducted by a global firm specializing in data analytics on consumers and markets worldwide. The research was conducted across 17 nations, including neighboring countries, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and mostly consisting of members from the G20. The underlying purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of the football, government, media and corporate sectors concerning the FWC 2022 is described by the following quote: "With a clear and concise understanding of actual perceptions, concerns, and expectations from key influencer and audience groups, the Supreme Committee will be able to plan and execute its strategy and communications in the most effective way" (Nielsen Report, 2014, p.4). Hence, once the

organization has a better understanding of its brand image and reputation in markets that matter to them, they could develop a strategic communication strategy that aligns well with their branding objectives.

The Secretary-General of SC stated, “We have an opportunity to improve our infrastructure while also positively affecting global perceptions of our nation and region and offering the world the chance to experience our hospitality, heritage, culture, and history, often for the first time” (SC Legacy Book, 2016, p.5). In Qatar 2022, the occasion to take center stage on the world scene through the sporting event provides the SC with the chance to portray their brand identity characteristics they want their nation to be branded with. In this case, branding consists of several characteristics deemed necessary for the SC to convey. Innovation and Hospitality, and Modern Qatar are key identity characteristics that represented Qatar’s Brand identity.

In regards to innovation, the Emir of Qatar in the bid book distinguished the hosts with the following statement: “Due to its unique hosting characteristics, Qatar 2022 differentiates itself by being a completely new and innovative type of FIFA World Cup™” (Bid Book, 2010, p.50). The organization states its mission to set new benchmarks in all organizational delivery areas by “acting as a hub for innovation and incubation of ideas and talent in all sectors of Qatari industry and society” (Legacy Aspirations, 2012, p.9). Being seen as an innovative brand has a vital role in the organizational strategy as, “One of the key drivers of Qatar’s long-term growth is innovation. The SC is working with individuals and a large number of stakeholders in Qatar and across the other member-states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to nurture and sustain a culture of innovation” (SC Legacy Book, 2016, p.8).

Regarding hospitality, being hospitable, and the welcoming nature of the nation's people was highlighted on several occasions within the documents. Hospitality is not just used in the ordinary meaning of the word but used with describing terms such as "warm", "excellent", "kind" accompanying it. The Bid Committee described what the traveling fans should expect, "Qatar has always demonstrated the warm and welcoming tradition of Arabian hospitality and is determined to ensure that Qatar's reputation as great hosts will be advanced by the 2022 FIFA World Cup" (Bid Book, 2010, p.57).

Presenting Qatar's brand identity as a Modern Qatar was a reoccurrence within the documents. The term 'Modern Qatar' is accompanied by adjectives like 'forward-thinking' and 'progressive' to describe its modernity. The nation described their brand as one that is 'modern' but at the same time, their cultural heritage is deeply valued, "Qatar is a modern, forward-thinking country that, at the same time, maintains a strong sense of its values and traditions" (Bid Book, 2010, p.13).

The organization indicated its strategy for integrating Qatar's identity characteristics and representing its heritage within the designs of their stadium infrastructure. One such venue, the Al-Gharafa stadium's architecture is stated as "the design also reflects the welcoming hospitality of Qatar to all of the participating nations and their fans" (Bid Book, 2010, p.254). The iconic Lusail stadium, the largest by capacity, is the designated venue for the finals of the FWC 2022. Not only is the stadium built from scratch but so is the actual city itself, a brand-new 'futuristic' metropolis located 15km north of the capital city. The venue that will be the last images broadcasted is described as, "the sleek, bold shape of this arena will stun fans at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. Yet that very shape is based on bowls, vessels and art pieces used across the Middle East for centuries" (Lusail Stadium, 2020, p.1). Lusail city/stadium provides for its

viewers/tourists as an ideal representation of Qatar's modern, technologically advanced but culturally grounded brand identity.

Brand Impact

Improving the nation's reputation seemed to be an essential brand impact for the host nation. The 'peaceful' nation is described by having a "reputation for being a voice of moderation and mediator in settlement of various issues in the region and cherishes the types of dialogue and societal betterment that are hallmarks of a FIFA World Cup™" (Bid Book, 2010, p.723). For instance, the government describes their foreign policy in its international-relations as promoters of peace makers which is meant to result in positive brand impact, "Maintaining good relations with neighboring countries, forging strategic alliances with major powers and regional and international bodies, and advancing Qatar's image internationally" (National Development Strategy, 2018, p.270).

One of the social development outcomes as part of the government's national strategy is to have regional and international cooperation and communication, reflecting the civilized image of the country. The government plans to strategically leverage its membership in the UN and relevant regional and international organizations to bolster their image and reputation:

The Culture and Enrichment and Sports Excellence Strategy will maximize the benefits of all bilateral and regional agreements and optimize their implementation. In addition, a plan will be developed and implemented to benefit from Qatar's membership in UN agencies and regional and international organizations. A plan will also be developed and implemented to ensure a continued representation of Qatar in leadership positions in regional and international organizations in the areas of this sector. (Qatar National Development Strategy, 2018, p.257).

One identified brand impact is to increase the cultural awareness for the nation, “Our FIFA World Cup™ will be the first to be held in the Middle East and thus represents an opportunity to bridge cultures between East and West, with people coming together in Qatar through a shared passion for the world’s most popular sport.” (Legacy Aspirations, 2012, p.5). The organization indicates a need to ‘broaden horizons’ to educate the world as there is a need for “improvement in understanding across cultures, particularly between Islam and the west” (Legacy Aspirations, 2012, p.15).

The Bid Committee indicated how Qatar’s brand would be impacted through sports diplomacy by hosting the tournament, “Qatar is also helping to bridge the gap between Islam and the West and Qatar 2022 aligns perfectly with the country’s foreign policy in this regard.” (Bid Book, 2010, p.737).

Brand Stakeholders

Regarding the nation's brand stakeholders, to have all the national stakeholders on the same page for their branding efforts, the SC established a National Legacy Committee (NLC) in 2012, comprising representatives from national stakeholders in the public sector. The Chairman (former Prime and Foreign Minister of Qatar) of the committee stressed the critical role of stakeholders in the development of the nation brand:

Ensuring that all projects relating to the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™ incorporate legacy is a task that places a high level of responsibility on a variety of stakeholders throughout the nation. If we are to achieve our goals, it is vital that entities involved in our nation-building project collaborate and cooperate effectively at all levels to ensure that these projects contribute to staging a successful event in 2022 and benefit the nation and our people in the decades that will follow. (Legacy Aspirations, 2012, p.5)

SC has placed a strong emphasis on stakeholder collaboration, notably one of its strategic objectives to deliver an outstanding FWC is to, “Establish effective stakeholder management framework” (Stakeholder Collaboration Strategy, 2013, p.4). Consequently, an internal Stakeholder Collaboration Strategy was developed by interviewing critical representatives from all their functional departments and analyzing their existing documentation. Through this assessment, the SC would have a stakeholder list to identify stakeholders relevant to each department. Further stakeholders would be prioritized/categorized, and the organization could develop a stakeholder management plan. Based on the assessment, 40 local and global entities were identified by the Communications and Marketing departments. It is important to note that the stakeholder list was identified back in 2013, it is unlikely the current stakeholder list would reflect as accurately at the time of the study as certain stakeholders may be added/removed from the list. Notably, the stakeholders prioritized in no particular order consist of Fan Base, Qatar Sports Investments, Local Media, PR Agencies, International/Regional Media, Universities, Qatar Foundation, Barcelona Football Club, Brand Agency, Centre of Excellence (Also now known as Josoor Institute), Qatar Museum Authority, Qatar Tourism Authority, Qatar Airways, Sport political Journalists and Local Community Representatives (Stakeholder Collaboration Strategy, 2013, p.32).

Destination Branding

The documents highlight Doha, the capital of Qatar as being modern and traditional. The destination brand’s most popular tourist attraction is illustrated as:

“A walk along the Corniche, the picturesque, tree lined promenade that stretches around Doha Bay will demonstrate how Doha has developed into a 21st century modern world city but, at the same time, retained its traditional identity” (Bid Book, 2010, p.20).

The government has undertaken key efforts to develop its destinations image, especially in the country's cultural and heritage sector. These efforts can be seen as a strategic process to change the opinion of Qatar's image and enhance its destination brand for the nationals and tourists. The following quote highlights undertakings by the government, specifically investing in the local arts sector to help develop and promote the nation brand's heritage.:

A significant cultural achievement was designating the city of Al-Zubarah as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2013. Also, museums were created with outstanding international designs, such as the Islamic Museum, the Arab Museum of Modern Art, the Islamic Art Library and the Islamic Art Museum Park. The QMA launched a tourism program to enable citizens, residents and even transit passengers to explore Qatar through guided tours, in addition to implementing “My Language” program with European partners to establish virtual libraries and publish cultural and historical books in Arabic and English in partnership with the Bloomsbury Publishing in 2012. In the same year, the QMA introduced the “Google Art” project to Qatar and introduced over 30,000 artworks, including the artworks of the Islamic Art Museum and the Arab Museum of Modern Art. (Qatar National Development Strategy, 2018, p.252).

Similarly, the government also highlights, “Several exhibitions on Qatari culture were organized in a number of European countries to introduce the country and its cultural heritage” (Qatar National Development Strategy, 2018, p.252). The SC are handed down the responsibility of developing a tourism strategy from the FWC 2022:

The development of human capital in Qatar’s tourism sector has been identified as a key enabler to guarantee the effective development of the sector’s capabilities, both before and after the 2022 FIFA World Cup™. With that in mind, the Qatar Tourism Authority

(QTA) commissioned the SC and the Josoor Institute to create a tourism human capital development strategy for Qatar (SC Legacy Book, 2016, p.11).

Potential Legacies

The theme of potential legacies is presented in relevance to what the higher-order code comprised of the documents analyzed: Event Leveraging, Economic Legacy, Tangible Legacy, Hosting Legacy, and Environmental Legacy.

Event Leveraging

The hosting of the FWC 2022 is described as a leveraging opportunity for the growth of the country. For instance, the Chairman of the NLC describes the hosting opportunity as, “as a catalyst for driving national growth and development and toward realizing the goals outlined by our leadership in the Qatar National Vision 2030” (Legacy Aspiration, 2012, p.5). The FWC is highlighted as a catalyst to achieve the long-term development goals that have been publically documented in the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030). The QNV 2030 was launched in 2008 so that “Qatar becomes an advanced society capable of sustaining its development and providing a high standard of living for its people” (Qatar National Vision 2030, 2019).

The findings indicated four major legacy initiatives deployed by the SC to leverage positive tangible and intangible legacies from hosting the FWC 2022 (Refer to Table 4-1 for the initiatives). These initiatives included: (1) Challenge 22; (2) Generation Amazing; (3); Josoor Institute; and (4) Workers’ Welfare. All initiatives created are in line with the objectives of the QNV 2030, contributing to either the Human, Social, Economic or Environmental Development pillars of the vision, “Each of its four pillars is accounted for in our planning and delivery. These four pillars are supplemented by the sporting legacy we are creating.” (SC Legacy Book, 2016, p.7).

In line with improving the workers' welfare, which the host nation has been scrutinized for since it was awarded the bid, apart from adopting their first Workers' Welfare Charter, SC launched the 'Workers Cup' in 2013. The Workers Cup is an annual football tournament. Teams are composed of players working on projects related to the FWC 2022, "Started in 2013, the Workers Cup has steadily increased in popularity. Over the past three years, more than 1,000 workers have played in the tournament. The size of the boisterous crowds attending the matches has increased each year, with a total of more than 17,000 spectators in 2015 edition of the tournament" (SC Legacy Book, 2016, p.31). This initiative by SC can be seen to increase local support, specifically the workers for the FWC 2022, by increasing their participation and passion for football.

Economic Legacy

An indicator of a successful mega-event legacy would be to have a positive effect on the economic legacy. To generate an economic legacy for the host nation the host will "Promote Qatar as a haven for investors during 2018-2022" (National Development Strategy, 2018, p.99). The government explicitly stated to undertake policy reforms, which in return, will enhance the business environment. Moreover, to improve business relations with nations, the organization strategizes completing, "Trade missions to countries with extensive experience hosting major sporting events and welcoming business and governmental delegations" (SC Legacy Book, 2016, p.20). In the document published in 2016, four trade missions to countries including Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States were cited.

Environmental Legacy

One of the potential legacies the host nation desired was to leave a positive impact on the environment. In fact, the bid committee made a commitment to feature:

environmental sustainability a central theme in its hosting concept, with the goal of recommending and setting new environmental standards for the preparation and delivery of the FIFA World Cup and for creating an environmental legacy that will inspire and guide future generations far beyond 2022” (p.132).

The host country wants to portray an image of being environmentally friendly as evidenced by this quote:

the hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup offers Qatar a great opportunity to present itself not only as a hospitable nation passionate about sports, and football in particular, but also as one fully engaged in bettering the environment shared by all nations. (Bid Book, 2010, p.132)

To ensure the nation’s image is captured in this light, the SC will “launch a broad local and international campaign prior to the tournament that promotes an environmentally sustainable lifestyle in Qatar, the region and the world, using Qatar 2022 as a model” (Bid Book, 2010, p.153).

Tangible Legacy

Regarding a tangible legacy (TL), a promise as part of Qatar’s bid commitment incorporated modular components within the design of their six new and two renovated stadiums. The Ras Abu Aboud stadium is labelled as a pioneer in stadium development and mega events as it is, “Constructed using shipping containers, removable seats and other modular ‘building blocks’, not only will this innovative, 40,000-seat venue have a remarkable design, but it will be entirely dismantled and repurposed after the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™” (Ras Abu Aboud Stadium, 2020, p.1). All other stadiums will be reduced in capacity by the removal of their modular seats post tournament.

In line with the QNV 2030 environmental pillar, this initiative from the host country will promote sustainability. Only the stadium capacity needed for each venue will remain post tournament. This will promote a positive tangible legacy for Qatar's image as, "the donated infrastructure will enhance Qatar's profile, and, by expanding it internationally, set a new benchmark for the legacy of major sporting events" (SC Legacy Book, 2016, p.29).

Another visible component to the nation's legacy due to the FWC 2022 is infrastructure being built to develop the country:

Qatar is building a world-class transportation system. All infrastructure and equipment will be modern, efficient, safe and comfortable and is part of a massive infrastructure investment programme that will be completed prior to 2022. Already under construction or planned are Qatar's state-of-the-art new international airport (opening in 2012), the metro network system, high-speed rail system and new road network expansion. (Bid Book, 2010, p.63).

Hosting Legacy

As part of its hosting legacy, since the organization's establishment, SC has organized several sporting events such as the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup 2019, which are referred to as 'test events'. The hosting of these smaller events before delivering the FWC 2022 serves an underlying purpose for the organization besides testing its event delivery capabilities. One such identifiable purpose is that "each of these events targeted different audiences" (SC Legacy Book, 2016, p.30). Furthermore, hosting exceptional events that have either participants or viewers from these diverse audiences serve another objective. Improving the host nation's reputation in event excellence as their objectives are stated as, "The impression made during these events

bolster Qatar's reputation as a regional and global leader in events hosting. This reputation will be further burnished following the delivery of an amazing 2022 FIFA World Cup" (p.30).

Table 4-1

Potential legacy initiatives developed by the SC

Initiative Name	Initiative Description
Challenge 22 (TL)	"The programme was launched in 2015 as a competition for budding entrepreneurs, innovators, and pioneers across the Arab World. It has evolved to quickly bring solutions to life by partnering startups with investors and stakeholders. As the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy's flagship programme, we are seeking global talent, with a focus on the Arab region". (Challenge 22, 2020, p.1)
Generation Amazing (TL and IL)	"Established since 2010 during Qatar's bid to host the FIFA World Cup 2022™. Following Qatar winning hosting rights, the programme was enthusiastically taken up by the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy. Generation Amazing uses football for development initiatives to address social issues in countries with an identified need, in line with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals. Through the construction of community football pitches, the delivery of comprehensive football for development training and the involvement of young people, the programme reaches some of the world's most excluded people, especially those experiencing high levels of deprivation. It also promotes sustainable behaviors among young people in Qatar and across the region". (Generation Amazing, 2020, p.1)
Josoor Institute (TL and IL)	"Created by the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, Josoor Institute is the Middle East's Centre of excellence for the sports and events industries. Inspired by the arrival of the FIFA World Cup™ to this historic region, it runs expert-led courses on sport management and events management. Some of its graduates will contribute to one of the

	most ground-breaking sports occasion of all time – the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. Before that, Josoor Institute will continue to conduct in-depth research, bringing new understanding to the sports and events industries. It also offers bespoke research – in addition to workshops and strategic guidance – through its consultancy arm”. (Education & Research, 2020, p.1)
Workers’ Welfare (IL)	“The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) is committed to supporting human and social development in Qatar. The work that we do today is crucial in creating the foundations for a lasting workers’ welfare legacy in Qatar and beyond. All our workers are protected by the Workers’ Welfare Standards – a contractually binding document that ensures all individuals contributing to the delivery of SC projects are treated with dignity and respect. In 2013, the SC created a charter focused on achieving best practice in workers’ welfare in Qatar”. (Workers’ Welfare, 2020, p.1)

Semi-structured Interviews

In this section, the results from the interviews are presented. Each theme's results are presented separately along with some verbatim statements from the interviews that highlight the theme content.

