

FRAMING SPORTS AND POWER: A COMPARATIVE CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF FIFA 2022 AND THE CRICKET WORLD CUP 2023

Paras Khan Jamali¹, Dr. Wajid Hussain², Dr. Zia Ullah³

¹Graduated in Social Sciences (International Relations), SZABIST University, Islamabad, Pakistan

paraskhanjamali123@gmail.com

² PhD in English Literature

connectwith.wajid@gmail.com

Department of English, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sheringal, Upper Dir, KPK, Pakistan

Corresponding Author: Dr. Zia Ullah, ziastella77@yahoo.com, ORCID: 0009-0002-5187-5459

ABSTRACT

The study comparatively investigates the political ideologies behind the international media coverage of two mega sports events, the FIFA World Cup 2022 and the Cricket World Cup 2023. It examines how international governance, interstate conflict, and geopolitical tension were reflected through sports. In this connection, this research deconstructs BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera, The Hindustan Times, The India News, Dawn, and The Express Tribune. To deconstruct these international media, the study applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a methodology, and the analysis reveals how different international media portrayed the FIFA World Cup 2022 and the Cricket World Cup 2023 differently to subtly show their political biases. It shows that the coverage of the two World Cups by these international media reflects their political ideologies that may conform to the policies of the states they belong to. Major discourse strategies the media used include: lexical selection, visual representations, rhetorical figures, micro and macro semantic figures, emphasizing and de-emphasizing, and generalizing and specifying the details suiting their agenda. The research concludes that the media's portrayal of sports events always carries latent political motives and, hence, needs to be evaluated critically. This study opens avenues for further research to deconstruct the underlying agenda of international media behind their coverage of other major sports events such as the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games, and the Asian Olympic Games.

KEYWORDS: *Critical Discourse Analysis FIFA 2022, ICC 2023, Soft Power, Sports Politics, Political Agendas, and International Media.*

Introduction

Sports have long been seen as a unifying force, uniting cultures and nations through friendly competition. However, the connection between politics and sports was often under-examined. The FIFA World Cup and Cricket World Cup were two of the most-watched and eagerly awaited international sporting events, offering an intriguing case study in this regard. The media plays a vital role in public opinion, expressing the charm of the sports world widely. However, it also serves as a political instrument, making news according to their political actors. Reputable media outlets such as The New York Times, The Guardian, Al Jazeera, TRT, and BBC have extensively covered the FIFA World Cup 2022, with some outlets bringing up issues with Qatar's human rights record. Different international media platforms shared different viewpoints of the incidents and events during these two World Cups, with Eastern and Western media updates being more biased and sometimes against each other than at broadcasting any other events. Understanding the role of politics in sports reporting can be gained by looking into how media outlets present the two World Cups, as well as the impact of social media. Political and sporting discussions frequently overlap on social media platforms, potentially influencing public opinion. This project was critical discourse analysis-based research about the politics of sports, considering the two recent World Cups of FIFA

Qatar-2022 and the Cricket World Cup 2023. The study criticizes the high involvement of politics in sports for the sake of attaining political agendas. States use sports as a form of soft diplomacy, using media platforms to influence the mass population and their perspectives on other states. Modern sport initially emphasizes government autonomy to avoid state control, but this autonomy blocks the ethical basis of sport, prohibiting athletes, coaches, and other participants from expressing any political affiliation beyond sport. The goal of critical discourse analysis was to reveal how the media was used to advance political agendas, focusing solely on attractive sports.

The relationship between politics and sports was a growing area of study. While sports often promote cooperation across borders and cultures, they also serve as arenas for political systems, power structures, and global law. International sporting competitions were not just competitions but also platforms for geopolitical, diplomatic, and public relations efforts. The collision of sport and politics was recurrent throughout history, with the 1980 Winter Olympics in Moscow being a significant event. Sporting events serve as forums for political discourse, international negotiations, and deliberations on pressing social issues, making them an indispensable aspect of the political landscape.

Addressing the contentious 2022 FIFA World Cup hosted by Qatar, Ana Urooj's (2023) article delves into the event's controversy. With the UK's decision to refrain from airing the opening ceremony amid reservations about Qatar's hosting and preceding World Cups, criticisms abound. The saga was further enmeshed as Western censures of Qatar's human rights track record contrast with the oversight of issues like racism and Islamophobia in the West.

