ABSTRACT

During its bid for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, Qatar has proposed the biggest and most profitable event ever for FIFA and offering untapped opportunities for potential investors while staging itself as a gateway to Middle East and North Africa. When the small state was awarded the 2022 tournament on December 2nd 2010, it had also become the first Middle Eastern country to host this global festival of the “royal” football league. Beating off rivals like the United States, Australia, South Korea and Japan, Qatar now has to convince the doubtful world about its potentials.

The aims are ambitious: bringing all outermost cities together and providing new rich culture and breathtaking designs of stadiums, coming along with a new Metro network and a broad expansion of the international airport, is all part of the “Greater Master Plan of Qatar”, a comprehensive and long-term plan visualising Qatar's development up to the year 2032 which was already signed in 2007.

Then again, worries have already been voiced concerning social and cultural clashes (e.g. consumption of alcohol, inappropriate supporter’s outfit) to be expected during the tournament. Qatar follows a conservative Wahabbi strain of Islam and has over the past couple of years been regulating more tightly the consumption of alcohol – and even limited moves towards democratisation have slowed.

But whether or not Qatar is an appropriate World Cup hosting location, this paper focuses on two main features which probably will attract more attention in the upcoming years. First, this paper focuses on the urban development, especially the fragmented urban planning which is expressed by urban design, zoning and large-scale development projects. Second, social challenges will be discussed regarding changes, shifts and rise of new urban action areas and spaces of identity. In this context, the situation of different groups of population (e.g. women, local population, and migrants) shall be investigated.

Bio
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