Table 4-2

Development of themes from the interviews

First-order codes	Second-order codes	Higher-order themes
Nation Branding Definition Nation Branding Impact Nation Branding Processes Nation Brand Ambassadors	Nation Branding	Branding

Role of Media		
Nation Branding Transferability		
Cultural Heritage		
Hospitality		
Innovation	Brand Identity	
Modern Qatar		
Unique Identity		
Brand Stakeholders		
Stakeholder Coordination	Nation Brand	
Citizen Support	Stakeholders	
Co-branding		
Dispel Perceptions		
Preconceived Perceptions		
FIFA Brand Impact	Brand Impact	
Positive Brand Impacts		
Negative Brand Impacts		
Regional Legacy		
Challenge 22		
Generation Amazing	Brand Development	
Josoor Institute	Initiatives	
Workers Welfare		
Global Exposure		
Mega Event Definition	Mega Events	Events

Mega Event Reach		
Role of Mega Events		
Event Organization	Event Excellence	
Fan Experience		
Infrastructure Legacy	Potential Legacies	Opportunities
Legacy Definition		
Legacy Outcomes		
Stadium Legacy		
Sport as a tool	Event Leveraging	
Investment Opportunity		
Destination Brand	Tourism	

Branding

The branding higher-order theme consisted of five second-order codes: nation branding, brand identity, nation brand stakeholders, brand impact, and brand development initiatives. Each second-order code is presented separately.

Nation Branding

All organizers were asked to define nation branding. Respondents stated the term's complexity before giving their own definitions, “It is a very complicated concept to take in and execute” (R8). Most respondents perceived nation branding as the image projected to the international world, “the opportunity to showcase a country in a particular light to spotlight its potential, status, and capabilities” (R4). Image and reputation were used as synonyms to describe the term, “It is how the world perceives the country, the image, and reputation”. (R5)

A respondent described the link between soft power and nation branding as “for me nation branding is like a soft power tool” (R8). Nation branding was not seen as a general marketing tool, “many people perceive nation branding as a marketing opportunity, and it is a lot more than the marketing of just running a campaign” (R6). A broader holistic concept of nation branding versus that of general corporate branding was stated, “you have to understand that nation branding works slightly different from the rest of the corporate strategies because nation branding is branding a country, not like a company” (R6). Nation branding is understood to be dependent on personal opinions and which attributes they perceive the brand. Further expanding on this concept, the respondent explained, “the first time someone mentions Germany to you, you may think of the football team, but you may also think of Mercedes-Benz, right?” (R1). Moreover, the case of cultural knowledge of the United States as an example is described “It could be broad from you know, Basketball or football, American football. It Could be Donald Trump, it could be anything” (R1). This quotation again points to the notion that the perception of the brand varies from person to person and that it includes various aspects (e.g., politicians, companies, sport). Multiple factors play a role in terms of what they link the nation's overall brand to be associated with.

As evident in the literature (Knott & Hemmonsby, 2016; Knott et al., 2017) and perceived by the organizers as a complicated task to execute, the process of nation branding comes with a variety of challenges for people working on nation branding. For Qatar and the organizers, there is an awareness of obstacles, which they must overcome, “so one of the biggest challenges that we have with nation branding is how we can communicate better proactively to the international world. So, if we were able to, and this is one of the biggest, it is one of the challenges that we would take on come 2022 because this is what we are doing”. (R6)

Respondents shared their concerns about the role of media in developing the nation brand as the media “play a vital role because they are the ones projecting the PR and managing the reputation of the country” (R5). There needs to be effective communication between the organizing committee and the media to get the right messages across:

We work closely with the local media, and they are invited to all the important events and inaugurations. We also work very closely with the international media, even a small achievement or project implemented. We make sure it is communicated well to all our different media stakeholders. (R5)

The event organizers were asked about the event's broadcast viewers and what they would observe that will promote the nation brand. One of the broadcast media strategies, as stated by one organizer, would be to showcase the initiatives the organization has worked on and the legacy they want people to see:

We try to showcase Qatar's soft legacies, and showcase that come 2022 fans or the broadcast people who are seeing this not just the event on TV. However, all the news that comes up with this is that there's much positive news from the event, not just the matches, but you know all the workers are appreciated. Those stadiums, the compact nature of the stadiums, allow them to save money and not have to travel using flight tickets, not have to look for accommodation because we have negated all the accommodation problems. Everything is ready for them when they are here. (R6)

The hosts' increased media exposure is seen as an excellent opportunity to direct their investments using advertisements to promote the nation brand:

They will observe many advertisements that are stressed on nation branding. Qatar is going to make sure that the way they are perceived to the outside world, like their

reputation, will be supervised and monitored and made sure that what is sent outside to the world is shown positively. So, they will be exposed to many adverts that will showcase Qatar in a positive light. (R5)

Every host country/city face a fair share of negative criticism related to hosting such mega-events. Qatar specifically has been in the media spotlight since they were awarded the bid. In relevance to media scrutiny, The SC closely works with government communications and is conscious of having a proactive media approach:

One of the key entities we will be working closely with is the Government Communications Office because this is the voice that goes out to the world at the end of the day. A lot of the times, our press here, the government media office (Government communications), reactively messages instead of proactively. So, our efforts will be to change that. (R6)

The proactive approach is a strategy enacted by the SC and requires repetition of a unified message:

SC has reacted very promptly (to allegations), they have shared their viewpoint on what issue or challenge that was raised. But then they are also working proactively where they would say the messages repeatedly, at different events or conferences, so that the media captures that coverage. (R5)

As the study's purpose was to understand the nation branding process, regarding SC's general approach to nation branding, one organizer highlighted a basic strategy of assuming the consumer has no understanding of the brand, "assume that they know nothing about the country and then help them out from there exploring it" (R1). One organizer specifically mentioned the identification of negative perceptions as key to their approach:

The process is to identify some of the key issues that plague Qatar, like workers' welfare or the labors and the labor laws, or the lack of trust in the local media or the international perception that the media has over Qatar. Once you have identified the different issues pertaining to the nation brand your next step is, how can we work out the opportunities around these issues, what's already been done with these issues, what is the global benchmarking that we have to follow with these particular issues and then try to iron out some solutions and work with the key stakeholders. (R6)

Regarding the nation branding strategy enacted by the SC, the following quote describes their stance:

It is a lot about implementing policies behind the scenes and making sure that these policies have ripple effects across society, making the country's marketing efforts more streamlined. Also, the country looks a lot more trustworthy to the global population. (R6)

The importance of having a national vision led by the nation's leadership is perceived to be important for the nation brand development:

For something like nation branding to work you first need a vision. You need to have the leadership of the country's vision. You need to have the resources, whether its human or financial resources. But these two things need to come together. And obviously, you need effective management to deliver those, because it's not just the vision and resources, you need to implement them. (R3)

A vital part of understanding the nation branding process was identifying the strategic decisions involved, and how and who had the final say. Hence the event organizers were asked, "how involved/important are the SC board in terms of the strategic decisions regarding nation

branding?’. There was a general unanimity on most of the strategic decisions coming from the SC board:

It is very significant, because of the members that sit on the board. They do have input or do have a say in the strategic direction for the SC. Also, members of the Royal family are on the board, so they have to make sure the nation branding is going the right way. (R5)

In regards to the international projects being a collaborative two-way process, one respondent explained:

Whatever international projects that we intend, we have to present it to the board, who will then give us the green light to utilize the budget. So, they essentially hold the keys to that budget. Also, it works the other way around, where we do not just go up to them and propose, but they tell us like ‘We want Rwanda as a strategic partner or Haiti as a partner, we are doing soft diplomacy there, we want to increase engagement with these countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is involved. So, what are you guys doing?’. So, we tell them we have these projects, so they will tell us, ‘okay streamline these, we want a project in Rwanda by this date, because the Emir is going to come’. Okay, boom, then our team works on it, gets behind it, starts delivering, start working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the Ministry in Rwanda, or an NGO on their grounds. We identify who can support us. (R3)

The organizers were asked about the use of brand ambassadors. The following quote revealed an ambassador team and their criteria to select such prominent football stars:

“You know when you select Ambassadors, you have to be very careful. You have to select Ambassadors that identify with your values, your messages you are trying to

create, not just in it for the ride or the money. There is an ambassador team that has to take all of this really into consideration”. (R3)

The organizers were asked about Qatar’s nation branding process, and if they thought their processes “can be transferable to other emerging nations?”. There were no dismissals in regards to this, and respondents believed each nation had their unique context, however, “there are some parts that can easily be transferred” (R5) and that “they could learn from us” (R1) the respondent further explained the transferrable elements: “they can definitely pick up how the airlines worked, the tourism council, what worked what didn’t, did they make any mistakes. I think it’s a case by case thing, there’s no one size fits all approach”. (R1)

Brand Identity

The terms 'desert' and 'backwards' were commonly used by most respondents when describing Qatar’s brand's current state in the eyes of the global public. One respondent describes their reality of working in a skyscraper with waterfront promenade views, “they would not know that I work in an office like this, with a view like that, they just would not have any idea whatsoever” (R1). The unawareness of the nation's current state is best described with this quote, “they have no idea how much Qatar is already modernized and is advanced” (R5). Most respondents referred to the Western countries when referring to international misperceptions, “the international press, specifically the press in the UK and the US, still does not have a very clear picture of Qatar is. They have a very for the lack of a better word, convoluted idea of Qatar, which is a larger perception that they have about the Middle East versus Qatar” (R6). Qatar is a country with a majority Muslim population. This quote refers to Qatar as “there is an image of Qatar being very religious” (R5).

Organizers referred to undertaking a research study earlier on in the planning phase, the purpose of doing the study is explained:

So essentially, what we did first is we did studies based on Qatar's international perception. We did interviews with the local public here to understand what was the concept of their understanding of Qatari values. We tried to personalize Qatar by giving it a character as you know, we thought of it as a person, gave it values, and gave it character definitions. We tried to align these with what the locals and what the global population perceived about Qatar. With these character definitions, we will then try to make a narrative about Qatar, a narrative that aligns itself to these values, we did not create these values, these were told to us by the global population and by the locals here and this is how they want to perceive Qatar to be. (R6)

The organizers were asked “What do you think the fans that visit will experience?”. Simultaneously, there were different answers to this same question that touched on different sectors. The majority of participants mentioned the brand identity (i.e., hospitable, innovative) during their interviews. The organization aims to showcase “the truth of the Qatari identity and the values in events, festivals, major tournaments, to name a few, in everything that we do”. (R9)

The term “Modern Qatar” was a reoccurring theme within the documents accompanied by terms like “forward-thinking” and “progressive” to describe its modernity. The respondents were asked “What identity Qatar was trying to create/achieve with the FIFA World Cup?”, one respondent stated “they want to be seen as a modern country full of opportunities”. (R5)

Respondent one talked about the two different sides of Qatar that can be projected to its visitors with the “Traditional Qatar” face which is seen as “Islamic, Arabic, it has got the deserts and the

desert camps”, while the other side of “Modern Qatar”, and fans that visit Qatar would “come in and you say ‘wow’, you know there are proper roads, fancy hotels, and fancy stadiums”, but “you want to project both to guests” (R1). Respondent eight also stated having a mix of the two characteristics, “we kind of like to merge and blend modernity with history” (R8), which illustrates a Modern Country in terms of world-class infrastructure but at the same time holding on their heritage. One organizer outlines Qatar’s rich cultural history, and the nations attempt to retain their heritage, “It is interesting to see that it is the only country in the world with an Islamic Museum. If you look at all the concerted efforts that Qatar has taken to preserve its cultural heritage, it is very focused. All the museums that we have here, they are all alluding to the rich Islamic heritage. That Qatar is proud to showcase”. (R6)

The organizers seemed to point out Qatar’s unique brand identity compared to its bordered neighboring countries, specifically Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The following quotation best describes the ambitions of Brand Qatar in developing a unique identity, “In terms of what Brand Qatar is trying to change, it is trying to create this very distinctive identity that Qatar has versus its Middle Eastern Neighbors”. The respondent further tries to describe a 'spectrum' in which:

“Dubai, which is like extremely open and flashy, it pleases to the global population, and then you have Saudi, which used to be very conservative, and Doha is rightly positioned. Qatar is rightly positioned in the middle because it takes a lot of the conservative aspects”, Qatar can be seen as “the best of both worlds. And it does not come across as a fake representation of the Middle East as you would think of Dubai because Qatar actively tries to hold onto its heritage”. (R6)

In regards to innovation, the respondents were questioned on their interpretation of the term. Most respondents linked the meaning with something that “creates a wider benefit” or something that “benefits the society”, but most explanations of innovation led to creating a “positive fan experience”. Respondent eight claimed, “innovation is a game-changing term, it is something that will make us stand apart from our neighbors” (R8). This quote refers to using innovation within their strategy to be viewed differently.

After respondents explained their understanding of the term, they were asked “why do you think there is a certain emphasis on the term innovation in regards to the FIFA World Cup 2022?”. Another opinion backing the claim of being identified stated, “Because Qatar wants to stand out, and it’s important that this major event that we are hosting is recognized in the long term” (R5). Through innovative technologies that will be displayed/presented to fans/viewers the SC’s goal is to be remembered as a WC that was original. This would lead the nation brand to be perceived as a contemporary society that utilizes state-of-the-art infrastructure to benefit its people.

Nation Brand Stakeholders

National stakeholders play a prominent role in the branding of a nation, as evident from the literature (Knott & Hemmonsbey, 2016; Knott et al., 2017). The event organizers were asked whom they regarded as “important stakeholders in the nation brand development process?”. The responses of the identified essential organizations that foster nation branding perceived by the organizers are listed in Table 4-3. Each stakeholder organization identified is also counted by the number of other respondents that expressed the same viewpoint within the interviews. National residents were collectively accepted as an essential stakeholder as one of the interview guide questions asked their important role to the nation brand development. Although several

stakeholders were mentioned within the document analyses, there was no link to any organization specific to nation branding. However, all the stakeholders identified in the interviews are evident within the documents.

Table 4-3

List of essential stakeholders for nation branding

Name of Stakeholder	# of respondents that listed
National residents	9
International media	9
Asghal - Public Works Authority (Government Agency)	4
Government Communications Office (State Ministry)	2
Hamad International Airport (State owned Airport)	1
National Tourism Council (NTC) (State Ministry)	5
Qatar Airways (State owned)	5
Qatar Rail (State owned)	2

All participants shared the view that the support and role the organizations played was important in the development of branding the nation, “the role of stakeholders is very important in nation branding because without the right stakeholders you wouldn’t be able to tell the narrative of the country consistently and also cohesively” (R8). As the interview respondents revealed the nation brand stakeholders play the role of indirectly marketing for the SC:

With nation branding, it will completely defeat the purpose if we as an entity went out, and proactively started marketing because it would be perceived as fake. That's why we need the stakeholders to buy in and everything we do in terms of communicating will be through their main channels. So hopefully, all the concerted efforts that we are doing to push the nation through the stakeholders' channels positively will be picked up by the international media. (R6)

While there was a varied response to the same question regarding the perceived brand stakeholders, the public sector, specifically the government departments, was the commonality in all responses. The NTC and Qatar Airways were the prominent stakeholders identified. Also, the National Airline, despite being state-owned, was the only non-governmental organization that was identified. One expert explained the role of both stakeholders as, "The NTC and Qatar Airways, they are the most front-facing. If you're just coming out of nowhere, the tourism council basically provides all information on Qatar's activities. Qatar Airways is your first, essentially gateway into the country. So those are the two most important". (R1)

Qatar Airways is seen as a corporation that represents the face of their brand:

Because they are playing a role from now. From the FIFA Club World Cup (2019), they are the official sponsor. So, from now they have a big role because they are an international brand, but at the same time it is Qatar's brand. So, they are promoting the country, a simple example when you are in the plane, the screen before taking off you will see advertisements about the FWC 2022 (promoting Qatar). (R2)

The NTC is described as using the SC and their platform to incentivize travel packages for tourists:

The SC is coordinating with the NTC to enhance Qatar's brand through the local, regional, and international sports events hosted by the SC and Local Organizing Committee (LOC). The SC and the LOC became the channel for the NTC to promote the offers and packages, including nation branding aspects for the fans visiting Qatar to attend these events. (R7)

As found evident in the literature, there seems to be a challenge in the coordination of the nation brand stakeholders and the importance of strategic planning between them (Dinnie, 2008). Participants were questioned about the stakeholders, their “coordination efforts” and any “negative tensions” between stakeholders, and how they were dealt with. An important point mentioned by the organizer was the fact that the event and the country itself was so “compact in nature”, not only would this work in favor for the fans attending but them too as, “this makes things easier in terms of communication” (R2). The following quote best describes the coordination efforts and awareness of the challenges of communicating for the organization:

Of course, you will always have challenges. That is a part of planning. Because they (national stakeholders) have a different agenda, and you have one, so you need to align those, you need to find where you have synergies, and then you align those objectives, and you go forward with a common goal. But that comes through when you understand them (national stakeholders), meet their teams, planning, and brainstorming. It is not the top-down ‘you are going to do this!’, it is more like ‘okay, so what do you want’, sometimes it is a mix match of those two things. We are promoting Qatar, and they (national stakeholders) are also getting their messages out simultaneously”. (R3)

The following quote shows the SC's communication strategy with its stakeholders and how that is enacted:

You know, because all these stakeholders do work for the government, some are more fluent in Arabic as it is the national language in Qatar, so it is essential to have Arabic speakers in the meetings. The presentations are made and approved by all the different departments/committees, whose strategy is included in the presentations, approved by their Directors. It is made sure that the Secretary-General reviewed it before it is shared outside of the SC". (R5)

The importance of having a "unified voice" was echoed by several organizers. As one respondent pointed to having a "unified channel" for communicating as a vital measure as "this is very important to be aligned, and one message is sent and delivered, and specific people are the ones communicating" (R2). The NLC can be seen as this unified channel. A member from the Legacy Department within the SC was probed about the role of the NLC in comparison to the internal Legacy Department within the SC, "The NLC serves at a strategic level, whereas the Legacy Department can work on a tactical basis with the different departments". (R5)

The interviewees were questioned about the "importance of having citizen and resident support for nation branding". They were followed up with "how the SC could achieve the desired level of support from them?". National citizen and resident support was collectively viewed as vital core components to building and managing the nation brand, "There is no nation branding without any local citizens. I mean it is the citizens' project at the end of the day, it is because the citizens are basically the ambassadors of the brand. They are ambassadors of the nation" (R6). The event organizers highlighted SC's role in involving the citizens' input from an early stage, and this benefited them as well, as one organizer noted:

SC has involved local citizens with stadiums legacy from the design stage through the Community Engagement Division at SC. Community Engagement went to local citizens around each stadium area to ask them what they would love to see or have in the stadium during and after the World Cup. This type of involvement made the local citizens responsible and able to support the nation brand by promoting the stadiums and Qatar's efforts to host the World Cup". (R7)

Building internal civic pride was highlighted as an essential factor in nation branding, "because it makes the Qataris believe they can do it, firstly, then secondly, the world believes they can do it. That they are able to deliver even with its small size, they can deliver a huge tournament". (R3)

Brand development initiatives

Regarding the legacy initiatives identified from the document analysis, respondents were questioned on what they perceived as "the main legacy initiatives that will aid in developing the nation brand of Qatar?" Similar to the document analysis, Generation Amazing, Challenge 22, Josoor Institute, Workers' Welfare and the donation of the stadiums were key initiatives highlighted. The organizers were asked about the history of these initiatives. They were probed with questions such as, "what was the thought process in selecting these initiatives?" and "who helped create such initiatives?".