Misbar's editorial team, in their article (Misbar, 2022), had mentioned that Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, also voiced opposition to the campaign that was directed at his country. The Emir told Qatar's Legislative Council, "We initially dealt with the matter in good faith, and even considered that some criticism was positive and useful, helping us to develop aspects of ours that need to be developed." "However, it quickly became evident to us that the campaign goes on, grows, and incorporates fabrication and unfairness until it attained a degree of intensity that regrettably led many to wonder about the true intentions and driving forces behind this campaign," Examining the intricacies of sports diplomacy, an exploration of the geopolitical aspects of the 2022 FIFA World Cup and the forthcoming Cricket World Cup 2023 unveils insights into the evolving dynamics of twenty-first-century international relations. Even as India prepares to host the 2023 Cricket World Cup, the specter of politics looms large, with historical disruptions in India-Pakistan cricket encounters exemplifying the enduring influence of political unrest on sporting spectacles. By analyzing these two important sports events and scrutinizing the role of popular media in shaping the surrounding politics, this research project aims to explore the complex world of politics in sports the detail. We hope to enhance knowledge about the interactions between politics, sports, and the media and the impact of these interactions on major international sports and public discourse.

Significance of the study

The study was significant because it contributed to bringing forth the underlying political dynamics of media, which was not only an important pillar of a state but also contributed to its counterparts in other countries in shaping and reshaping international relations. The FIFA World Cup and Cricket World Cup are two significantly popular sports of the world and incur huge political controversies as well. The study, therefore, focuses on bringing to the limelight interstate conflicts and geopolitical tensions that were reflected through these mega-events. It especially deconstructs the subtle discourse strategies, including lexical selection, visual representations, rhetorical figures, micro and macro semantic figures, emphasizing and de-emphasizing, and generalizing and specifying, as used by international media to subtly build

and impose their agenda. The study was also significant because it opens avenues for further research to deconstruct the underlying agenda of international media behind their coverage of other major sports events such as the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games, and the Asian Olympic Games.

Literature review

Examining the corpus of existing literature was a crucial step in the research process. By combining the main conclusions, viewpoints, and methods, they can offer a thorough synopsis of pertinent published work on a particular subject or area of interest, highlighting areas that require additional study.

According to the study of Streak (1979), Sports and politics have historically been intertwined, with nations prioritizing winning at international events like the Olympics. This emphasis was due to the money spent on elite athletes, as well as the potential for sport to serve as a political and diplomatic tool. The history of this connection dates back to ancient Greeks, with movements like the Turner and Skolt influencing the development of sports.

The fascist powers of the interwar period, according to Sengupta (2009), particularly Italy and later Germany, were the ones who fully developed the cult of sport for national purposes. Mussolini considered athletics to be a physical uprising to establish a new Roman Empire, fostering a spirit of ferocious rivalry and group manhood in support of the fascist regime. Mussolini's 1938 directive to Italy's World Cup team, "win or die," makes sense. Hitler utilized sports, especially the Olympics, as a political unifying and racial supremacist symbol in 1936. Even now, sports have both positive and negative political ramifications and meanings. It was employed to overthrow South Africa's apartheid regime. As Gemmel (2012) also mentioned in his research mentioned about the famous "Bodyline" tour of Australia by England in the winter of 1932–1933 marked the first significant encroachment of "politics" upon the peaceful business of international cricket. England's bowlers were told to stop the Australian batsmen, particularly the legendary Don Bradman, by using "leg theory," which involves aiming at the batter's body...Cricket has always been international and political due to the British Empire's unraveling of it. Modern cricket was absorbed by politics due to its centrality to the nationalist movement, particularly in developing nations where sport has created an even playing field where economic and military might have not been able to. This indicates that governments routinely interfere in cricket matches and are formally involved in the management of cricket in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, and India.

The Olympic Games were the most politically charged sporting event ever (Grix, 2013). Sport and politics have long been intertwined. The article focuses on the use of the Olympics by states to promote the host nation and the hoped-for "legacies" that result from them, two of the most significant aspects of the Olympics (and sports "mega-events" in general) to which students of politics and international relations could make a significant contribution. Naturally, there were connections between the two; in fact, the "legacies" were frequently cited as the main justification for both hosting and competing in the Olympics.

Boykoff (2022) has stressed the term Sports washing, which was defined as Political leaders using sports to appear important or 14 legitimate on the international stage, fueling nationalism and diverting attention away from enduring social issues and human rights concerns at home.

The Study by Alioune Aboutalib L (2023) makes the case that Qatar used soccer and the 2022 FIFA World Cup as public diplomacy tools to enhance its reputation around the world. The main tools of Qatar's football and World Cup diplomacy included media and broadcasting, ambassadorship, sponsorship, the French club Paris Saint-Germain, infrastructure and technology, and naturalizing talent.