Respondent one linked the national policies to the development of such strategies:

Generally, in the Qatar National Vision 2030, which refers to the four pillars, the general alignment to the four pillars: human, social, economic, and environmental stability. But overall above that most of them come up as we spend more time researching on it, some are very natural outcomes of new initiatives that come up that you do not know exist.

One organizer highlighted the importance of such initiatives and the government's involvement and the country's leadership:

The number one thing they have to make this event unique. So, essentially the bid was unique. No one has ever done a compact World Cup, and no other country has been this small. No one said we were going to donate modular components of the stadiums. No one said we would contribute to the Carbon Neutrality environment. No one had a legacy plan like the Generation Amazing 10 years before the World Cup, none of these existed. So, part of the bid commitment, Qatar was strategically, and from the senior management, all the way to the Emir were heavily involved in this, making sure these were delivered. (R3)

Brand Impact

The event organizers were questioned on whether they thought the event would either reinforce, reverse, or create new perceptions for Qatar and what those might be. All respondents agreed that the event would have a positive impact on the perception of the nation. One expert linked nation branding specifically for changing the nation's image, “the country will leverage the 2022 FIFA World Cup to create exposure and broaden perceptions about the country’s values, both locally and internationally. It will shed light on the overall country narrative” (R9). They further pointed out that hosting such an event “presents a unique opportunity to break down barriers and build bridges of understanding between the East and the West” and this understanding would help in “dispelling misconceptions” (R4). The following quote best illustrates the desired change in perception for Qatar, “I think it will highlight the hospitality of Qatar, how it welcomes tourists. It will show Qatar's hospitality side, how welcoming it is to all cultures, religions, nationalities which they did not see before”. (R5)

To assess whether the event organizers perceived image transference between the event rights holder's relationship and the nation brand, they were asked if "the image of Qatar will be influenced by being associated with FIFA's brand?". The nation's association with FIFA was only perceived positively by the organizers "it's a huge sector to promote Qatar's image through FIFA" (R7). Despite the FIFA brand being under scrutiny and having negative associations linked to them, one organizer explains how football is viewed positively, "It is one of those things where people view football extremely positively right? Maybe FIFA not so much, but even if they do not view FIFA very positively, they view the sport so positively, that the overall package itself is a positive". (R1)

On the flip side, whether FIFA's brand image would benefit by being associated with Qatar was questioned, most respondents believed FIFA's brand would not be affected much. One organizer did not believe FIFA's brand would be impacted by being associated with any host nation, "I think for FIFA it is a neutral thing. I cannot imagine like the next World Cup is in the US, Mexico and Canada. I would not describe FIFA benefiting from an association with them. I do not think they would benefit from an association with any country really. Just does not work that way". (R1)

The influence FIFA would have on Qatar's nation brand was mentioned as:

There is an image of Qatar being very religious. But because Qatar has to allow a lot of these brands coming in, companies that are promoting products/services which Qatar did not initially endorse. This will showcase Qatar as a very open-minded country and not backward anymore, not conservative. Even though they are very traditional and strict to their religious values, the FIFA World Cup will have to influence that and make sure they

are more open minded towards these products/services they are endorsing and welcoming into their country”. (R5)

Being associated or being linked with organizations with a positive brand and international significance was highlighted by some members. In regards to their legacy initiatives such as Generation Amazing:

If the United Nations recognizes this, it could be a huge thing. Because they are looking at humanitarian strategies too. Every time the Qatari leadership when they go to the United Nations, they raise Generation Amazing and other projects they are doing. So, they want the world’s attention, and they want the work with the UN’s institutions to be promoted as a legacy. (R3)

Respondent One provides a personal example of their interaction at the customs in Buenos Aires airport after the FWC 2014 highlighting Qatar Airways’ brand impact on the nation:

I was essentially stopped, and they were like ‘you know your visa is issued in Doha, but we cannot find Doha on the system and we do not know which country it is. I said well, you know it’s in this country called Qatar, blank look on everyone’s faces. The way I got my point across, I remembered that Lionel Messi at the time had the Qatar Airways sign on his FC Barcelona jersey. So, I went like you know Lionel Messi, Qatar Airways, FC Barcelona. And then he goes ‘Oh yeah, Qatar!’. (R1)

Events

The events' higher-order theme consisted of two second-order codes: mega event and event excellence. The role of mega-events, and the organization of such an event is presented below in relevance to the theme.

Mega Event

Respondents were asked to define their understanding of the mega event term. Two respondents mentioned the impact mega events have on a nation, “large scale event with target international audience that will directly impact economic, political, tourism and infrastructure of the hosted country” (R7), “An event with major significance, one that takes place on a global scale. It brings people together from across the globe – people who share the same passion. An event that has the potential to yield extreme high levels of impact on the country such as the economic, tourism and infrastructure”. (R4)

Respondent six defines mega-events as an event that provides ‘reputation’ and attention, “Any event that gives the country much global reputation, a lot of attention from around the world that brings in financial revenue”. One expert stated the impact the FWC already had on the nation, “Hosting the first FIFA World Cup in the Middle East and the Arab World has already had a profound impact on Qatar and accelerated many existing national infrastructure projects that is transforming Qatar into a modern and connected nation” (R4). The opportunity of hosting such a mega event is seen positively for “Brand Qatar” and that “no other world event, could put Qatar on the map as much as this World Cup” (R3), by being a recognized country on the map this will “enhance the reputation of the country” (R5). The justification of using such a mega event to “brand your country” is explained as, “if you do not have an opinion on it (Qatar) and everyone comes in with a blank slate, then essentially you can use that to project a positive image of your country”. (R1)

As all the organizers had explicitly stated the potential of brand image development through a mega event, they were then asked what the FWC offered for such branding opportunities. Participants referred to the spectators travelling and viewership that came with the

event as a commonly cited theme. Football being the most-watched sport globally provides “a captive audience of about 3 billion people, so it is more about the spread and reach” (R1).

Additionally, the organizers see this increased attention as the biggest opportunity for branding as, “Capitalizing on the increased exposure Qatar will receive during the World Cup and using this to tell the story of Qatar effectively”. (R9)

The notion of soft disempowerment was linked to the current state of the nation, “So if the country is in a state where it already has an elevated status, the mega-event will only add to that status and elevate it slightly more. However, if it is not in a state where it has many issues, it has not ironed out any of these issues, then the mega-event would only cause more negative publicity”. (R6).

Event Excellence

The event organizers referred to the nation as a “small country.” Hence, the successful execution of such a tournament would allow the world to “observe the amazing delivery of the World Cup and readiness of Qatar to host such a mega event. This will definitely promote the brand of Qatar” (R7). Regarding the delivery of the event, the participants noted SC’s priorities in looking at “the tournament readiness, all the operational aspects, who is going to run all these stadiums. The event experience as a whole, from A-Z, the person coming into the airport, to the hotel, to the stadiums” (R3).

The fan experience was a significant theme that all respondents mentioned and that the seamless experience is a contributing factor to event excellence. One organizer mentioned the impact of the fans and how they play a role:

From the moment they land in Qatar, we say their journey starts, so from the moment you open the airplane gate they should see a smile, otherwise if they see two or three

negatives they will remember it. People in general remember the bad things more than the good things. Unless something incredible happens to them, and they do not put in their minds that negative experience. (R2)

Event excellence for the SC entails coordination efforts with all relevant country stakeholders (e.g., Ministry of Interior, National Tourism Council) and organizations (e.g., Hamad International Airport) to ensure the FWC 2022 provides a seamless experience for the tourist. As the SC has promoted a first-ever 'compact nature' World Cup, ensuring this objective is fulfilled without any difficulty is seen as critical to ensure the mega-event is seen positively for the nation brand.

Opportunities

The opportunities' theme about looking toward the future and the potential promise of hosting this event for the country and its citizens. The theme is presented in relation to what the higher-order code comprised from interviews: Potential Legacies, Event Leveraging, and Tourism, and each is touched upon below.

Potential Legacies

The key organizers were asked to define the meaning of the term. All respondents had very similar understandings of the term and defined legacy as a post-tournament achievement. The following quotation best summarizes the organizers viewpoint on the term, "It is the lasting imprint that is left after the event has taken place" (R5). The donation of modular seats as a "tangible, visible legacy" (R1) was a common theme emphasized in regards to the nation's potential legacies and how the media would capture the images of "how it looked during the World Cup, and the images in Africa, Asia, how it is being utilized. That could be a very positive

legacy” (R3). Organizers referred to the pre-and post-tournament images, and how the stadiums would look during the FWC 2022 and after assembled in other donated countries.

Respondent One compared the Generation Amazing initiative with the donation of stadiums in relation to media attention:

You know it is a feel-good story, and it is great, but then it does not have that much, at least in my opinion, that much press play over a long period. You know there will be one article, and that is it. Whereas a stadium that was donated, every time there is a match played there, they will go, ‘oh yeah, by the way, this was donated by Qatar as a result of the World Cup’.

With the significant infrastructural changes that were being done in preparations for the World Cup, the organizers were asked which of them they believed are “the most significant in terms of assisting nation branding?”. The majority of the respondents referred to the “state-of-the-art” transportation infrastructure as significant for nation branding, including The Metro, Hamad International Airport, Expressway Roads, which will assist the nation brand. Respondent Seven describes how the Metro and the airport assist the nations brand:

Hamad International Airport became the key element in developing Qatar's nation brand, as many people now travel to continue their destinations through it. The Rail will be the main transport for fans during the World Cup to make sure they arrive on time and can attend more than one matches a day. This way of the marketing strategy for the Rail has assisted the image of Qatar in regards to readiness to host the event. (R7)

The respondents mentioned the Lusail city and its stadium playing an essential legacy for the nation brand:

It is kind of like national pride. It is an essential piece in the expansion of Lusail City. So, they are not building just the stadium but the city around that stadium. Lusail could be a city that was founded on the World Cup, but maybe by 2030, it becomes an iconic city or place for Qatar. (R3)

Overall, respondents felt that the many material legacies such as the infrastructure development, and donation of stadiums would have a major impact on the positive potential brand legacy for the country, and the effects would be visible after the tournament.

Event Leveraging

An improved nation brand fosters success in the economic field, tourism, diplomatic and cultural relations with other member states. The event organizers were asked if they thought any particular field “would impact more than others?”. There was a varied response, but most answers specified economy and tourism as significant fields that would be impacted the greatest. One organizer confirmed reforms such as relaxing trade rules and regulations in the economic sector to enhance the business environment to attract investors, which was also evident in the documents:

One of the criticisms that Qatar faces is how out-bound its investments are. So definitely, there is a very major focus to bring in-bound investment. You can tell by the relaxing of the employment rules in terms of investment opportunities, also not having to have a Qatari sponsor now. (R6)

This shows SC responding to external criticism of its existing economic policies, hence SC is hoping to leverage the FWC to show progress in the economic sector to draw foreign direct investments in the country.

Notably, the Workers' Welfare initiative is also described as a means to attract investment opportunities:

So, you want to be able to showcase a country where workers' welfare is deeply taken care of so that when corporates of global equity come here to invest, and they want to build their infrastructure, they know that they are building their infrastructure on very ethical policies, which is already in place because financially or investment-wise, our policies are very transparent and ethical, but we still have a lot to do in terms of Workers' Welfare. (R6)

The opportunity to leverage the SC's Generation Amazing initiative as a strategic tool was mentioned as a soft diplomacy method:

When we take Generation Amazing to other places, we take Brand Qatar, and we are promoting Brand Qatar. Moreover, we are promoting differently, like take 'Education Above All'. They are promoting education through impoverished communities. We do that through sports. So, they kind of complement each other. They complement Qatar's overall strategy in supporting vulnerable communities, whichever way it is, through education or sports. It is one of the tools Qatar can use as a soft diplomacy tool. (R3)

Overall, the participants revealed SC's stance on responding to external pressures from outside Qatar, hence event-led leveraging through the FWC is prominent in their event planning. By implementing reforms and policy changes in various fields (e.g., Business Sector) they hope to improve their nation brand.

Tourism

There are different opportunities related to tourism that host cities hope to capitalize on. When participants were asked to define a destination brand, all responses were linked to tourism, “destination branding is to create a brand for a certain location or city as a tourism destination” (R7). Most respondents felt promoting the destination brand was critical to increasing tourism. One organizer highlighted the museum strategy as a way to promote the destination brand for tourism:

Qatar’s museums have a culture pass where you can visit more than one museum, so the pass would allow you to visit more than one museum. And just appreciate the country’s investments in arts and also the country’s heritage. So, this will provide visitors with a clearer picture of the country’s narrative and feed into the tourism and entertainment aspect. (R8)

Likewise, one participant explained the opportunity to utilize fan zones during the event to showcase and educate tourists about the Qatari culture:

There’s a lot of these fan zones that will be located right outside of the stadiums, as part of nation branding, Qatar wants to make sure that they expose their culture, you know their heritage to these fans coming from outside, who will get to experience what Qatar is all about, and how Qatar supports diversity as well. So, the fans will be able to experience that. (R5)

As noted above, the opportunity to expose the culture to the tourists is seen as vital. The organizers expressed the tourist experiences from the Arabian Gulf Cup 2019 (AGC) and the FIFA Club World Cup (FCWC) 2019 that were held at the time of the study:

As we have seen during the AGC and FCWC, football fans immersed themselves in the Qatari culture, mixed with the local community, and experienced what Qatar had to offer from its generosity and hospitality. Also, its heritage and its rich arts landscape. It will also be an opportunity for those travelling here and tuning in 2022 to get a better understanding of the region and all its cultural wonders and the uniquely hospitable nature of its people. (R4)

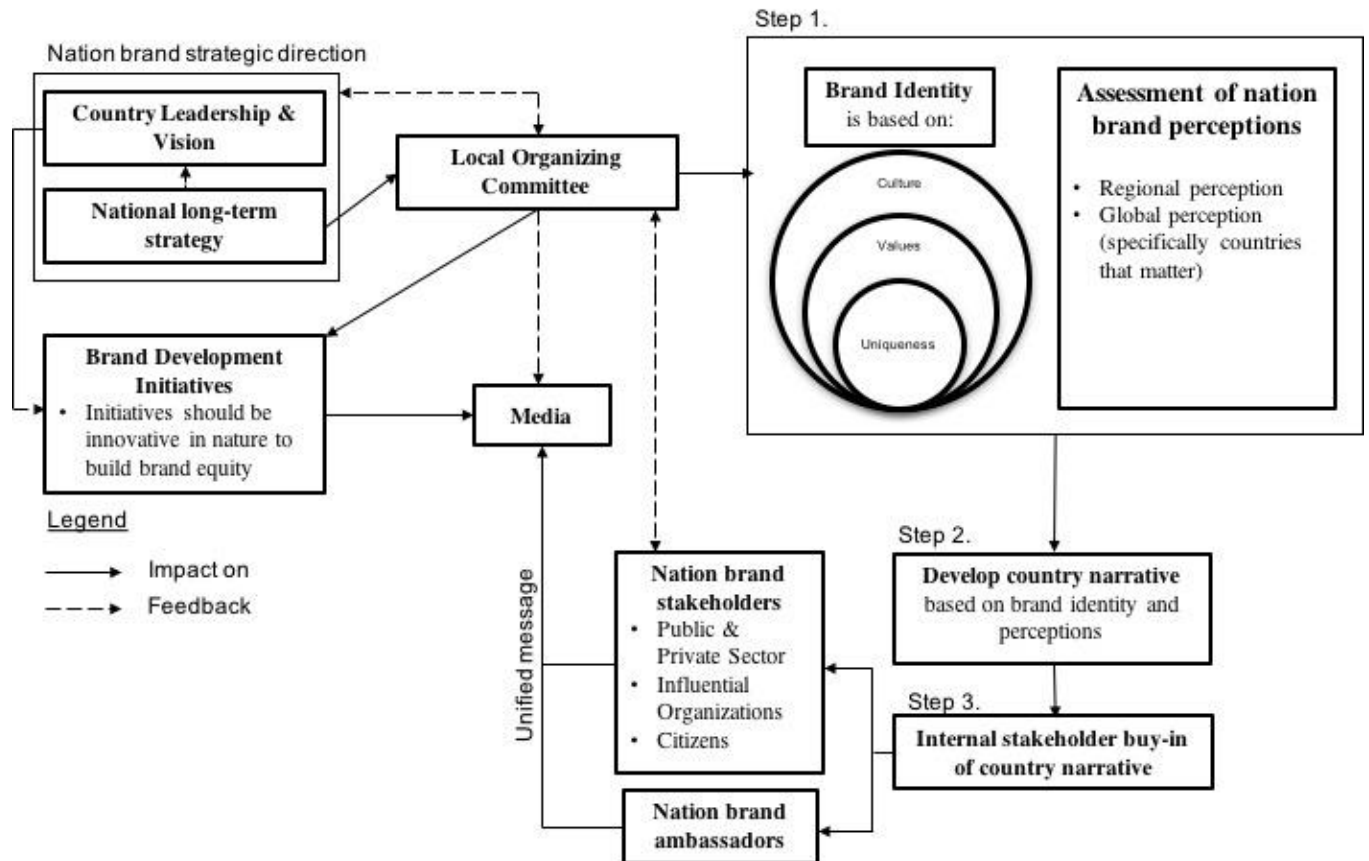
Thus, findings indicated that SC desires to capitalize on the incoming tourists by increasing their appreciation of the country's cultural heritage. This will not only benefit their tourism sector but provide rippling effects on the regional tourism industry, as the visitors would have broadened their perceptions of the region.