In a positive way, Fuat Boyacioglu (2016) argued that the sport developed into and is still a significant sanction tool in international relations. It was one of the most significant cases from the previous century to the present day due to its growing effects. Before the Olympic Games, almost the entire world was influenced by the sporting events held by a very small minority, followed by other organizations (especially football). The phenomenon of sports has expanded even further than facts like democracy, the free market, and even freedom. Sports have played a pivotal role in both domestic and global politics. Its popularity as a worldwide phenomenon was a result of the local government's socioeconomic policies. It occurs in the context of the globalization-accelerated consumption phenomenon. It was believed that the world was politically bipolar.

By following the statement, Chankuna (2022) highlighted that major sports events such as the Olympics and Paralympics, the World Cup, and the Commonwealth Games can be a catalyst for economic development in the host nation. The country has the opportunity to increase investment in facilities and infrastructure to attract future sporting events.

(Belén Fernández 2022) In her opinion, Al Jazeera mentioned that the 2022 World Cup was a "representative example of the world that Western power built," not a phenomenon that was "alien" to the West. And it's time to get out the proverbial mirror as 15 worried parties continue to express alarm over what they consider to be a violation of Western ideals during the event. As the host nation of the World Cup this year, Qatar has faced harsh criticism from the US and Europe on migrant worker exploitation and homosexual rights (not to mention the obvious human right to drink beer at sports stadiums). Since Orientalism was an enduring icon of Arab backwardness and aversion to progress, what better setting than a football tournament in a real Middle Eastern desert to let out pent-up Western chauvinism? After all, Orientalism dies hard. The different authors in their studies have mentioned the politics of sports. Also, it was mandatory to highlight those sports and ethnic, regional, and cultural identities that were often closely related. Sports teams' accomplishments or failures can have an effect on the sense of self and community, which can have political repercussions. Many governments were aware of how sports can influence global perceptions through soft power. The literature examines how nations strategically allocate funds for sports to enhance their international standing and influence. Case studies showing the use of sports as a platform for foreign propaganda include the Olympic Games in China and the FIFA World Cup in Russia. Sports can act as a conflict-free zone for nations embroiled in disputes or conflicts. International sporting events can promote communication and cooperation while temporarily easing political tensions.

This shift aligns with a broader trend toward soft power, as defined by Joseph Nye's Theory of soft power, and away from hard power, which was achieved through economic or military force. By appealing to culture, values, and policies, soft power aims to change how the world is perceived without resorting to force. States, especially non-Western ones, have the opportunity to challenge dominant narratives, project modernity, and make their political presence known on the global scene by hosting mega-events.

Additionally, they were devoted to investigating the social and material effects of discourse. Discourse, according to Critical Discourse Analysis researchers, was socially shaped as well as socially constitutive. The present study applies critical discourse analysis both as a method for analysis and as a theory. The theoretical perspective employs critical discourse analysis to investigate the media's narrative on controversies of both the World Cups through the assumption that language always subtly represents agenda, ideology, or power, which is always power abuse. To use the critical discourse analysis perspective as a method for analysis, the study follows certain points from this perspective, which highlights discourse tactics, such as the specific word choices, the representation of us and them, specifying and

generalizing information accordingly, subtly changing the context of an event, and guide how to deconstruct media's narrative on the subject. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) believes that there were always hidden agendas behind languages; the aim was to deconstruct those agendas and narratives. The research was conducted by selecting mainstream media and sports channels. The study analyses both electronic and print versions of these media. The different frameworks and tones of media coverage reflect the media's attempt to balance multiple interests. Qatar faced widespread criticism for its treatment of migrant workers involved in the making of the World Cup program. The reports highlighted poor working conditions, low wages, and abuse of information. (Cherkaoui, 2021) Supporting social justice and human rights was a noble cause. But without an emotional and ideological shift, the demonization of Qatar was ineffective. Human rights organizations have raised concerns about the overall human rights situation in Qatar, including issues such as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and medical treatment for migrant workers. Qatar's countermeasures include air-conditioned sports stadiums and training facilities. Additionally, FIFA was accused of corruption in the bidding process for the 2022 World Cup. The announcement and subsequent investigations into possible corruption raised questions about the transparency and integrity of the selection process. The spy problem in the Gulf region involves Qatar and many other Arab countries and has raised potential obstacles in Qatar that have added to the crisis in World Cup preparations. The aim was to dissect the media coverage and planning of the FIFA World Cup 2022 and the Cricket World Cup 2023 post-controversy.