Nation Branding Process

The preceding findings from the document and interview analysis allowed for the development of Figure 4-2 illustrating the nation branding process in an emerging nation context. Firstly, the nation brands strategic direction stems from the leadership & vision of the country as well as their national long-term strategy. Moreover, this strategic direction is used by the LOC as a guide for their nation branding strategy, especially as the country leadership has an impact on the LOC's decision making. The first step of the nation branding process requires the LOC to understand their brand identity, and hence undertake an assessment of the nation brand perceptions (regional and global perceptions). The brand identity is based on three elements: cultural heritage, values and uniqueness. Once these are identified, the country narrative needs to be developed based on the brand identity and global perceptions in order to be perceived as an authentic brand. Furthermore, it is essential for the LOC to ensure internal nation brand stakeholders to buy-in to this country narrative.

The nation brand stakeholders consist of the public and private sector, influential organizations (e.g., Qatar Airways) as well as the citizens of the nation. The nation brand ambassadors serve an integral role of co-branding for the nation brand. The country narrative is the means by which the LOC help project a unified message to the global media. The LOC and the nation brand stakeholders influence each other as there is a need for consistent feedback between the two in order to ensure brand alignment. In regards to brand development initiatives (e.g., Donation of modular stadiums, Generation Amazing, Worker's Welfare) the LOC are tasked with the development of such innovative initiatives that are projected in the media to serve the goal of building the nations brand equity. Such brand development initiatives require certain government backing hence there is a direct impact from the country leadership. The media plays a critical role in the nation branding process hence their central placement in the model depicts how all processes have either a direct impact or feedback on them.

Figure 4-2

Nation Branding Process

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

This study set out to examine the nation branding processes through a SME (i.e., FWC 2022) by explicitly investigating relevant organizational documents and the perspectives of people working within the organizing committee (i.e., SC). In doing so, this study identified some critical characterizations of the opportunity to host this SME. In addition, this study helped uncover some of the processes involved in realizing the intended nation brand. Finally, nation branding involves several brand stakeholders, ambassadors, the media, and the country leadership. Thus, these organizations and individuals play a critical role in creating not just the environment preceding and during the event, but what follows in terms of the legacy aspirations for the SC. Consequently, nation branding is a holistic approach that requires strategic objectives to add value to the external and internal populations.

Hosting Opportunity

RQ.1) How does the organizing committee see the opportunity of hosting SME's as a nation branding tool?

The study's findings signified the importance for the SC to utilize the hosting of the FWC 2022 as an opportunity to nation brand internally, regionally, and globally. To understand the hosting opportunity requires an appreciation for the desired outcomes for the SC. The results indicate the SC shares a similar belief to the Head of Qatar's Bid Committee, who expressed their hosting as an opportunity to, "present a new image of the Middle East far away from clichés and closer to reality" (Longman, 2010). This belief has not changed a decade after winning the bid, as evidenced by the *Brand Impact* results from the interviews in particular. Additionally, the document analyses' findings support SC's role of enhancing the nation brand's reputation as an

essential outcome that will be a result of hosting the tournament, which is evident as an *Intangible Legacy*. Reputation in the eyes of the hosts will be earned through successful delivery of the tournament. Knott et al., (2017) found a similar reputation interest with the case of South African brand stakeholders. Heslop et al., (2013) argued that there is considerable proof that reputation enhancement is a positive outcome from hosting mega-events for emerging nations. It is clear from the results both the documents and interviews that this hosting opportunity is meant to change the reputation of Qatar on a broad scale.

The interviews' findings highlighted the success of the tournament lies in Qatar's ability to host such a grand-scale event that is evident as part of their *event excellence*. Qatar is the first Arab nation to host this event, but also the smallest country ever to host the games. Both documents and interviews demonstrated that for the SC, size should have no relevance to their ability to host an excellent tournament. In fact, it allows them to show the world that they have the capabilities to host a SME even though they are a smaller nation. The *Legacy Book* noted, "a small country that dreams – and delivers – amazing". This stanza highlights the belief that their geographical limits can be overcome with their ability to deliver as expressed by one of the participants "That they can deliver even with its small size, they can deliver a huge tournament" (R3).

A notable finding from the documents noted the NLC provided the SC with a strategic goal to "build high quality talent and establish a Centre of Excellence" (Legacy Aspirations, 2012). As a result, the Josoor Institute formerly named as the Centre of Excellence was established in 2013 (See Figure 3-2). Apart from recruiting and retaining experts in the sports and event management industry to assist with the delivery of the FWC, the experts would nurture the local and regional talent through educational workshops/certificates benefiting the human

capital. Retaining experts and knowledgeable employees within sports can help create the legacy aspirations to, “create a unique model for best practice, best operational excellence, best strategic execution, and best learning and career development platform” (Legacy Aspirations, 2012).

Hence, the tournament slogan ‘expect amazing’ is not merely to execute and deliver a satisfactory World Cup, but the opportunity to go beyond and create benchmarks for future hosts that will ultimately guarantee them a reputable plaque in FIFA's eyes and its member states.

Moreover, the organization document highlights the importance of *event leveraging* to develop their nation through the hosting of the FWC 2022. However, the event is not seen as a tool that gets them to their final destination but simply serves as a *catalyst* in their roadmap of the QNV 2030. Similarly, the NDS document was written after Qatar had already been awarded the rights to host the FWC 2022, it states that “from a planning perspective the World Cup is best considered within a broader framework of national development and not as a one-off event”. These findings echo those found by Hartman and Zandberg (2015) who examined the Netherlands approach to planning for hosting the Olympic Games of 2028. The authors found the event was not seen as the ultimate goal but as the ultimate reward for a nation's long-term developmental approach. Therefore, this study shows that several primary conditions are adopted by SC to promote a positive legacy well beyond hosting the event and not solely for sport (Hartman & Zandberg, 2015).

The study findings support Richelieu (2018) notion of adopting a diamond approach to place branding. This approach mirrors the SC as their guiding principles are based on the QNV 2030 in which three of the four pillars (human, social and economic development) echo the priorities required to leverage a nation's socio-economic legacy. As the QNV 2030 provides a clear and ambitious vision to “transform Qatar into an advanced country by 2030, capable of

sustaining its development and providing for a high standard of living for all its people for generations to come” (Legacy Aspirations, 2012).

Both documents and interviews revealed that the hosting opportunity is perceived to amend negative preconceived perceptions about Qatar (e.g., backwards, desert like, not developed) and the region (e.g., warzone, unwelcoming) as a whole and signal positive attributes, which is an evident objective for building their *Brand Identity*. MSEs can create positive associations for the host nation and help change the negative perceptions associated with the country (Kim & Morrison, 2005). Consequently, this opportunity is seen by the SC as a way of showcasing their *brand identity* and values through an all event-related plan that includes festivals, major tournaments, and fan zones during the World Cup

RQ.2) What aspects of the FWC do people working within the organizing committee believe create such nation branding opportunities?

Both the interviews and documents had commonality in that they highlighted the importance of bridging the cultures between the East and West as an important aspect to shift old perceptions of the nation brand. In fact, the *Legacy Aspirations* document indicated the SC’s plans to utilize the increased awareness as hosts to educate and facilitate intercultural understanding. Berkowitz et al., (2007) analyzed China’s opportunity to use the 2008 Olympic Games hosting opportunity to rebuild their brands' image. The findings are comparable to the results of this study. China wanted to use their hosting opportunity to build their significance in the international arena. One such identified opportunity was to portray China's side that is often lacking in the world scene by showcasing and educating the depths of their culture (Berkowitz et al., 2007). The global spotlight due to the FWC provides Qatar the occasion to portray a ‘new image’ of the state that captures their reality and demonstrates their *Brand Identity* and Qatari

values. To represent this desired image while following the government's *Destination branding* policies, the SC utilized the FWC 2018 to launch creative campaigns (Majlis Qatar, Qatar Elements) in Moscow and Saint Petersburg during the event. The 'Majlis Qatar' was a showpiece installation in Moscow that showcased Arab hospitality and offered a glimpse of the expected fan experience in Qatar 2022. While the 'Qatar Elements' labeled as the "world's first floating multimedia museum" showcased the country's culture, history and traditions to the tourists in Russia during the FWC (SC Russia Activities, 2020). Similarly, the SC also hosted an exhibition in Sao Paulo during the Copa America 2019 where the host nation was invited to participate for the first time in the competition's history. The SC's exhibition held in a mall was seen as the "perfect opportunity to engage with the fans from across Latin America" (SC Sao Paulo Exhibition, 2020). SC also unveiled the Brazilian football legend Cafu as their ambassador during the event. This can be viewed as a strategic decision by the SC to engage with millions of football fans who regard South America as the spiritual home for football (Rachman, 2011). These findings show that branding the nation for the SC is not restricted to the event itself, but shifting old attitudes requires engaging with fans early on to provide opportunities for intercultural understanding.

The interview findings indicated that the organizers perceive the access to a captive audience with viewership numbers in the billions, as another critical aspect to help change the perceptions of the host nation. The hosting of the FWC 2022 will offer 'attention' and 'reputation', both from its participants/travelers and the international audience viewing the event. In line with Keller's (2008) understanding of achieving reputation and awareness as positive results of branding, the SC's purpose of hosting fits correctly within these dimensions. Moreover, hosting the FWC 2022 is seen as an opportunity to boost the nation's standings with

the hopes of an improved reputation regionally and with the international community. The belief is that hosting this event will help to positively spotlight the nation upon the event's successful delivery. Knott et al. (2016) surmised that hosting an event of caliber is already seen as recognition in itself. Yet, for Qatar, it is evident that hosting alone will not be enough and that the SC objectives for *event leveraging* and positive legacies will go a long way in creating the needed change.

RQ 3) How do event organizers leverage a nation branding legacy from the FWC?

In lieu of the hosting opportunity, the SC has developed several potential legacy initiatives: Challenge 22, Generation Amazing, Josoor Institute, Workers' Welfare as well as the donation of their stadiums. These potential legacy initiatives can also be viewed as brand development initiatives. For instance, the interviews highlighted Generation Amazing as a significant *brand development initiative* developed before the bid was submitted. Keller (2008) implies that, brands can make connections between others to create mental associations such as judgements, feelings, and inclinations linked to that entity. Kapferer (2012) also clarified some of the reasons for co-branding: expanding the brand's scope beyond its target market, engaging with a new target audience, enhancing product quality expectations, providing the brand with a 'buzz', and promoting trust in the brand. In order to enhance the reputation and awareness of the host nation, the SC can be seen as creating brand associations with the UN as it is more likely the audience would deduce similar brand awareness and create positive mental associations.

As highlighted by the organizers, the donation of the stadium seats is a tangible *Legacy* for Qatar that will be physically evident post the tournament. The concept of modular stadiums to disassemble parts of the stadium post the tournament will provide the hosts with a positive infrastructure legacy, but the strategic decision to donate the modular components

to developing countries through the World Cup is meant to foster a reputable nation brand. The documents highlighted that the stadiums constructed in the donated countries will reflect on the nation's brand every time it is used “These gifts to the respective national football associations will serve as symbols of the goodwill of organized football and the international ties that make all football associations part of one close family and be a valued legacy for many generations of Qatar 2022” (Bid Book, 2010). Using the FWC as a platform, this concept provides a sense of fairness, compassion, and humanitarian engagement while also creating a respectable image of Qatar as a successful and prosperous member of the international ‘family’ compared to underdeveloped nations less-established. Moreover, the interviews indicated that there would be much promotion during the event through the SC, particularly Qatar’s ability to ‘gift’ and other brand initiatives to be promoted through the SC. However, the publicity generated through the donated countries rather than proactive marketing from the SC would result in a positive brand legacy. These findings suggest that leading up to the event, the SC’s stance on their nation branding campaign prioritizes their brand identity characteristics (e.g., Modern Qatar, innovation, hospitality) to be showcased.

Host countries may not be prepared for heightened attention and scrutiny from human rights groups, governments, and international media, hence the staging of SMEs like the FWC entail certain reputational risks (Chalip, 2005). The other side of the soft power coin is soft disempowerment, which in the case of Qatar has caused a loss of attractiveness to the nation brand (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015). The most significant negative publicity raised from heightened media attention has been related to human rights, specifically the treatment of blue-collar workers in Qatar (see Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2014; Millward, 2017). As Figure 3-2 indicates, the international unions were pressing FIFA regarding workers’ rights in Qatar as early

as 2011. The documents and interviews highlighted the initiatives taken to tackle such negativity of the brand. The Workers' Welfare Charter was the earliest initiative undertaken by the organization. The creation of the Workers' Welfare Standards and the Workers Cup plans to signal the organization and the nation-state as an ethically committed body. Signaling can be defined as "sending out signals to convey information about the sender's unobservable qualities to minimize the information asymmetry or to accumulate symbolic capital" (Preuss & Alfs, 2011, p.56). The organizers stated 'ironing out' these issues by showcasing such initiatives through the hosting opportunity. It was important for Qatar to, "show the world the reforms they were doing in terms of Workers Welfare" (R3). These findings suggest the government policy changes are seen as an immediate brand initiative due to external pressure, that the SC hoped would rectify their reputation.

Anholt (2010) argues that policies alone "are not sufficient to persuade foreign publics to part with their existing prejudices and perceptions" (p.13). Instead, the nation's strategy needs to incorporate substance and symbolic actions to enhance its reputation (Anholt, 2010). The substance can be seen as the effective implementation of the nation's strategy through the policies that will contribute to the change needed (Anholt, 2010). This notion is evident in the SC's approach to Workers' Welfare reforms. While symbolic actions entail that of substance but have non-verbal communicative strength, they are 'memorable, picturesque, newsworthy' and emblematic of the nation's strategy (Anholt, 2010). Both the Generation Amazing and donation of stadiums are seen by the organizers to fulfill these two assessments and are promoted as the nation's legacy post-tournament. This contributes to the literature and practice by displaying that host nations need to incorporate policies and initiatives that have substance and symbolic value to enhance their reputation, in the hopes of establishing a favorable nation brand legacy.

Nation Branding Processes

To understand the nation branding processes, it is crucial first to uncover what people working within the SC understand of nation branding. The organizers were aware of the complexities of branding a nation, as evident in the literature. However, their understanding of the consequences of branding the nation increased its significance. The participants viewed nation branding as a more business-oriented approach, which primarily focuses on image change, global perceptions, and the nations positioning in the international arena (Knott et al., 2017). Just as marketers see the opportunity to create and grow a company's brand for market place positioning, the participants of this study implied that working on their brand as a nation would benefit Qatar. Specifically, the findings show that Qatar's nation branding processes would focus on regional and international perceptions denoting both soft power importance and differentiation of their brand identity in the region.

The nation branding process (See Figure 4-2) underlined SC's approach to nation branding were first to understand their nation's global perceptions; in this case, done through extensive scientific research (SC Legacy Book, 2016). Despite having the time and resources to conduct the research internally, the decision was made to hire a global measurement and data analytics company (Nielsen Study) to get findings that would be credible and trustworthy. The study provided the organization with a better understanding of the views, perceptions, concerns, and expectations of several key stakeholders and fan audiences specific to the FWC. With these findings, threats and opportunities could be identified, and the SC would be able to plan and execute its strategy and communications in the most effective way.

In addition, the SC's nation branding process also reflects Anholt's (2010) proposed three means of national reputation management. The SC's first step was research to understand their

image in the countries that matter to their interests. Individually selecting countries identified as emerging international economies and deemed most advanced, including Brazil, France, Germany, Italy and Russia, UK and USA, and regional nations like the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon. Four stakeholder groups within these countries (the media; football family; corporate; government) were identified for their research sample. This finding contributes to the literature by demonstrating that host nations need to uncover their global perceptions, specifically from essential nations in the sectors they hope to improve.

The second step of national reputation management is developing the country's narrative, which Anholt (2010) refers to as 'the story of the who the nation is' (p.7). As the interviews' *brand identity* results highlighted the SC's development of their nation brand originated like a character from a story. This character would essentially portray the positive values and characteristics that represent the Qatari people, which would result in a country narrative that is believable and honest. The document analysis results highlighted these important characteristics within their desired brand identity as hospitable, innovative, and modern. Additionally, these characteristics were further echoed by the organizers during the interviews. This finding simply indicates the narrative of the nation being positively engraved within its organization's culture. Step two in the proposed nation branding process illustrates developing the country narrative based on the nations brand identity and brand perceptions. Nadeau et al., (2011) study on tourist perceptions on China as a host of the 2008 Olympic Games concluded that the hosts should have addressed the character of the country and its people and communicated its strengths to tourists, as these are the influencing factors that have an impact on the evaluation of the nation's image. Hence a nation brand should originate from a country's culture rather than merely a superficial logo or advertisement (Dinnie, 2016). Every country possesses its own distinctive and unique

culture. These and other national identity components underpin the creation of nation branding and ensure that nation branding remains an expression of an honest meaning of a nation rather than a hollow public relations initiative (Dinnie, 2008). The findings also show that the cultural heritage of the country is an important consideration when creating associations for potential consumers of the event.

Once this narrative had been internally developed, it made the organization's job simpler to explain this story to its nation brand stakeholders for their buy-in. As a participant explained, “once we have this narrative in place, we start meeting with the stakeholders individually and in groups because we want their buy-in and their understanding of this narrative” (R6). The results of this study highlight the importance for host organizing committees to develop a country narrative that is in line with the country culture and characteristics of its people. This is an important contribution as it demonstrates what is vital to create a country narrative to get the stakeholders to understand the nation's branding goals and their support. A significant aspect of nation brand equity is maintaining internal buy-in to the nation's brand, hence Dinnie (2016) stated it is a challenge to build the brand strategy of the country. The nation brand stakeholders cannot be expected to ‘live the brand’ if they are not aware of or do not embrace the representations and narratives that are being projected from their own country.

The third means of the nation's reputation management is also evident by the SC and the government by implementation of innovation in its policies and initiatives (Anholt, 2010). The document analyses highlighted the government intentions to host and participate in global research conferences (e.g., World Innovation Summit for Health). This was an important initiative to allow Qatar to join the sphere of developed and prosperous emerging economies and head towards a knowledge-based economy. The document highlights that “countries such as

Japan, South Korea, and China, at the beginning of their industrialization process, focused on receiving, adopting, and understanding technologies and innovations, and then reproducing and inventing them” (National Development Strategy, 2018). In Qatar's case, identifying itself as innovative as part of their *Brand Identity* allows them to be perceived as an industrialized country. Hence SC has labeled the FWC 2022 being the most innovative concept since it submitted its bid book.

Innovation is also evident from the findings in their event planning, which is reflective in their modular stadium designs, legacy initiatives, and fan experiences. Integrating innovative concepts and demonstrating them into the tournament's delivery keeps the admiration and attention for the nation brand at the forefront; it shows legitimacy in the country narrative and signifies the nation's right to a reputation desired by the government (Anholt, 2010). One participant (R4) revealed that SC created a technical role as an innovation advisor to lead a sustainability and innovations team. The team was given the responsibility to promote and create innovative initiatives. Based on meetings with international organizations (e.g., Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) and regional organizations working in the social initiative sectors, the *Challenge 22* initiative was developed. Innovation has been incorporated internally within SC and reflective of the initiatives developed. Participants highlighted enhancing fan experience by utilizing the countries investment into 5G technology, using applications to improve transportation for fans (i.e., metro app), and assisting taxi drivers (e.g., Uber). Investing in innovative technologies is used to create a new image for Qatar, “instead of desert and camels, they think of football and holograms ideally. So that is what we are aiming for” (R1). Hence the brand development initiatives in the nation branding process (see Figure 4-2) exhibit that the host organizing committee in collaboration with the government need to feature innovation in their

policies and brand development initiatives to be noticed as an attractive nation brand. Likewise, emerging countries require the process of reinventing or reproducing innovative technologies to be seen as industrialized or successful.

Qatar's Unique Identity

The creation of a unique identity compared to the rest of the Middle East, was a common theme (*Brand Identity*) that emerged from the interview findings. The documents labeled the FWC 2022 as the 'Middle Eastern World Cup' and representing Arab nations as an umbrella brand. However, participants stressed the importance of creating an identity that would allow the consumers to differ Qatar and its identity when compared explicitly to neighboring countries Saudi Arabia and the UAE. This shift in change may result from the ongoing blockading crisis between the Gulf Nations. Hence the adoption of soft power diplomacy has become even more essential. For nation branding to be successful, the brand must consistently correspond to changes in internal and external environments and ensure consistency in image and identity building (Lee, 2011). Despite being one of the wealthiest in relevance to its hydrocarbon reserves, the region has realized it is not sustainable; hence, there has been a significant push from all governments for new economic diversification structures (Zeineddine, 2017). Due to this, creating a competitive identity only signifies the importance in order for Qatar to maintain its national identity and be able to promote its distinctiveness.

Thus, the SC created a team (i.e., Brand Qatar) specifically to focus their efforts on creating and projecting Qatar's nation brand through their platform. The Brand Qatar team, highlighted the authenticity of Qatar's identity, as well as how their placement between the two neighboring countries separates the reality of their identity. The UAE, specifically the city of Dubai, has an established brand. Their brand is described as, "Soulless, like the Las Vegas of the

Middle East, an artificial world with architectural megalomania, fake replicas and a cosmopolitan population that has lost its sense of belonging” (Govers, 2012, p.56). Saudi Arabia is described as lying on the other end of the spectrum compared to Dubai, with a much broader appreciation for its religious values and profoundly rooted conservatism within its society (Nevo, 1998). One participant (R5) in this study remarked that, “as part of nation branding, Qatar wants to make sure that they expose their cultural heritage”. This quote shows that participants believed strongly that cultural heritage was a critical feature that would help to reposition and distinguish Qatar’s global image compared to other Middle Eastern nations. Indeed, the findings demonstrate that the nation brand's cultural heritage is essential in building a unique set of associations in the public mind to provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance (Dinnie, 2008).

The document analyses and the participants in this study disclosed the numerous financial investments to establish museums in the country that promote its cultural heritage. This is meant to showcase the nations' attempts to hold on to its cultural values and display the nation's identity as more authentic and realistic.

Both the documents and interviews underlined Qatar’s attempts to blend modernism with its cultural heritage ‘Modern Qatar’ as part of their *Brand Identity*. Specifically, this concept is found in the documents adopted by the government through its cultural policies to promote their heritage locally and abroad through the arts sector is evident as part of their *Destination Branding* in the *National Development Strategy* document. Additionally, the document results (*Brand Identity*) revealed this blend of characteristics is also evident in stadium designs. Qatar has made specific efforts to portray its modernism and advancement, using state-of-the-art technologies (Scharfenort, 2012). The stadium designs have modern/futuristic exteriors and

“many messaging behind their designs such as the culture of our country, Islamic elements, innovations and sustainability” (R7). According to the documents, stadiums' architectural designs depict a traditional dhow boat, nomadic tent, traditional hat, the city's maritime history, art pieces, and shapes to stand out to its observers.

This link between visual imaging and a brand is seen as a critical part of obtaining emotional responses between consumers and the brand (Kim et al., 1996). The results indicate that SC has adopted to sustain their identity through their building designs to preserve their identity. Also, using iconic buildings to communicate the image of modernism vs. cultural heritage to attract visitors (Riza, et al., 2012). As the Figure 3-2 shows SC's decision to unveil their official emblem that embodies elements of local and regional Arab culture onto iconic buildings in major cities around the world (i.e., New York, Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Santiago, Mexico City, Johannesburg, London, Paris, Milan, Moscow, Mumbai and Seoul) was another strategy used by the organization to link visual imaging creating an affective reaction in the mind of the consumers. These findings contribute to the literature by signifying the need for host nations to depict their unique identity by showcasing their cultural heritage in various outlets (i.e., infrastructure, stadium designs, emblems) to preserve and reposition their brand identity.

Nation Brand Stakeholders

The support of the local population has been recognized as crucial for realizing the nation's branding benefits (Knott et al., 2016). In regards to local support, the participants identified (*Nation Brand Stakeholders*) the need for the citizens to buy into their tournament plans early on during the establishment of the SC. Hence the SC established a community engagement team. The participants revealed that to make the citizens and residents feel like the FWC 2022 was for their betterment, the SC had consultations with community members of each

stadium precinct before finalizing stadium plans. Through this community consultations, the SC was able to identify the community's needs and how the stadiums post-tournament would best serve each stadium precincts. The interviews highlighted the community engagement teams working with local and regional schools to inform and educate the younger generation about the FWC 2022. The youth were identified as critical demographic groups by the organizers because the excitement would have been built up in their minds by the tournament. This finding suggests that local citizen support needs to address both older and younger populations, as they are essential stakeholders in the nation branding process.

A primary concern with building the nation brand is the long-term commitment of key stakeholders, particularly those involved in essential sectors and the organizational structure to coordinate nation branding activities (Hankinson, 2010). Hankinson (2010), in his findings from field interviews with place brand organizations, noted issues with stakeholder management. The document and interview findings indicate that the NLC established by the SC in the form of a stakeholder working group provides a platform for key stakeholders to communicate through a unified channel and voice, further presenting opportunities to generate their input in the nation branding process. The decision to establish the NLC by the SC echoes Hartman and Zandberg's (2015) suggestions to form a "legacy cooperation" during the planning stage and giving them the responsibilities of contributing to a positive legacy. Such structures can help mitigate negative influencing factors and stimulate positive ones (Hartman & Zandberg, 2015). The establishment of the NLC in 2012 serves a great purpose for SC in order for the stakeholders of the nation-building project to be collaborative and cooperate effectively.

Study participants noted that the collaboration between the stakeholders was positive because of the organization's approach to having regular interactions and meetings with various

stakeholders, either individually or quarterly meetings with all NLC members. Moreover, to have effective communication between the organizing committee and its various stakeholders, communication would take place through a unified channel mostly through the SC's communications department. This communication process allowed the organization to build stakeholder relations by having focal points of contact between the SC and its various stakeholders. This would result in faster and efficient interactions. The communication strategy for brand stakeholders entailed creating presentations in both Arabic and English language and having native speakers present during their meetings. The presentations had to be approved by the various departments and their respective directors. Also, each department would input their strategy within the presentations. Before any presentation could be presented to an external stakeholder and executive level management, the Secretary-General had to approve and review them.

The document results in *Brand Stakeholders* revealed that key stakeholders from the public sector are represented within the NLC to provide support and guidance in different sectors. Moreover, the NLC can provide additional support to create a desired positive legacy for the FWC 2022. Having minister representatives from the government makes it possible for a positive brand alignment for their nation branding purpose and goals and increases accountability within the different ministries. Additionally, the interviews demonstrated that participants believe the country's size makes it easier for brand alignment as it is easier to transmit messages from the SC directly to the relevant brand stakeholders.

In Qatar's case, participants identified nation brand stakeholders as both individuals (i.e., national residents) as well as organizations with high levels of global awareness (e.g., Qatar Airways). Study participants regarded the NTC and Qatar Airways as influential stakeholders in

the nation's brand development. In Knott and Hemmonsbey (2016) study on place branding for Cape Town, the brand stakeholders interviewed perceived the tourism organizations/boards playing a significant role in place branding. Although there is no definitive list of brand stakeholders listed in the literature, tourist boards are highlighted as critical stakeholders (Anholt, 2007; Scott et al., 2011). The interview findings show the organizers view that the NTC acts as a critical organization for tourists planning to come to or have arrived in the host country. Hence, the NTC is a vital nation brand stakeholder for the SC since they play an instrumental role in marketing for the FWC 2022 and presenting a positive image for the organization. The numerous events hosted by the SC, also referred to as 'test events', are promoted by the NTC to incentivize tourists' travel packages.

Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007) suggested that to take advantage of the influence the event can have on the destinations image and its indirect effect on tourist intentions to revisit, destination marketers are encouraged to project images of the event in their promotional material. This finding is comparable to what is adopted by the NTC. However, the document analyses also highlighted how SC was handed down the responsibility of developing the tourism human capital development strategy, indicating that the NTC enacts marketing decisions based on the SC's strategy. These study findings assert that the country tourism authority/boards need to collaborate with the host organizing committee to create a tourism strategy that is beneficial to the general public and sport tourists through the FWC (Chalip & Costa, 2005).

Qatar Airways was a highly influential organization from the interview findings (*Nation Brand Stakeholders*) for their nation brand. This finding was also evidently notable within the *Bid Book* and identified stakeholders for the Communications and Marketing team within the documents (*Stakeholder Collaboration Strategy, 2013*). Looking at Qatar Airways' current

sponsorship portfolio, sport is a strategic decision for the airlines to enhance their brand presence within the global community. Apart from being the official partner and airline for FIFA, they have secured prominent sports partnerships with reputable brands ranging from Boca Juniors in Brazil, FC Bayern Munich in Germany, AS Roma in Italy, Sydney Swans in the Australian Football League and more (Chadwick et al., 2020). These sponsorships allow Qatar to connect with brands that are already established and have positive reputations within their large fan bases (Krzyszaniak, 2018). In Qatar's case, soft power sponsorships indicate a strategy employed by the government to use the state-owned airline to communicate and promote a set of values within key target audiences (Chadwick et al., 2020). It is noteworthy that the airline sponsorship portfolio represents a majority of the countries included in the initial study done by the SC that assessed their image.

Additionally, the airlines play an essential role in nation branding as the perceptions are created when the passengers decide to fly with them. The organizers indicated advertising the FWC 2022 through promotional videos on the plane. Hence, a World Cup ambiance on the airline can be promoted through video advertisements showcasing the host country for the passengers. Playing the right advertisements can visually appeal and get flyers excited about the World Cup's destination and further provide branding opportunities to display the nation as desired. Furthermore, due to the airlines being state-owned, they represent Brand Qatar, as the airlines benefit from increased revenue through the sponsorship deals. The nation brand profit from an increased attractiveness as airline sponsorships influence customer perceptions (Chadwick et al., 2020). The state-owned airline has started to play a more prominent role for the Qatar's nation brand as the FWC draws closer.

Both the documents and interviews stressed the importance of the ‘fan experience’. Participants were highly mindful of the experience they expect the fans to have, the ‘journey’ as some organizers state is not bound to just the matches played at the venues. Instead, the journey starts from the second the travelers get on their planes. Participants noted the state-airlines role in creating memorable and positive experiences for the traveling fans, assisting in portraying a favorable brand image. This notion positively reflects on Nadeau et al. 's (2011) study, which implied the experiential dimension to have a positive association with the event's image, hence recommending event organizers to endorse the event through this dimension.

These findings suggest the prominent role the state-owned airlines play as part of the nation branding for the country. This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating the need to establish stakeholder working groups to support the host organizing committee with their nation branding goals. It also specifies the critical organizations that the host organizing committee needs to be associated with, especially leading up to the event as their roles prominence increases.

Co-branding through Nation Brand Ambassadors

Dinnie (2016) suggested appointing a team of brand ambassadors is a valuable asset to the nation as they advance the nation brand at every opportunity. He further stated, “it is likely that nations will in the future also view the concept of brand ambassadors as an integral component of their nation brand equity” (p.72). The use of brand ambassadors as endorsers of the nation brand has been used by the SC for co-branding efforts (See Figure 4-2). Seno and Lukas (2007) noted that a combination of two or more independent brands is seen as co-branding. The interview findings revealed that as part of its *Nation Branding*, the organization has an established Ambassadors team that works specifically to identify and recruit ambassadors that

could be valuable assets to the brand. Ambassadors are selected based on their authenticity and global fan bases, “Each Ambassador is selected based on their natural ability to inform and engage football fans and communities from coast to coast” (R4).

Dinnie (2016) argued that the central issue in the appointment of brand ambassadors is to ensure that the individuals chosen, represent their identity and the positive qualities the nation wishes to create. The interviews' findings reveal SC's awareness to this view, as one participant highlighted the “you have to select ambassadors that identify with your values” (R4). Moreover, the findings also reveal that ambassadors' selection represents the critical target demographics that would benefit the nation's image in the desired regions. This is evident as the current ambassadors represent the nation's brand in nearly all continents. Xavi a Spanish national, has links to FC Barcelona, who have an influential presence in European football. The former Barcelona player is utilized to represent the European continent. Similarly, Brazilian football legend Cafu represents Southern America. Tim Cahill is the all-time leading goal scorer for Australia, represents Oceania. Cameroon international Samuel Eto'o, the winner of the African player a record four times, represents the African region. Regional sport celebrities are also appointed to represent the Asian population. While not formally appointed, many sporting personalities are, in fact, their countries nation brand ambassadors (Dinnie, 2016). The condition for an effective co-branding partnership to succeed is that each individual brand has awareness and produces an image in the minds of the consumer, hence these selected ambassadors have a perceived level of awareness and image in their own respect (Seno & Lukas, 2007). Seno and Lukas (2007) argued that “equity creation is an important objective of marketing strategy. Celebrity endorsement of a product is a potent mechanism for generating both brand equity and celebrity equity” (p.130). The findings of this study indicate that the sport celebrities (i.e., nation

brand ambassadors) can be utilized to endorse the nation brand through an ambassador role in order to generate nation brand equity. Having these global ambassadors representing the potential legacy initiatives developed by the SC further increases their awareness and image within these continents.

Supreme Committee's Media Strategy

Media corporations are at the heart of a SME business model and how their reporters and editors position the event-related discussions are always a cause of concern as they tend to be rooted in deep-seated biases (Bailey et al., 2017). Lu et al., (2019) study that assessed the relationship between the media content and attitudes of residents hosting the Olympic Games in China and the USA suggested developing a local media strategy. A developed strategy early on from the bidding stage of the event hosting cycle can help shape the presented agenda in future media reports (Lu et al., 2019). This finding is comparable to that in this study. The organizers perceived the media to hold significant influence in the development of the nation brand. The increased media awareness through SMEs has been particularly highlighted to increase the nation's visibility, prestige, and reputation (Chalip & Costa, 2004; Higham & Hinch, 2009).

Moreover, the study participants noted the media scrutiny to get heightened as the event draws closer. Hence the organizers revealed hiring qualified public relations teams and adopting a proactive approach in the media through consistent messaging. This approach lets the leadership and senior officials from the SC who have the most media presence to continually remind the press about the reforms and different initiatives the organization has taken so that there is sufficient coverage on these issues (McCombs, 2014).

Likewise, the organizers suggested their strategy for the broadcast media. The strategy demands direct investments of the organization and the government through advertisements to

promote the nation brand in a positive light by showcasing the potential legacies they want the viewers to see. There is a positive correlation between high impact television programs and advertisement recall (Norris et al., 2003). Especially with viewers who actively view the broadcast and possess heightened levels of emotion, they are more likely to draw the viewers' attention, resulting in them remembering the advertisements (Norris et al., 2003). In the case of the FWC 2022, the 32 participating nations will broadcast these advertisements to the football enthusiasts and patriotic nationals who will actively view the tournament advertisements. These findings contribute to the literature by demonstrating the host organizing committee's need to develop a local and international media strategy as a proactive approach to provide consistent messaging through its senior officials and national leaders. Through such a strategy, the SC hopes to alter the agenda of media reports and broadcasts leading up to and during the event.