It reflects the narratives of the international media on the political influence and controversies on sports, considering the case studies of the two World Cups: FIFA World Cup 2022 and ICC Cricket World Cup 2023. The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used with the media narratives of the different international media newspapers such as Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN, Daily Motion, Tribune, Dawn, and The Times of India, along with the comparison and contrasts between the Eastern media and Western media. The analysis focuses on the strategies of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) such as visual representation, detailed and briefed news, the selection of words and expressions of the language, and rhetoric phrases, positive self-presentation and negative others presentation, our good and their bad impression, explicit or implicit, emphasized and de-emphasized information used by these media newspapers to convey their messages and to portray themselves positively and how they use the techniques through mass media to let down others reputation.

Research gap

Although the literature currently in publication provides insightful information about the intersection of politics and sport, it mainly ignores a comparative discourse analysis of the framing of two recent mega-events by international media: the FIFA World Cup 2022 and the Cricket World Cup 2023. Previous research frequently ignores the ideological differences in the representation of various events and geographical areas in favor of concentrating on individual occurrences or broad patterns. Furthermore, little was known about how the media can be used to project soft power and exert geopolitical influence in both situations. By performing a comparative Critical Discourse Analysis of the global media narratives surrounding the two tournaments, this study fills that gap. It was timely given the growing politicization of international sports, the importance of media framing in international relations, and the increased use of athletic platforms for diplomatic signaling and national image-building. This study offers a much-needed perspective on how media, soft power, and international politics interact in the modern sports world by examining how discourse reflects and creates power.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative methodology based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate how the FIFA World Cup 2022 and the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 were framed by the global media. A deeper comprehension of how language, images, and discourse techniques were employed to create and disseminate political ideologies through sports coverage was made possible by CDA, which acts as both the theoretical underpinning and the analytical instrument.

Data Collection: The data came from print and online publications published by reputable international media sites, including Western media outlets: The BBC, CNN, Daily Motion, and The Guardian Eastern/South Asian media outlets: Al Jazeera, The Hindu, The Hindustan Times, NDTV, India News, Dawn, and The Express Tribune. A comprehensive analysis of discursive patterns was made possible by the inclusion of articles, headlines, pictures, captions, and opinion pieces. Media content was sourced from official websites and archived publications that covered both mega-events during their active tournament periods: FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar (November–December 2022) and the ICC Cricket World Cup India (October–November 2023).

Analytical Framework

The study dissects the media discourse surrounding the two athletic events using Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). At the textual level, the analysis concentrates on linguistic elements that influence the tone and ideological slant of the coverage, such as modality, rhetorical devices, and vocabulary choices (such as "conservative" or "chaos"). The study examines how media content was created and consumed at the level of discursive practice, looking at how audiences, editors, and journalists shape meaning. Lastly, the analysis interprets how larger socio-political structures and power relations impact the narratives produced by international media at the level of social practice.

Discourse Strategies Identified

Finding important discourse techniques frequently used in media coverage of major sporting events was the main goal of the study. These include visual framing, which uses specific images or angles to support specific narratives, and lexical selection, which uses loaded or ideologically charged words to affect perception. The contrast between positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation was another well-known tactic, whereby media outlets present their own political or cultural group in a positive light while negatively portraying others. Emphasis and de-emphasis were also taken into account in the analysis, whereby particular facts were either emphasized or minimized in order to further a particular goal. Finally, the application of generalization and specification was analyzed to show how information was either expanded or contracted to suit ideological or political objectives.

The present study applies critical discourse analysis both as a method for analysis and as a theory. The theoretical perspective employs critical discourse analysis to investigate the media's narrative on controversies of both the World Cups through the assumption that language always subtly represents agenda, ideology, or power, which is always power abuse. To use the critical discourse analysis perspective as a method for analysis, the study follows certain points from this perspective, which highlights discourse tactics, such as the specific word choices, the representation of us and them, specifying and generalizing information accordingly, subtly changing the context of an event, and guide how to deconstruct media's narrative on the subject. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) believes that there were always hidden agendas behind languages; the aim was to deconstruct those agendas and narratives. The research was conducted by selecting mainstream media and sports channels. The study analyses both electronic and print versions of these media. The different frameworks and

tones of media coverage reflect the media's attempt to balance multiple interests. In situations where media coverage acts as a proxy battlefield for state diplomacy, cultural contestation, or international image-building, CDA was especially well-suited for examining power dynamics and ideology in media discourse. Qatar faced widespread criticism for its treatment of migrant workers involved in the making of the World Cup program. The reports highlighted poor working conditions, low wages, and abuse of information. (Cherkaoui, 2021) Supporting social justice and human rights was a noble cause. But without an emotional and ideological shift, the demonization of Qatar was ineffective. Human rights organizations have raised concerns about the overall human rights situation in Qatar, including issues such as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and medical treatment for migrant workers. Qatar's countermeasures include air-conditioned sports stadiums and training facilities. Additionally, FIFA was accused of corruption in the bidding process for the 2022 World Cup. The announcement and subsequent investigations into possible corruption raised questions about the transparency and integrity of the selection process. The spy problem in the Gulf region involves Qatar and many other Arab countries and has raised potential obstacles in Qatar that have added to the crisis in World Cup preparations. The aim was to dissect the media coverage and planning of the FIFA World Cup 2022 and the Cricket World Cup 2023 post-controversy.

Analysis

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was utilized to analyze media narratives from international newspapers like Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN, Daily Motion, Tribune, Dawn, and The Times of India, comparing Eastern and Western media. The analysis focuses on strategies such as visual representation, language selection, rhetorical phrases, positive and negative self-presentation, and explicit or implicit information. It also examines how these newspapers use mass media to convey messages and portray themselves positively, while also affecting others' reputations.

Deconstruction of the International Media Narratives on the FIFA 2022 Qatar:

The FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar has been a topic of controversy and interest since its announcement. The event was heavily criticized by Western media outlets, particularly the BBC, which portrayed Qatar as "too small a country" and "football and the World Cup were too big for it." This statement reflects anti-Muslim and anti-Arab attitudes and has a profound Western legacy. The BBC used a critical discourse approach with a discursive interaction form of manipulation to engage viewers worldwide, highlighting both positive and negative attributes of the dominant group. Al Jazeera, on the other hand, argues that Qatar was the smallest country to have hosted the World Cup, but worries that the country's ability to host millions of extra guests has not been realized. However, Al Jazeera's statement reflects pride and honor, suggesting that Qatar has broken the stereotype of the West hegemonizing the FIFA World Cups. The study analyzes the political agenda behind the coverage of the event by news media and the Western media.

Al Jazeera's narratives support Qatar as the host for the FIFA World Cup 2022, highlighting its cultural and symbolic importance. Qatar's bid signifies a departure from traditional hosting locations, often in Western or non-Muslim nations. FIFA acknowledges the global reach of football, and Qatar's success in hosting the event was not just about showcasing the Middle East's capabilities but also breaking barriers and fostering international cooperation. However, Western and American media tend to focus on negatively portraying Qatar and its traditions, despite the challenges and adaptations involved in hosting a major event in a Muslim-majority nation.

For instance, the narrative mentioned in CNN, which was an American broadcasting company, narrates that "Everyone was welcome in Qatar, but we were a conservative country,

and any public display of affection, regardless of orientation, was frowned upon. We simply ask for people to respect our culture. (CNN 2022, November 23) The word "Conservative" was meant to depict a negative impression of Qatar globally. This was how CNN and other media used a discourse approach to convey their specific messages worldwide. The Western media also employs the FIFA World Cup 2022 as an opportunity to misinterpret the Middle Eastern countries by linking multiple other issues with their identities globally. BBC also criticized this and narrated it by supporting LGBTQ rights, as considered a human rights violation in Qatar. (BBC 2022, November 18), Homosexual acts were illegal in Qatar because they were considered immoral under Islamic Sharia law. Punishments include fines, prison sentences of up to seven years, and even death by stoning. Qatar's World Cup organizers say "everyone was welcome" and claim no one will be discriminated against. However, Qatar's chief executive said laws on homosexuality will not change and visitors should "respect our culture". Here, the BBC builds a narrative that propagates that Qatar was completely unfit to host the Football World Cup. This was the Social Power Abusive form of manipulation. Abuse of social power was characterized by unlawful dominance that sustains social inequity. BBC and other Western media narratives show biases against Qatar and Middle Eastern countries. The World Cup in Qatar, hosted by Qatar, was seen as a significant event in the region, promoting sports and development. The event has sparked investments in sports infrastructure, grassroots football initiatives, and youth engagement, influencing neighboring countries and attracting a new generation of athletes and sports enthusiasts. However, Qatar's cultural sensitivity and adherence to Islamic practices, such as alcohol consumption and dress codes, have been criticized. The FIFA World Cup in Qatar has also faced criticism for its ban on alcohol sales at the eight stadiums. Despite this, Qatar's significant investment in infrastructure development, including state-of-the-art stadiums, transportation upgrades, and accommodations, has served both the immediate needs of the World Cup and the long-term development of Qatar's infrastructure.