Nation Brand Leadership

The question of who determines the brand theme and how it is held accountable is crucial in nation branding (Pike, 2005). In the case of Qatar and SC, the participants indicated (*Brand Development Initiatives*) the strategic nation branding decisions are led by the Emir of Qatar and his advisors, which in this situation are members from the ruling family of the country. Although the nation brand cannot be owned or controlled by a sole organization (Hankinson, 2010), the findings show a clear distinction in where the brand leadership is formed and where the strategic decisions are made. Nonetheless, the organizers also highlighted specific brand development initiatives to include a bottom-up approach where the various departments would present their ideas to the board members. These findings from the results point towards the decision-making process rendered by the SC as the board members set the strategic directions based on the vision of the country's leadership. Moreover, this nation branding process is not unique to Qatar as this

finding is similar to that found in Lee's (2011) study on Korea's nation branding. The study found their approach strategized through their national development strategy plans and adopting a top-down approach based on the government and its national leaders (Lee, 2011).

The documents (*Event Leveraging*) and interview (*Brand Development Initiatives*) findings indicate that QNV 2030 and the National Development Strategy (NDS) are strategic policy documents that play an integral role in the strategic direction for the organization. All planning necessary to host and deliver an exceptional tournament is aligned to fulfill the four pillars of the QNV 2030. As noted from the *Legacy Aspirations* document, "Taking a lead from the QNV 2030, the NDS, and the mandate set out for us by His Highness the Emir of Qatar upon establishing the committee, we developed our Vision, Mission and Values".

Anholt (2003) advocated for long-term nation brand planning and strategy for effective image campaigns. This is evident in Qatar's case and within the QNV 2030, which acts as a compass for its branding strategies. This strategy suggests that host organizing committees simply need to adopt and integrate the nation's long-term vision or country strategy into their MSE planning to foster a nation brand legacy.

Qatar's Soft Power Approach

Richelieu (2018) stated that what used to be "diplomacy branding" has been substituted or at least supplemented by place branding. He further argues that this notion is now called "sport diplomacy" which illustrates how certain countries use sport to gain international respect, strengthen their influence in global affairs and establish their legitimacy, which can be seen as adopting "soft power" (Richelieu, 2018). In Qatar's case the show of soft power or the least the illusion of soft power is done through a strategic approach through the government. Substantial government investments into its various sectors to develop Qatar into a modern country help in

displaying ‘political symbolism’, thus using the state-of-the-art infrastructure built including the transportation and stadium infrastructures as a symbol of ‘greatness’ of the society (Van Der Westhuizen, 2007). The concept of blending modernity with cultural heritage was discussed earlier concerning Qatar's brand identity. Brannagan et al., (2014) article on Qatar’s soft power, implied the country’s ability to preserve its cultural heritage enhances its soft power. By giving visitors an idea of the rich and prestigious states history and providing its consumers with the kind of cultural experience found in few other places. Qatar’s ability to embed modernity in this historical sense adds attractiveness to the nation brand (Brannagan et al., 2014). As Nye (2004) identified the attractiveness of the nation's culture is one soft power source. By exposing and projecting Qatar's culture through its various sectors, SC hopes to make the nation more attractive in the global public's eyes.

The documents highlighted the *economic legacy* SC aimed to achieve through hosting initiatives such as ‘Trade Missions’. These trade missions were put in place for SC and their stakeholders to meet with businesses and senior government officials and create partnerships through the hosting of the FWC 2022. As the *SC Legacy Book* notes, “Networking and knowledge sharing in Qatar enhance relations with countries”. Trade missions to establish relations with States such as Australia, the United States, and United Kingdom are diplomatic initiatives being used by the government to build their soft power.

Similarly, the study participants highlighted a cross-collaboration between the government and the SC through the Generation Amazing. Another soft power source is the appeal of its domestic political and social values (Nye, 2004). The participants revealed that countries identified for social development through football through its various means, such as pitch construction or development training, are selected based on diplomatic intentions that are

decided through the country's leadership. The documents highlight several partnerships between Qatar and various countries initiated through the Generation Amazing program. Apart from being active in regional countries in Asia, including Nepal, India, Jordan, and Oman. The SC also established global partnerships with the likes of KAS Eupen in Belgium, Flamengo FC in Brazil, AS Roma in Italy, and Leeds United and Sheffield FC in the United Kingdom. This finding indicates the leadership utilizing soft power within the identified countries through Generation Amazing projects to establish dialogue and relations with other nations (Nye, 2011). Sporting activities from hosting the FWC to simply providing goodwill gestures such as building pitches in vulnerable communities strengthens ties between governments, and provides a place for peaceful cultural exchange and opportunities to normalize and advance political relations (Nygard & Gates, 2013).

Furthermore, both the document and interview findings indicate the importance of having the nation's recognition through the UN. This is evident from the government's strategic policies (i.e., National Development Strategy) as it outlines one of their objectives of developing strategic alliances with major powers and regional and international bodies. This finding indicates having international organizations such as the UN promotes the country's initiative to further the nation's reputation and enhance the legitimacy of the project. As the end outcome would result in climbing the rankings in international indicators, which is explicitly stated, "Qatar has worked to be an active and influential member of the international community and to achieve the highest possible rankings in international indicators" (National Development Strategy, 2018, p.257).

To become an attractive State, the audience needs to be aware of the nation before it can have a reputation (Krzyzaniak, 2018). Moreover, building awareness is a necessary preliminary step to building soft power (Krzyzaniak, 2018). Indexes such as The Anholt-GfK Nation Brands

Index as well as CEIBS CEMS Soft Power Index may be used to reflect efforts to measure relations between the images of each nation along its various sectors such as the best country to invest in (Newburry & Song, 2019). Similarly, indexes such as the Good Country index developed by Simon Anholt and colleagues evaluate the respective countries that contribute to global social welfare. These rankings indicate Qatar's aim to position themselves clearly and help the host nation develop its image in relevance to other member-states (Newburry & Song, 2019). Attaining soft power is one legacy that States like Qatar, consider as achievable through the FWC (Grix et al., 2017).

Comparing Nation Branding in South Africa 2010

Nations compete on the international stage; the idea of competition ultimately depends on the comparison (Buckley et al., 1988). South Africa shares many similarities with the case of Qatar. A developing nation with stereotyped associations of the broader African region was the first African country to host the FWC. Hence a comparison can provide similarities or differences in the approach adopted by both host nations. Knott et al. (2016) study assessed the leveraged nation branding opportunities for South Africa as the host of the FWC 2010 through its brand stakeholders. The authors identified the media, local citizens, tourism experience, stakeholders, design, sustainable development, and event hosting, as seven ways a nation can leverage these opportunities to achieve a nation branding legacy through a FWC.

Many similarities are evident from the findings that have been leveraged by the SC. The study indicated the media to be viewed as crucial agents in the nation brand development, likewise, participants indicated (*Nation Branding*) a close connection to be established between the traditional media that are local and international. The organization ensures that all tournament related information is effectively communicated to all media platforms. Also, their

news page on their official website is updated regularly with updates related to the organization. The organizers indicated that the success of the MSE might come down to content disseminated on alternative media platforms such as social media compared to traditional media, specifically ‘western’ media. The authors recommended organizing committees to have a proactive approach in being more active by disseminating the event's positive legacies as the media article and broadcasts for the Olympic Games were based on information through press releases by the organizing committee (Lu et al., 2019). This finding is comparable to that found with SC’s media strategy.

In respect to stakeholders, Knott and colleagues identified an improvement in relationships between the public and private sectors. However, there were challenges noted due to the number of stakeholders involved. The organizers within the SC indicated a similar scenario for the case of the organization. However, since there was such big government backing for the nation branding project and the FWC 2022, all stakeholders were stated to be fully supported as they were positive about the nation branding benefits for the host country. Also, noticeable in Qatar's case, the majority of the brand stakeholders identified were from the public sector. The organizers also highlighted how the conflict between the stakeholders would be very natural for such a large-scale project if occurred further meetings with senior-level management would take place with the individual stakeholders.

In relevance to the tourism experience, SC’s approach is similar to South Africa, which focused on creating a positive fan experience discussed earlier in the chapter. The interviews (*Tourism*) mentioned how Fan Zones would play a crucial role as those were opportunities for the SC to implement branding within. Likewise, the organizers mentioned having fan zones catered to different types of tourists, which is evident in the nation showcasing its ‘Modern

Qatar' alongside its cultural heritage. The fan zones would cater to the different demographics providing entertainment for non-alcohol drinking visitors to ensure they can also have a positive fan experience, which would help legitimize and strengthen Qatar's nation branding work (Rookwood, 2019).

Non-event specific tourism infrastructure such as the metro was highlighted as an essential infrastructure in the interviews that would play a role in the nation brand development. All the metro lines throughout the city are directly connected to the stadiums to allow fans and tourists to commute with ease. Likewise, apart from luxurious high-rise hotels, the organizers mentioned the desert campsites and cruise ships as opportunities for tourists to explore the country's culture and provide them with the tourism experience in between matches.

Concerning leveraging the design elements such as showcasing and creating iconic brand elements, Knott et al., (2016) determined nation brand stakeholders incorporate aesthetic and iconographic elements to the infrastructure being built or regenerated, which ultimately benefits the nation brand reputation and image development. This has been adopted by the SC, and was discussed earlier on in relevance to the stadium designs to leverage the iconic showcasing potential of the SME.

Leveraging the FWC 2010 as a catalyst for sustainable development and the urban regeneration was not viewed positively by the brand stakeholders in South Africa specifically for event stadia. In Qatar's case, the interview findings indicate SC organizers hold very positive views about the infrastructure and stadium legacy. Participants revealed most stadiums were designed to be surrounded by multi-use precincts, offering the communities non-sporting facilities such as mosques, markets, hotels, and office space. The stadiums and the precincts were

described as becoming sporting, and no-sporting community hubs post the event. Additionally, the donation of the modular stadiums was implemented to encourage sustainable development.

Brand stakeholders in South Africa noted the need for post-event leveraging to sustain the momentum of the FWC 2010 by hosting future events. In the case of SC, all organizers indicated the FWC 2022 as a pit stop towards the QNV 2030 and advocated the development of the hospitality and tourism sectors post the tournament. The documents analyses highlighted the hosts ambitions to be viewed as garnering a reputation for events hosting. Although the FWC 2022 will be the most significant event hosted, it will certainly not be the end of countries' event hosting journey. At the time of this study, Doha has already won the right to bring FINA's flagship event their World Championships to the Middle East for the first time and entertain their participants and fans a year after the FWC 2022. Likewise, the nation has bid for the hosting rights of the Asian Games in 2030 (Al Jazeera, 2020). Lee (2014) suggested the frequency of hosting such events will enhance the city's brand awareness as hosting SME's can effectively market the city's brand. In Qatar's case, the country and brand stakeholders' leadership has implemented this event leveraging opportunity. They will sustain the media presence post the tournament with events such as the FINA World Championships in 2023.

This study further supports the existing literature by affirming the contention that the brand stakeholders leverage a nation branding legacy through the hosting of the FWC and its specific brand stakeholders' strategic intentions and activities. Furthermore, this thesis also provided the strategic processes involved in nation branding to leverage such identified opportunities.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to investigate the nation branding process deployed by a host country organizing committee. The nation branding processes were examined by investigating relevant organizational documents and the perspective of event organizers. Three research questions were developed to guide this thesis: (1) How does the organizing committee see the opportunity of hosting a SME as a nation branding tool? (2) What aspect/aspects of the FWC do people working with the organizing committee believe create such nation branding opportunities? (3) How do event organizers leverage a nation branding legacy from the FWC? The following chapter summarizes the significant findings, followed by the theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and future directions.

Through an analysis of the findings from the study, a nation branding process model (Figure 4-2) was developed to illustrate the processes utilized by an emerging host nation (i.e., Qatar) for the FWC 2022. The model portrays the nation branding processes between the Country leadership, the LOC (i.e., SC), Nation brand stakeholders and how they are utilized to communicate to the global media. Looking at the nation branding strategies deployed by the host nation, Anholt (2010) recommendations for managing national reputation seem to be adopted in their nation branding processes.

This study's findings underlined how the LOC saw the hosting of the FWC 2022 as an opportunity to dispel negative perceptions of the nation's image and reputation and further create a unique identity for themselves to differentiate them in the region and to brand themselves on a more global scale. The SC wants to use the increased media attention as an opportunity before and during the event to increase cultural awareness and education about the nation's brand

identity (e. g, hospitable, modern, and innovative) which they hope will result in a favorable brand image. The ability to expose their cultural heritage and history before and leading up to the event aims to facilitate intercultural understanding. A positive fan experience and event excellence of the event are seen as ways to garner a positive reputation as leaders in event hosting for Qatar.

The findings showed several brand development initiatives developed, such as Challenge 22, Generation Amazing, Workers' Welfare, Donation of stadiums. All brand development initiatives are leveraged through the event by the SC to foster positive potential legacies from the FWC 2022. These initiatives serve to portray both tangible and intangible potential legacies for Qatar. It also appeared that these Potential *Legacies*, are seen as soft power diplomatic initiatives that are meant to foster a positive legacy for Qatar but also increase their rankings in international indexes as they are viewed as a nation that gives back to the community. Merely hosting the FWC is not sufficient in the perspective of the SC for image change and these brand development initiatives are necessary to build the nations brand equity.

The state-owned airlines Qatar Airways and the NTC are viewed as critical organizations that have an influence on the nation brand. Especially the airline, as its reputation as a world-class airline represents brand Qatar. Its soft power sponsorships aim to elevate the status of the nation's image and tap into key target markets through its global customer base. Similarly, Nation brand ambassadors are used to target all continents to expose Qatar's nation brand.

The findings from the interviews (*Nation Branding*) indicated that organizers within the SC do not believe in a universal method of nation branding. Although their approach is context specific, as the nation branding goals vary for each country (Newbury & Song, 2019), organizers held the view that other hosts could utilize certain processes.

Theoretical Contributions

The notion of nation branding has a young history and lacks theoretical cohesion in the management literature (Anholt, 2007; Stock, 2009). While the literature on the topic is rising steadily, there is still a concern for governments in the right way to brand their nation (Simonin, 2008).

Firstly, this study contributed to the literature by assessing the nation branding phenomenon in an emerging nation (Rein & Shields, 2007) while extending previous work on assessing a SME role in the development of the nation brand. The present study contributed to the emerging discourse of nation branding in the sport management context by studying nation branding processes adopted by the LOC in their hosting of the FWC 2022. In particular, this study examined the processes involved in staging an event before the event taking place and developed a figure (See figure 4-2) illustrating the nation branding process based on those findings.

As the results demonstrated, the host organizing committee perceived the SME as a nation branding tool to help rebrand and improve their reputation. This finding shows the host organizing committee perceives the exposure through the SME will provide intercultural awareness to help negate the negative associations to the nation brand. However, being awarded the opportunity to host itself is not sufficient in terms of rebranding the nation, thus host organizations must also rely on several innovative brand development initiatives and amend government policies in order to foster a positive nation brand equity. In addition, an effort to nation branding requires three critical steps that the LOC needs to undertake, including understanding current perceptions held of the nation's image (from those inside and outside the country), the development of a country narrative based on the nation's internal brand identity and

perceptions and lastly ensuring the internal stakeholder buy-in of this country narrative. In today's world of modern technology, it is also important to have well known ambassadors as useful assets to utilize for co-branding in order to build the nation brand equity.

Moreover, the organizer perspectives provide more in-depth and understanding that were lacking in the literature. Specifically, the nation branding processes, including the stakeholder coordination efforts, by forming a stakeholder working group (i.e., NLC) specifically to help achieve the countries nation branding objectives. In addition, how host organizing committees deal with media scrutiny through a developed local and international media strategy. Nation branding and soft power have been interchangeably used in the literature. This study also demonstrates how Qatar's soft power approach of exposing and projecting their brand identity and culture through its various sectors, in the hopes of making the nation more attractive in the global public's eyes, resulting in achieving soft power. This thesis also contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating that the aspirations of the country to improve their nation's image and reputation may be formed through specific strategic efforts directed towards the nation brand.

Practical Contributions

The study revealed some novel insights to practice that can be learned. The establishing of an official body like that of the SC and a LOC branding department (i.e., Brand Qatar) may be ideal from the onset of winning the rights to host the event so that the nation branding legacy can be enacted through a long-term strategy. Also, aligning the nation branding goals with the country's long-term development/vision allows the country narrative to be consistent and maintains government backing.

Additionally, the nation brand stakeholders can provide support and input to the local organizing committee as the event draws closer. Similarly, the creation of the stakeholder working group (i.e., NLC) may help significant for brand alignment and effective communication between several brand stakeholders. As such, host nations can create stakeholder working groups representing the public and private sectors to assist the nation's branding goals for effective and efficient communications and to create positive brand alignment.

Next, emerging host nations should first evaluate and identify the external perceptions of their nations' image and reputation to create a nation branding strategy that complements the nation's strengths or improves the negative attributes linked to it. Identifying nations that have negative images associated with the hosts can also identify which geographic locations to target. The LOC should incorporate the nation's cultural heritage in designing the stadiums. The stadium's aesthetic and elements are a visual means the host nation can display their brand image. Similarly, depicting a unique identity by showcasing the cultural heritage and incorporating innovation in the identity is seen as critical to increasing attraction to the brand.

In relevance to soft power diplomacy, as was evident from this case study, event organizers should collaborate with the host country's government to utilize sports diplomacy through various initiatives that can be promoted as potential legacies for the event.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study has focused on Qatar's case, specifically the documents produced by the organizing committee, as well as perceptions of the organizers working at the SC. As such, the context of the country and its organizers have an impact on the findings. Therefore, the findings reflect the perspective of the organization. Different host countries with their differing national branding goals may identify newer processes and strategies applicable to their hosting objectives

of an event like the FWC. Also, this study investigated the nation branding process through the Men's FWC. A comparative case could be studied with the Women's FWC, this could be an area of future research. Due to the time considerations and the academic requirements of a master's thesis, ideally, an inquiry with all nation brand stakeholders would have been beneficial to discover their process and perspectives. Although it is still believed that due to the nature of the organization and the stakeholders that are represented on the board, the findings are a holistic representation of the nation branding processes and strategies deployed by the host country. The semi-structured interviews took place between November 2019 – April 2020, two years before the event's start, as such event-specific branding opportunities (e.g., opening and closing ceremonies, fan zone elements) could not be investigated as those had not been current priorities for the organization. Other avenues for future research include exploring the costs involved in nation brand development for nations.