However, concerns have been raised about the treatment of migrant workers involved in construction projects, leading to reports of labor rights violations, poor working conditions, and low wages. These issues have prompted international scrutiny and call for reform, highlighting the broader challenges of labor rights in the Gulf region. The involvement of politics in sports has always increased.

The events of the FIFA World Cup 2022 and the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 reflect political propaganda as propagated by international media. The accusations of corruption for voting and bribing, human rights violations, and migrant workers' exploitation by the Western Media were listed at the top to degrade the global charisma of Qatar and other Middle Eastern countries. Al Jazeera always uses rhetorical methods and tools to combat Western and European media. For instance, Al Jazeera uses the discourse approach here, which reflects a tone of warning as well for the Middle East against Western media. It would be great for FIFA if the World Cup could travel around the world every four years and yet simultaneously take place in a magical and sanitized "FIFAland", where none of these issues exist. Unfortunately for them, the World Cup takes place in the real world, and that means questions over how such global sporting events should handle politics were not going to go away. (Aljazeera 2022, November 19) The FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar was a subject of global debate, with human rights concerns, environmental impact, and political controversies gaining attention. Human rights organizations have reported worker deaths, poor living conditions, and wage issues, putting pressure on FIFA and Qatar to address these issues transparently. Political controversies, such as Qatar's geopolitical situation and diplomatic tensions with neighboring countries, have complicated the World Cup preparations. Boycotts and diplomatic rifts have influenced regional dynamics and raised questions about the event's

broader implications beyond sports. Navigating these political obstacles while maintaining the World Cup's integrity and diversity was a major challenge.

For example, at the time of the celebration and trophy awarding to the winning team of the FIFA World Cup 2022 Argentina, Lionel Messi was honored to wear the Arabian Gulf's traditional Bisht (Men's outer robe). But Western media, (BBC, CNN, Daily Motion) narrated it negatively by stating that in a moment of self-centeredness during the championship ceremony; Lionel Messi was made to wear an Arabic robe over his iconic No. 10 shirt by the Qatar World Cup hosts: "The players, not the host, should be in this moment." After Argentina's victory in the World Cup on Sunday, Lionel Messi had to undergo an embarrassing moment as he was covered in a robe before the trophy was lifted. The Emir of Qatar bestowed upon Messi the robe, a bisht that was customarily worn for formal events like weddings or religious festivals, to the enthusiastic cheers of FIFA President Gianni Infantino. (Dailymotion.UK, 2022 December 19).

The Western media's coverage of Qatar hosting the FIFA World Cup was multifaceted. While acknowledging Qatar's achievements in infrastructure development and sports promotion, media outlets have also raised critical questions and concerns. These include allegations of corruption during the bidding process, transparency and accountability in project management, and the treatment of migrant workers. The focus on human rights issues, particularly labor rights violations and LGBTQ supporters' strict restrictions in the stadium, was a recurring theme in Western media coverage. As the first World Cup to be held in the Middle East, it was undoubtedly a historic event, but it was also one clouded by controversy, from the death of migrant workers and the conditions many have endured as the Gulf state prepared for the tournament, to LGBTQ and women's rights. (CNN 2022, November 19). Reports highlighting worker conditions, worker deaths, and calls for labor reforms have put pressure on Qatar to address these concerns and improve working conditions for migrant workers. Additionally, political controversies surrounding Qatar's hosting have also been topics of scrutiny in Western media narratives.

Critical Analysis of the International Media Narratives on the ICC World Cup 2023

The Cricket World Cup 2023 also carries significant political discourse narrated by international media such as Hindustan Times, BBC, Al Jazeera, The Tribune, India, and a few more. Some media claims that the BJP was using the tournament as a springboard for a third term in office, citing factors such as political influence, stadium selection and naming, and the demonization of Pakistan and Muslims. Modi and his Australian counterpart, Anthony Albanese, drove around the stadium, waving to onlookers from a golf cart that had been customized to resemble a golden chariot. After that, they went to the stage to see a performance and hear speeches before the Test began. A photo of Modi in the Modi Stadium was given to him as part of the ceremonies. It was a sneak peek at the politics that the 2023 International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup, which will be hosted in India, was expected to serve up. This World Cup was a G20 cricket match, "or "like an extended election campaign." And was predicted as "was likely to be remembered not as Kohli's or Stokes' or Bumrah's World Cup so much as the BJP's World Cup," (Al-Jazeera, 2023, October 4). Aljazeera uses lexical selection just as "like an extended election campaign" in the above narrative, linking it with the Indian internal politics. At the same time, it highlights the BJP's engagement to uplift its political interests in electoral processes. 25 The terms used in the news line, such as "demonization," represent an extremely negative impression of India, and the picture visualization by media also shows the direct influence of the BJP's Government on the ground. Moreover, the stressed vocabulary with inverted commas, as mentioned by Al Jazeera was "more politicized" and also portrays the narrative of the media using the critical

discourse theory approach. It shows how the political impact globally was displayed to the people using the critical discourse methodology and theory.