References

- Aaker, A. D. (1996). *Building strong brands*. New York, N.Y: Free Press.
- Al Jazeera. (2020, April 23). *Qatar, Saudi Arabia bid to host 2030 Asian Games*. Retrieved from Al Jazeera: <https://www.aljazeera.com/ajimpact/qatar-saudi-arabia-bid-host-2030-asian-games-200423164028858.html>
- Alekseyeva, A. (2014). Sochi 2014 and the rhetoric of a new Russia: image construction through mega-events. *East European Politics*, 30(2), 158-174.
- Anholt, S. (2003). *Brand New Justice: The Upside of Global Branding*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Anholt, S. (2004). editor's foreword to the first issue. *Place Branding and Public Policy* , 1(1), 4-11.
- Anholt, S. (2007). *Competitive identity: The new brand management for nations, cities and regions*. . Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anholt, S. (2010). *Places: Identity, Image and Reputation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Armenakyan, A., Heslop, L. A., Nadeau, J., O'Reilly, N., & Lu, I. R. (2012). Does hosting the Olympic Games matter?: Canada and Olympic Games images before and after the 2010 Olympic Games. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 12(1-2), 111-140.
- Associated Press. (2010, December 10). *Barcelona agree €150m shirt sponsor deal with Qatar Foundation* . Retrieved from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2010/dec/10/barcelona-shirt-sponsor-qatar-foundation>

Associated Press. (2017, February 15). *PSG playing its best soccer since Qatari takeover in 2011*. Retrieved from www.foxnews.com:

<http://www.foxnews.com/sports/2017/02/15/psg-playing-its-best-soccer-since-qatari-takeover-in-2011.html>

Bailey, K., Oliver, R., Gaffney, C., & Kolivras, K. (2017). Negotiating “New” narratives: Rio de Janeiro and the “media geography” of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 41(1), 70-93.

Berkowitz, P., Gjermano, G., Gomez, L., & Schafer, G. (2007). Brand China: using the 2008 Olympic games to enhance China’s image. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 3(2), 164-178.

Bodet, G., & Lacassagne, M. (2012). International place branding through sporting events: A British perspective of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 12(4), 357-374.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40.

Brannagan, P. M., & Giulianotti, R. (2014). Soft power and soft disempowerment: Qatar, global sport and football’s 2022 World Cup finals. *Leisure Studies*, 34(6), 703-719.

Brannagan, P. M., & Giulianotti, R. (2015). Soft power and soft disempowerment: Qatar, global sport and football’s 2022 World Cup finals. *Leisure Studies*, 34(6), 703-719.

Brannagan, P. M., & Giulianotti, R. (2018). The soft power–soft disempowerment nexus: the case of Qatar. *International Affairs*, 94(4), 1139–1157.

- Brannagan, P. M., Mubanga, I. J., & Wolff, M. D. (2014, March 20). *Qatar: a first-hand account of soft power*. Retrieved from E-International Relations: <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/03/20/the-state-of-qatar-a-first-hand-account-of-soft-power/>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 1-16.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Weate, P. (2016). Using thematic analysis in sport and exercise research. In B. Smith, & A. C. Sparkes, *Routledge Handbook of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise* (pp. 290-309). London: UK: Routledge.
- Buckley, P., Christopher, P., & Prescott, K. (1988). Measures of international competitiveness: a critical survey. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 4(2), 175-200.
- Byers, T., Slack, T., & Parent, M. M. (2012). *Key concepts in sport management*. London, UK: SAGE.
- Chalip, L. (2006, May). Towards social leverage of sport events. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 11(2), 109-127.
- Chalip, L., & Costa, C. A. (2005). Sport event tourism and the destination brand: towards a general theory. *Sport in Society*, 8(2), 218-237.
- Cornelissen, S. (2010). The geopolitics of global aspiration: sport mega-events and emerging Powers. *The Geopolitics of Global Aspiration: Sport Mega-events and Emerging Powers*, 27(16-18), 3008-3025.

- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th Edition ed.). London: Sage.
- Custodia, F., & Gouveia, P. (2007). "Evaluation of the cognitive image of a country/ destination by the media during the coverage of mega-events: the case of UEFA Euro 2004 in Portugal. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 9(4), 285-296.
- De Almeida, B. S., Júnior, W. M., & Pike, E. (2014). The 2016 Olympic and Paralympic games and Brazil's soft power. *Contemporary Social Science*, 9(2), 271-283.
- De Bosscher, V., De Knop, P., Van Bottenburg, M., & Shibli, S. (2006). A conceptual framework for analysing sports policy factors leading to international sporting success. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 6, 185-215.
- Dinnie, K. (2008). *Nation Branding: Concepts, Issues, Practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Dinnie, K. (2016). *Nation branding: concepts, issues, practice* (2nd Edition ed.). Oxon: Routledge.
- Dorsey, J. M. (2014). The 2022 World Cup: a potential monkey wrench for change. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 31(13), 1739-1754.
- East, S. (2015, January 12). *Middle East millions fueling European football*. Retrieved from CNN: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/12/football/qatar-uae-sponsor-football-europe/>
- Fan, Y. (2008). Soft power: Power of attraction or confusion? . *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 4(2), 147-158.

- FIFA. (2017, May 7). *Qatar Airways announced as official partner and official airline of FIFA until 2022*. Retrieved from FIFA: <http://www.fifa.com/about-fifa/news/y=2017/m=5/news=qatar-airways-official-partner-airline-fifa-2882728.html>
- fourfourtwo. (2012, March 6). *Qataris purchase remaining stake in PSG* . Retrieved from [www.fourfourtwo.com](http://www.fourfourtwo.com/news/qataris-purchase-remaining-stake-psg): <https://www.fourfourtwo.com/news/qataris-purchase-remaining-stake-psg>
- Fullerton, J., & Holtzhausen, D. (2012). Americans' attitudes toward South Africa: A study of country reputation and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 8(4), 269-283.
- Gengler, J., & Al-Khelaifi, B. (2019). Crisis, state legitimacy, and political participation in a non-democracy: how Qatar withstood the 2017 blockade. *The Middle East Journal*, 73(3), 397-416.
- Girginov, V., & Hills, L. (2008). A sustainable sports legacy: creating a link between the London Olympics and sports participation. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 25, 2091-2116.
- Government Communications Office. (2019, August 1). *Qatar national vision 2030*. Retrieved from [gco.gov.qa](https://www.gco.gov.qa/en/about-qatar/national-vision2030/): <https://www.gco.gov.qa/en/about-qatar/national-vision2030/>
- Govers, R. (2012). Brand Dubai and its competitors in the Middle East: An image and reputation analysis. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 8(1), 58-57.
- Govers, R., & Go, F. (2009). *Place Branding: Glocal, Virtual and Physical Identities, Constructed, Imagined and Experienced*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gratton, C., & Preuss, H. (2008). Maximizing Olympic impacts by building up legacies. *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 25(14), 1922-1938.

- Grix, J. (2012). "Image" leveraging and sports mega-events: Germany and the 2006 FIFA World Cup. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 17(4), 289-312.
- Grix, J. (2014). *Leveraging legacies from sports mega-events: concepts and cases*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Grix, J., & Brannagan, P. M. (2016). Of mechanisms and myths: conceptualising states' "soft power" strategies through sports mega events. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 27(2), 251-272.
- Grix, J., & Houlihan, B. (2014). Sports mega-events as part of a nation's soft power strategy: the cases of Germany (2006) and the UK (2012). *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 16, 572-596.
- Grix, J., & Lee, D. (2013). Soft power, sports mega-events and emerging states: the lure of the politics of attraction. *Global Society*, 27(4), 521-536.
- Grix, J., Brannagan, P. M., & Houlihan, B. (2015). Interrogating States' Soft Power Strategies: A Case Study of Sports Mega-Events in Brazil and the UK. *Global Society*, 29(3), 463-479.
- Grix, J., Brannagan, P. M., Wood, H., & Wynne, C. (2017). State strategies for leveraging sports mega-events: unpacking the concept of 'legacy'. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 9(2), 203-218.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ham, P. v. (2010). *Social Power in International Politics* (Vol. 138). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Hankinson, G. (2010). Place branding research: a cross-disciplinary agenda and the views of practitioners. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 6(4), 300-315.

- Hanna, S., & Rowley, J. (2008). An analysis of terminology use in place branding. *Journal of Place branding and Public Diplomacy*, 4(1), 61-75.
- Harris, J., & Lepp, A. (2011). Golf, tourism and the 2010 Ryder Cup: (de)constructing images of Wales. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 16(1), 55-73.
- Hartman, S., & Zandberg, T. (2015). The future of mega sport events: examining the “Dutch approach” to legacy planning. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 1(2), 108-116.
- Haut, J., Grix, J., Brannagan, P. M., & Hilvoorde, I. V. (2018). International prestige through ‘sporting success’: an evaluation of the evidence. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 14(4), 311-326.
- Hede, A.-M. (2005). Sports-events, tourism and destination marketing strategies: an Australian case study of Athens 2004 and its media telecast. *Journal of Sport Tourism*, 10(3), 187-200.
- Heslop, L. A., Nadeau, J., & O'Reilly, N. (2010). China and the Olympics: views of insiders and outsiders. *International Marketing Review*, 27(4), 404-433.
- Heslop, L. A., Nadeau, J., O'Reilly, N., & Armenakyan, A. (2013). Mega-event and country co-branding: Image shifts, transfers and reputational impacts. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 16(1), 7-33.
- Heslop, L., O'Reilly, N., & Nadeau, J. (2011). China's Olympic destination: tourist evaluations of China and the games. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 5(3), 235-246.
- Higham, J., & Hinch, T. (2009). *Sport and tourism: globalisation, mobility and identity*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

- Hilton, C. (2008). *Hitler's Olympics. The 1936 Berlin Olympic Games*. Gloucester: Sutton Publishing.
- Hilvoorde, I. V., Elling, A., & Stokvis, R. (2010). 'How to influence national pride? The Olympic medal index as a unifying narrative'. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45(1), 87-102.
- Holloway, I., & Todres, L. (2003). The status of method: flexibility, consistency and coherence. *Qualitative Research*, 3, 345-357.
- Holt, R., & Ruta, D. (2015). *Routledge handbook of sport and legacy. meeting the challenge of major sport events*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.
- Horne, J., & Manzenreiter, W. (2006). Underestimated costs and overestimated benefits? Comparing the outcomes of sports mega-events in Canada and Japan. *Sociological Review*, 54(2), 71-89.
- Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D., & Murphy, K. (2013). Rigour in qualitative case-study research. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(4), 12-17.
- Imray, G. (2012, November 23). *South Africa spent \$3 billion on 2010 World Cup*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com/>:
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/nov/23/south-africa-spent-3-billion-2010-world-cup/>
- Jago, L., Dwyer, L., Lipman, G., Van Lill, D., & Vorster, S. (2010). Optimising the potential of mega-events: An overview. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 1(3), 220-237.
- Johnson, G., Scholes, K., & Whittington, R. (2008). *Exploring corporate strategy*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.

- Judd, C. M., Smith, A., Eliot, R., Kidder, H., & Louise, H. (1991). *Research methods in social relations*. New York: Fort Worth.
- Kapferer, J. N. (2012). *The new strategic brand management: advanced insights and strategic thinking*. London: Kogan Page.
- Kaplanidou, K., & Vogt, C. (2007). The interrelationship between sport event and destination image and sport tourists' behaviours. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 12(3), 183-206.
- Keller, K. L. (2003). Understanding brands, branding and brand equity . *Interactive Marketing*, 5(1), 7-20.
- Keller, K. L. (2008). *Strategic brand management - building measuring and managing brand equity*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Keohane, R. O., & Nye, J. S. (1998). Power and interdependence in the information age. *Foreign Affairs*, 77(5), 81-94.
- Kim, J., Allen, C. T., & Kardes, F. R. (1996). An investigation of the mediational mechanisms underlying attitudinal conditioning. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 33(3), 318-328.
- Kim, S. S., & Morrison, A. M. (2005). Change of images of South Korea among foreign tourists after the 2002 FIFA World Cup. *Tourism Management*, 26(2), 233-247.
- King, N. (2004). Using templates in the thematic analysis of text. In C. Cassell, & G. Symon, *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research* (pp. 257-270). London: Sage.
- Knott, B. K. (2014). *The strategic contribution of sport mega-events to nation branding: The case of South Africa and the 2010 FIFA World Cup*. Bournemouth: Bournemouth University.

- Knott, B., & Hemmonsby, J. (2016). Branding an African city through sport: the role of stakeholder engagement. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* , 5(3), 1-14.
- Knott, B., Fyall, A., & Jones, I. (2016). Leveraging nation branding opportunities through sport mega-events. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 10(1), 105-118.
- Knott, B., Fyall, A., & Jones, I. (2017). Sport mega-events and nation branding. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(3), 900-923.
- Krzyzaniak, J. S. (2018). The soft power strategy of soccer sponsorships. *Soccer & Society*, 19(4), 498-515.
- Lee, A. (2010). Did the Olympics help the nation branding in China? Comparing public perception of China with the Olympics before and after the 2008 Beijing Olympics in Hong Kong. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 6, 207-227.
- Lee, C.-J. (2014). Effects of sport mega-events on city brand awareness and image: using the 2009 world games in Kaohsiung as an example. *Quality & Quantity*, 48(3), 1243-1256.
- Lee, K.-M. (2011). Toward nation branding systems: evidence from brand Korea development. *Journal of International and Area Studies*, 18(1), 1-18.
- Leopkey, B., & Parent, M. M. (2012). Olympic Games legacy: From general benefits to sustainable long-term legacy. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 29(6), 924-943.
- Lepp, A., & Gibson, H. (2011). Reimagining a nation: South Africa and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 16(3), 211-230.

- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1986). But is It rigorous? trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 73-84.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). The only generalization is: there is no generalization. In R. Gomm, M. Hammersley, & P. Foster, *Case Study Method* (pp. 27-44). London: Sage.
- Longman, J. (2010, December 2). *Russia and Qatar win world cup bids*. Retrieved from The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/03/sports/soccer/03worldcup.html>
- Lu, Q., Mihalik, B., Heere, B., Meng, F., & Fairchild, A. (2019). Media effect on resident attitudes toward an Olympic bid. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 29, 66-75.
- Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1753-1760.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1995). *Designing qualitative research* (2nd Edition ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Matos, P. (2006, January). Hosting mega sports events – a brief assessment of their multidimensional impacts. *Copenhagen Conference on the Economic and Social Impact of Hosting Mega Sport Events*. Copenhagen.
- Mattern, J. B. (2005). Why ‘soft power’ isn’t so soft: representational force and the sociolinguistic construction of attraction in world politics. *Millennium Journal of International Studies*, 33(3), 583-612.
- McCombs, M. (2014). *setting the agenda: mass media and public opinion*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Mendes, J., Do Valle, P., & Guerreiro, M. (2011). Destination image and events: a structural model for the Algarve case. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing&Management*, 20(4), 366-384.

- Merkelsen, H., & Rasmussen, K. (2019). Evaluation of nation brand indexes. In D. Ingenhoff, *Bridging disciplinary perspectives of country image, reputation, brand, and identity* (pp. 69-84). New York, NY: London: Routledge.
- Merriam, S. B. (1988a). *Case study research in education: a qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998b). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education: revised and expanded from case study research in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Millward, P. (2017). World Cup 2022 and Qatar's construction projects: relational power in networks and relational responsibilities to migrant workers. *Current Sociology*, 65(5), 756-776.
- Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E., & Alexander, L. (1995). *In-depth interviewing: Principles, techniques, analysis*. Melbourne: Longman.
- Misener, L., & Mason, D. S. (2009). Fostering community development through sporting events strategies: an examination of urban regime perceptions. *Journal of Sport Management*, 23(6), 770-794.
- Murray, S. (2013). Sports diplomacy. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 8, 191-195.
- Nadeau, J., O'Reilly, N., & Heslop, L. (2011). China's Olympic destination: tourist evaluations of China and the Games. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 5(3), 235-246.
- Nauright, J. (2013). Selling nations to the world through sports: mega-events and nation branding as global diplomacy. *Public Diplomacy Magazine*, 22-27.
- Nevo, J. (1998). Religion and national identity in Saudi Arabia. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34(3), 34-53.

- Newbury, W., & Song, M. (2019). Nation branding, product-country images, and country ranking. In D. Ingenhoff, C. White, A. Buhmann, & S. Kioussis, *Bridging disciplinary perspectives of country image, reputation, brand and identity* (pp. 50-68). New York: Routledge.
- Norris, C. E., Colman, A. M., & Aleixo, P. A. (2003). Selective exposure to television programmes and advertising effectiveness. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 17(5), 593-606.
- Norris, C. E., Colman, A. M., & Aleixo, P. A. (2003). Selective exposure to television programmes and advertising effectiveness. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 17, 593-606.
- Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Vol. 5). New York: Public Affairs.
- Nye, J. S. (2008). Public diplomacy and soft power. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 94-109.
- Nye, J. S. (2011). *The future of power*. New York: NY: Public Affairs.
- Nygaard, H. M., & Gates, S. G. (2013). Soft power at home and abroad: sport diplomacy, politics and peace-building. *International Area Studies Review*, 16(3), 235-243.
- Panagiotopoulou, R. (2012). Nation branding and the Olympic games: new media images for Greece and China. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 29(16), 2337-2348.
- Panke, D. (2016). *Small states in the European Union: coping with structural disadvantages*. London: Routledge.
- Peterson, J. E. (2006). Qatar and the world: branding for a micro-state. *The Middle East Journal*, 60(4), 732-748.

Phillips, D. (2016, August 5). *Thousands join anti-Olympic protest in Rio before Games begin.*

Retrieved from The Washington Post:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/08/05/thousands-join-anti-olympic-protest-in-rio-before-games-begin/?utm_term=.15177587196c

Pigman, G. A., & Rofo, J. S. (2014). Sport and diplomacy: an introduction. *Sport in Society*, 17(9), 1095-1097.

Pike, S. (2005). Tourism destination branding complexity. *The Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 14(4), 258-259.

Preuss, H. (2007). The conceptualisation and measurement of mega sport event legacies. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 12(3-4), 207-228.

Preuss, H., & Alfs, C. (2011). Signaling through the 2008 Beijing Olympics - using mega sport events to change the perception and image of the host. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 11(1), 55-71.

Qatar 2022. (2020, July 20). *Lusail stadium design*. Retrieved from Qatar 2022:

<https://www.qatar2022.qa/en/stadiums/lusail-stadium/design>

QOC. (2017). *Culture of sports in Qatar*. Retrieved from www.olympic.qa:

<http://www.olympic.qa/en/SportInQatar/Pages/CultureOfSportsInQatar.aspx>

QSI. (2017). *Who we are*. Retrieved from www.qsi.com.qa: <https://www.qsi.com.qa/who-we-are/>

Rachman, G. (2011). Beautiful game, lousy business: the problems of latin American football. In I. Stavans, *Fútbol* (pp. 71-80). ABC-CLIO.

Rapoza, K. (2014, June 11). *Bringing FIFA to Brazil equal to roughly 61% of education budget*. Retrieved from www.forbes.com:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2014/06/11/bringing-fifa-to-brazil-equal-to-roughly-61-of-education-budget/#3df036a236d6>

Reiche, D. (2014). Investing in sporting success as a domestic and foreign policy tool: the case of Qatar. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 7(4), 489-504.

Rein, I., & Shields, B. (2007). Place branding sports: strategies for differentiating emerging, transitional, negatively viewed and newly industrialised nations. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 3(1), 73-85.

Richelieu, A. (2018). A sport-oriented place branding strategy for cities, regions and countries. *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal*, 8(4), 354-374.

Ritchie, B. (2000). Turning 16 days into 16 years through Olympic legacies. *Event Management*, 6, 155-165.

Ritchie, B. J., & Smith, B. (1991). the impact of A mega-event on host region awareness: a longitudinal study. *Journal of Travel Research*, 30(1), 3-10.

Riza, M., Doratli, D., & Fasli, M. (2012). City branding and identity. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 35, 293-300.

Roche, M. (2000). *Mega-events and modernity*. London: Routledge.

Rookwood, J. (2019). Access, security and diplomacy: perceptions of soft power, nation branding and the organisational challenges facing Qatar's 2022 FIFA World Cup. *Sport, Business and Management*, 9(1), 26-44.

Santos, J. M. (2014). Brazil: an emerging power establishing itself in the world of international sports mega-events. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 31(10), 1312-1327.

- Scharfenort, N. (2012). Urban development and social change in Qatar: the Qatar national vision 2030 and the 2022 FIFA World Cup. *Journal of Arabian Studies*, 2(2), 209-230.
- Scott, N., Ashton, A. S., Ding, P., & Xu, H. (2011). Tourism branding and nation building in China. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 5(3), 227-234.
- Selmi, R., & Bouoiyour, J. (2020). Arab geopolitics in turmoil: implications of Qatar-gulf crisis for business. *International Economics*, 161, 100-119.
- Seno, D., & Lukas, B. A. (2007). The equity effect of product endorsement by celebrities. A conceptual framework from a co-branding perspective. *European Journal of Marketing*, 41(1), 121-134.
- Simion, C., Bucovetchi, O., & Dumitrescu, A. (2017). Nation brand and reputation of a nation. *FAIMA Business & Management Journal*, 5(3), 16-26.
- Simonin, B. (2008). Nation branding and public diplomacy: challenges and opportunities. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 32.
- Smith, A. (2006). Tourists' consumption and interpretation of sport event imagery. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 11(1), 77-100.
- Smith, A. (2012). *Events and urban regeneration: the strategic use of events to revitalise cities*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Solberg, H. A., & Preuss, H. (2007). Major sport events and long-term tourism impacts. *Journal of Sport Management*, 21(2), 213.
- Stake, R. (2000). Case Studies. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 435-451). CA.

Stewart, C., & Cash, W. (1994). *Interviewing : principles and practices* (7th Edition ed.).
Madison: Brown & Benchmark.

Stock, F. (2009). Identity, image and brand: A conceptual framework. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 5(2), 118-125.

Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy. (2020, July 1). *The SC*. Retrieved from Qatar 2022:
<https://www.qatar2022.qa/en/about/faq>

The Law Dictionary. (2019, June 19). *What is emerging nation?* Retrieved from The Law
Dictionary: <https://thelawdictionary.org/emerging-nation/>

Van Der Westhuizen, J. (2007). Glitz, glamour and the gautrain: mega-projects as political
symbols. *Politikon*, 34(3), 333-351.

van Ham, P. (2001). The rise of the brand state. The postmodern politics of image and
reputation. *Foreign Affairs*.

Wagner, C., Garner, M., & Kawulich, B. (2012). The state of the art of teaching research
methods in the social sciences: towards a pedagogical culture. *Studies in Higher
Education*, 36(1), 75-88.

Wang, J. (2006). Managing national reputation and international relations in the global era:
Public diplomacy revisited. *Public Relations Review*, 32(2), 91-96.

Weed, M. E., & Bull, C. J. (2009). *Sports tourism: participants, policy and providers* (2nd
Edition ed.). Elsevier: Oxford.

Yang, X. (2016, February 9). *Why is Qatar investing so much money in sport?* Retrieved from
[www.aipsmedia.com: http://www.aipsmedia.com/index.php?page=news&cod=18109](http://www.aipsmedia.com/index.php?page=news&cod=18109)

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: design and methods*. London: Sage.

Yu, L., Wang, C., & Seo, J. (2012). Mega event and destination brand: 2010 Shanghai Expo.

International Journal of Event and Festival Management, 3(1), 46-65.

Zeineddine, C. (2017). Employing nation branding in the Middle East - United Arab Emirates

(UAE) and Qatar. *Management & Marketing. Challenges for the Knowledge Society*,

12(2), 208-221.

Zhao, X., & Latshaw, L. (2009). *The Anholt-GfK Roper nation brands index 2009 report*. New

York: GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media.

Zollner, O. (2016). Nation brand Germany: images of past and present. In K. Dinnie, *Nation*

Branding: concepts, issues, practice (2nd Edition ed., pp. 100-101). Oxon: Routledge.

Appendix A

03/10/2019

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number

H-09-19-4790

Titre du projet / Project Title

Nation branding through
mega-sport events - A Case
study of Qatar 2022

Type de projet / Project Type

Thèse de maîtrise / Master's
thesis

Statut du projet / Project Status

Approuvé / Approved

Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

03/10/2019

Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

02/10/2020

Équipe de recherche / Research Team

Chercheur /
Researcher

Affiliation

Role

Naeem AHMED

École des sciences de l'activité physique / School of Human
KineticsChercheur Principal / Principal
Investigator

Eric MACINTOSH

École des sciences de l'activité physique / School of Human
Kinetics

Superviseur / Supervisor

Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154
Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada613-562-5387 • 613-562-5338 • ethique@uOttawa.ca / ethics@uOttawa.ca
www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie | www.recherche.uottawa.ca/ethics

03/10/2019

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Le Comité d'éthique de la recherche (CÉR) de l'Université d'Ottawa, opérant conformément à l'*Énoncé de politique des Trois conseils* (2014) et toutes autres lois et tous règlements applicables, a examiné et approuvé la demande d'éthique du projet de recherche ci-nommé.

L'approbation est valide pour la durée indiquée plus haut et est sujette aux conditions énumérées dans la section intitulée "Conditions Spéciales ou Commentaires". Le formulaire « Renouvellement ou Fermeture de Projet » doit être complété quatre semaines avant la date d'échéance indiquée ci-haut afin de demander un renouvellement de cette approbation éthique ou afin de fermer le dossier.

Toutes modifications apportées au projet doivent être approuvées par le CÉR avant leur mise en place, sauf si le participant doit être retiré en raison d'un danger immédiat ou s'il s'agit d'un changement ayant trait à des éléments administratifs ou logistiques du projet. Les chercheurs doivent aviser le CÉR dans les plus brefs délais de tout changement pouvant augmenter le niveau de risque aux participants ou pouvant affecter considérablement le déroulement du projet, rapporter tout événement imprévu ou indésirable et soumettre toute nouvelle information pouvant nuire à la conduite du projet ou à la sécurité des participants.

The University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board, which operates in accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (2014) and other applicable laws and regulations, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above-named research project.

Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and is subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions or Comments". The "Renewal/Project Closure" form must be completed four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval or closure of the file.

Any changes made to the project must be approved by the REB before being implemented, except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) only pertain to administrative or logistical components of the project. Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes that increase the risk to participant(s), any changes that considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project or the safety of the participant(s).

Kim THOMPSON

Responsable d'éthique en recherche / Protocol Officer

Pour/For **Daniel LAGAREC** Président(e) du/ Chair of the **Comité d'éthique de la recherche en sciences de la santé et sciences / Health Sciences and Sciences Research Ethics Board**

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154
Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada

613-562-5387 • 613-562-5338 • ethique@uOttawa.ca / ethics@uOttawa.ca
www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie | www.recherche.uottawa.ca/ethics

Appendix B

Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy Interview Guide

To begin with, I would like to ask you how you understand or define the following:

1. a mega-event:
2. nation-branding:
3. destination branding:
4. legacy (of a mega-event):

Looking specifically at the potential role that the 2022 FIFA World Cup will play in Nation branding for Qatar:

[Pre-event expectations]

5. Leading up to 2022, what do you believe are the general expectations of how the event would/could impact Brand Qatar?

6. Do you believe that the event can have any particular positive/negative impacts on the nation-brand?

Please specify.

Prompt: Who/ what are the main factors that contribute towards/ influence this impact (both positive and/or negative)?

7. Would you say that any of the following aspects of the nation brand will impact more than others?

8. There are a number of infrastructural changes/developments for Qatar in the lead up to the World Cup. Which of these do you believe are the most significant in terms of assisting the nation-brand development of Qatar?

9. What do you think the fans that will visit Qatar will experience during the event that will promote nation branding?

- What do you think the broadcast viewers will observe during the event that will promote nation branding?

10. Linked to this, do you think the event will reinforce, reverse or create new perceptions of Qatar? Please describe.

11. Do you believe that the-image of Qatar will be influenced by being associated with the FIFA World Cup? In what ways?

12. Conversely, will the FIFA World Cup brand benefit from its association with Qatar? In what ways?

13. Do you believe that the branding impacts of the event will go beyond Qatar to other Arab nations or to the Middle East in general? Please explain why/why not.

[Role of sport mega-events]

14. Do you believe that sport mega-events can play a role in the nation-brand development of countries? If so, how would you best describe this role?(If not, why?)
Follow with: What strategies deployed do you think will assist in the nation brand development of Qatar?

15. What advantages do sport mega-events offer in terms of facilitating nation-brand development compared to other event types

[Stakeholder involvement]

16. Who would you regard as important stakeholders in the nation-branding development process? (If you could describe the coordination efforts, how does SC coordinate with these multi-level stakeholders to ensure that the strategic nation branding goals are achieved?)

17. Knowing the multi-level stakeholders involved, have you experienced any positive or difficult tensions between both parties?

18. How important are the SC Board in terms of the strategic decision making specifically in regards towards nation branding?

19. How important is local citizen support for nation branding?
- How do you achieve the level of local citizen support?

20. How important is the role of the local and international media towards nation branding of Qatar?

Follow up: Every Host Country/City has had their fair share of negative criticism related to hosting, how does SC tackle such media scrutiny?

21. SC has chosen some great ambassadors with the likes of (Cafu, Xavi, Eto, Mohammed Al Kuwari) what was the thought process in identifying/selecting these ambassadors?

[SC Initiatives]

22. What do you think are the main legacy initiatives that will aid in developing the nation brand of Qatar?

23. There are a number of legacy initiatives that SC have established, which of these initiatives is your priority right now and why?

[Leveraging Strategies]

24. Who helped create such legacy initiatives? (Was the SC board involved?)
- Were these initiatives carefully planned and were they part of your research when bidding for the event?
 - Was there a strategic vision in terms of when these initiatives were going to be launched?
 - Are there any initiatives that aren't publicly stated which are going on behind the scenes?
 - What is the history behind these legacy initiatives?
 - Why do you believe these initiatives are important?
25. One of the key themes that emerges from SC is the use of the word Innovation, what does this word mean to you?
26. Why do you think there is a certain emphasis on the term innovation in regards to the FIFA World Cup in Qatar?
27. What parts of the FIFA World Cup will help display "innovation" from Qatar?
28. Qatar has been linked to using Sport as a tool to improve their brand image, in the context of future host nations (specifically emerging nations) do you think your strategic model of nation branding can be transferable to other emerging nations?

Appendix C

Recruitment Email

Dear (removed),

I hope this email finds you well,

As part of my Master's thesis, I am working on a topic that I have a great interest in. I have decided to pursue my Master's thesis in the area of nation branding through sport mega-events with the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy as my case study. I would greatly appreciate the time to interview you and senior members of your team at SC on your perspective on nation branding for my research. Attached to this email you will find a consent form which provides an overview of the research project.

I have great hopes for this research project and hopefully, the findings will be of value to you. Please let me know which day and time work best for you!

Thank you so much for your support and cooperation.

Kind Regards,

Naeem Ahmed

Appendix D

Participant Consent Form

Title of study: Nation Branding Through Mega-Events:
A Case Study of Qatar 2022

Principal Investigator: Naeem Ahmed, MA Student, School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa,

Research Supervisor: Dr. Eric MacIntosh, Associate Professor, School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Naeem Ahmed and Dr. Eric MacIntosh.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this project is to investigate the nation branding processes deployed by a host organizing committee specifically, from the perspective of key event organizers in the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC). The following research questions will help in the development of this study:

- 1) How does the SC see the opportunity of hosting a sport mega-event as a nation branding tool?
- 2) What aspects of the FIFA World Cup, create such nation branding opportunities?
- 3) How do the local key event organizers leverage a nation branding legacy from the FIFA World Cup?

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of attending one interview session with the researcher, which will be 45-60 minutes in length. I will be asked to participate in a one-to-one interview with the researcher, specifically answering questions that will help provide the researcher with my perspective and knowledge in regards to nation branding through mega-events. Interview sessions may be audio-recorded with the permission of the participant. I will have the option to review the transcript (or notes if not audio-recorded) post interview if I wish to do so. The session will be scheduled according to my availability, and the location of the session will be at the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy main offices located at Al Bidda Tower, Corniche St, Doha.

Risks: My participation in this study will not entail any foreseeable risks. My choice to participate (or not) will have no effect on my relationship with Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy.

Benefits: My participation in this study will help provide valuable information which in return will lead to further development of the nation branding process through a sport mega-event. This information will be important for the sport management context as well as the individuals who are working in sport organizations. The research project will contribute to the emerging nation branding discourse as it will provide a case study example from an emerging/developing host country context. Additionally, it will provide the identification of the key branding opportunities provided by a sport mega-event, specifically the process of how it happens.

Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for academic purposes.

Anonymity: I will be protected in the following manner; my name will not be revealed in any publications. However, demographic information such as job title will be published only if I agree and provide written or verbal consent. The reason for revealing the job title is crucial for this research project as it will improve the quality of the research by providing the perspectives of certain roles within the organization which need to be addressed.

Conservation of data: Electronic data such as audio recording of interviews, interviews transcripts will be kept in a secure manner in the researcher's personal computer which is password protected. Physical data such as consent forms will be secured in a secure filing cabinet in the Research Supervisors office which is at the University of Ottawa. Only the principal researcher and research supervisor will have access to this data. All data will be conserved for the full period of retention which will be five years.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw from the study, I will decide at that point if I want the researchers to use my data or if I want them to destroy it and not use it.

Acceptance: I, *(Name of participant)*, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Naeem Ahmed of the *(School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa)*, which research is under the supervision of *(name of professor)*.

(Please tick the corresponding box if case applies)

I, agree to being audio-recorded for the purpose of this interview ☐

I, agree to having my job title revealed for the purpose of this research project ☐

I would like to review the interview transcript/researcher's notes after my participation in this study ☐

The study is being conducted independently from the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy. If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550, Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

Tel: (613) 562-5387

Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which mine is to keep.

Participant Signature:

Researchers Signature:

Appendix E

Table E-1 *List of Documents Gathered for Data Collection and Analysis*

Document Name	Number of Pages	Document Type	Source
2009 Bid Book - Qatar FIFA World 2022™	744	PDF	Internal
2012 Legacy Aspirations	25	PDF	Internal
2012 Legacy Framework	135	PDF	Internal
2014 Nielsen Report	269	PDF	Internal
2014 Spatial Plan 2022 FIFA World Cup™	120	PDF	Internal
2015 BOD Corporate Review	16	PDF	Internal
2016 SC Legacy Book	34	PDF	qatar2022.qa
2018 Qatar Second National Development Strategy (2018-2022)	318	PDF	psa.gov.qa
2020 Lusail Stadium Design	1	Webpage	qatar2022.qa
2020 Workers' Welfare	1	Webpage	qatar2022.qa
2020 Generation Amazing	1	Webpage	qatar2022.qa
2020 Challenge 22	1	Webpage	qatar2022.qa
2020 Education & Research	1	Webpage	qatar2022.qa
2020 Ras Abu Aboud Stadium	1	Webpage	qatar2022.qa
2022 SC Russia Activities	1	Webpage	qatar2022.qa
2022 SC Sao Paulo Exhibition	1	Webpage	qatar2022.qa