Moreover, many issues caused the domino effect to link the ICC World Cup more with the BJP's World Cup. Technical issues for ticket delays, high pricing, and limiting Pakistani fans and media journalists for the coverage of the World Cup. The discourse of using a Chaotic and very shoddy ticket system and hyping the exorbitant prices and delayed ticket price release reflects a negative impression of the Hosting country, India, at a global level. The fans of Cricket were very disappointed by this mismanagement of the ICC. ICC not only delayed the ticket release processing but also caused a massive absence of Pakistani fans and media journalists. Pak fans and media face visa delays for the World Cup. The Pakistan Cricket Board said in a statement on Friday that the visa delay had put the PCB "under immense pressure". "PCB was disappointed to see that Pakistani journalists and fans were facing uncertainty about obtaining an Indian visa to 26 cover Pakistan's opening game in the ICC World Cup. "Their presence not only adds vibrancy to the stadium but also contributes to the global coverage and appreciation of the game. (Tribune 2023, October 08). At the same time, BBC reports this ticket processing issue as a fault by stating that the International Cricket Council (ICC) blamed a "technical issue" after fans missed out on entering a ballot for Men's T20 World Cup 2024 tickets. (BBC 2023, February 16) In both news agencies, the same strategy of expressing the words by using inverted commas" to show certain impressions, along with conveying the message they wanted viewers to get. Tribune used these commas to stress the disappointment of the PCB with visa delaying issues. Also stressing how Pakistani journalists and fans hold significance in stadium vibrancy and in promoting ads and global coverage appreciation. However, the BBC tries to be neutral and unbiased towards the same ticket processing system and stresses calling it a technical issue with no further details.

According to Qadeer (2021), Sports can influence people and act as a diplomatic tool to alleviate tensions and improve ties between states. However, the recent securitization of sports has marred its beauty. Political theorists suggest that low politics can hold more sway if proponents securitize them. The recent abandonment of a cricket tour to Pakistan by the New Zealand cricket team exemplifies this.

Perveen (2005), in her research paper, because it was a highly popular sport in this area, especially in Pakistan and India. The history of the cricket World Cup between India and Pakistan from 1987 to 2007 was also examined in order to show how useful cricket was in easing tensions between the two nations at these times. According to this study, the power of cricket has demonstrated that, in contrast to gun diplomacy, every situation involving India and Pakistan can be resolved peacefully. Another major incident was the entry of a young boy wearing the Palestine flag who tried to hug Virat Kohli on the ground pitch during the match between India and Australia. The way of reporting this incident by the different news agencies portrays different messages to the billions of viewers from all over the world. In a massive security breach, a Palestinian supporter invaded the field and hugged Virat Kohli during the 14th over of India's innings. An Australian national donning a white tee supporting Palestine and red shorts invaded the pitch and tried hugging Virat Kohli before he was apprehended by security authorities at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Sunday. He wore the Palestine flag as a mask and had a clear message on his shirt, 'Stop Bombing Palestine'. Initially, he patted Kohli's back and tried hugging the Indian batter, but was shooed away before the security personnel rushed to the scene. (The Hindu 2023, November 19) In Sunday's ICC World Cup final in India, a pro-Palestinian wearing a face mask in the colors of the Palestinian flag and a T-shirt with the slogans "Stop Bombing Palestine" and "Free Palestine", the unnamed young protester activist broke through the security cordon and ran onto the field, briefly stopping play as he hugged the world's greatest batsman, Virat Kohli.

(Dawn, 2023, November 19) Using the term "invaded" for the boy represents the rudeness of the protester, who was protesting against Israel's bombing of Palestine. Moreover, indicating the inverted commas over the Stop Bombing Palestine emphasizes the contemporary geopolitical issue in sports. Through the lens of the media, this type of social power abuse against Palestine by Israel was displayed. And giving the hype to this incident shows the notion of cognitive mind control.

Although the Pakistani news agency Dawn and India's The Hindu both represented this news in a very delicate manner. However, the selection of words and virtualization somehow reflected the bias of the media towards the Palestine issue. Just as the Hindu media did not mention the Free Palestine written on the back of that young boy. And Dawn media used the word PRO for the guy to show their sympathy towards Palestine. However, the three pictures by Dawn show that the Indian players and security behaved very harshly toward the Palestinian supporters. Through these tactics, the media used discursive interaction showing their (India) bad things. There were more major mishaps during this ICC World Cup than ever before. Furthermore, political involvement fundamentally altered the glamour of this international sport. From no opening ceremony, renaming the grounds, rescheduling match fixings, delaying the visas of Pakistani players, fans, and journalists, and limiting the media coverage approvals to the entry of Palestine supporters, the case of Zainab Abbas and Mumtaz Zahra incident. Every shot was polarized and politicized, shaping a different dimension of the World Cup through the lens of media narratives. The Case of Zainab Abbas was a hype-making incident of the ICC World Cup 2023. This case was narrated by BBC, NDTV, The Economist, and The News with different narratives and manipulating techniques to convey their desired messages to the viewers globally. ICC spokesperson says famed Pakistani journalist left India due to "personal reasons," dismisses reports claiming she was deported (The News 2023, October 09) Pakistani presenter Zainab Abbas, part of the ICC digital team covering the ODI Cricket World Cup, on Monday left India after facing backlash on social media over her alleged anti- India posts in the past but the sport's governing body insisted that she left the country due to personal reasons. (NDTV 2023, October 09). The news, a renowned media in Pakistan, stated that the Pakistani Journalist who was for the coverage of ICC World Cup 2023 left India for her own reasons, but not because she was dismissed. The narrative strongly supports the statement by emphasizing Personal Reasons. However, another narrative by NDTV belonging to India used a discursive interaction form of manipulation to convey their good and other bad things. The use of the term Backlash with a negative impression and showing that she left because of personal reasons was an enforced statement by the sport's governing body that tried to degrade the reputation of Pakistani journalists globally. Zainab Abbas: Pakistan reporter who left India, sorry for old posts (BBC 2023, October 12). With a different narrative, the BBC, in its headline and bold words, stated that she was sorry for her tweet against India. An obvious and severe assault on Pakistan's standing journalist's reputation.

Comparison and Contrast between the Media Narratives of the FIFA World Cup 2022 and the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023

In contrasting the media narratives of the FIFA World Cup 2022 and the ICC World Cricket 2023 by using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it was found that the international media shows anti-Muslim behavior towards Muslims in both events. Particularly, FIFA 2022 prominently discusses this prejudiced behavior by pointing out and criticizing Qatar constantly. However, the same thing was observed in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 as well. Also, the major focal point of this study was to see the political influence of these sports. The ICC Cricket World Cup was more politicized than the FIFA World Cup 2022. Different international media, through broadcasting and narratives, were discussed.

Conclusion

The study focused on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) strategies used by these media newspapers to convey their messages and present themselves in a positive light, as well as how they use mass media techniques to damage the reputations of others through the forms of manipulation, which included the social power abuse, and discursive interaction. These strategies included visualization representation, which was both detailed and lightened, as well as language expression and word choice. The study concluded by focusing on the two major World Cups, FIFA 2022 and ICC Cricket 2023. The FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar represented a significant milestone in global sports, cultural exchange, and international cooperation. Qatar's successful bid to host the World Cup symbolizes inclusivity and recognition of the Middle East's potential as a global sports hub. It provided a platform for celebrating football within the context of Islamic culture, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and showcasing Qatar's hospitality and modernization efforts. However, the journey to the World Cup had not been without criticisms and controversies. Concerns over labor rights violations and political tensions have sparked debates and calls for reforms. The scrutiny from the Western media and international organizations underscored the importance of addressing these issues transparently and implementing necessary changes to ensure a fair, ethical, and successful World Cup event. However, rather than just being a worldwide sport, the Cricket World Cup 2023 gained popularity due to its contentious and political nature. From the choice of stadiums to the ticketing systems, from the lack of interest from Pakistani audiences to the restriction of coverage of this massive event by Pakistani media outlets, from Modi's attendance at every event celebration to the division surrounding the Zainab Abbas incident, from the invasion of protestors supporting Palestine to the disparate word choices and visuals used by international media to tell different stories and from the marginalization of Muslims and Pakistan. The various news agencies conveyed disparate signals to billions of people worldwide in their coverage of events and crises. It was not simply an ICC Cricket World Cup; it was a far more politicized World Cup.

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