# Relational Space: Football as a Meta Fetishism

## *İlişkisel Mekân: Bir Meta Fetişizmi Olarak Futbol*

Mazlum AR[1] 

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**ABSTRACT**

The concept of space, which is constantly reshaped within the routine activity of geography, forms its contexts through the processes it undergoes, and constructs its basic relations through the "other". This relationality, which embodies all kinds of dichotomic constructs such as good-bad, beautiful-ugly, and political-apolitical, can have a natural fiction or be based on hegemonic structuralism loaded with ideology. While it can ensure the continuity of individual and collective culture, identity, and memory, it can also commodify the reproduction of all kinds of power elements. Therefore, the relational relations of space can only be understood depending on when, where, and by whom it is constructed. Football spaces, where this relationality is intensely embedded, are constantly reproduced by different actors at different scales and presented to the daily life consumption of individuals and societies in new contexts. In this context, this article aims to analyze the relational contexts of football spaces in the case of the Qatar World Cup. In the study, in which the qualitative research method was used, the data obtained from Twitter users during the 2022 World Cup were analyzed using content and descriptive analysis techniques. As a result of the research, it was understood that football spaces have multi-layered sociopolitical, economic, and cultural contexts constructed by both individual and ideological actors and systems.

**Keywords:** Critical Human Geography, Culture Industry, Cultural And Political Geography, Football, Hegemony, Relational Space, Sports Geography

**ÖZ**

Coğrafyanın rutin eylemselliği içerisinde sürekli olarak yeniden şekillenen mekân kavramı, uğradığı süreçlerle bağlamlarını oluşturarak "öteki" üzerinden temel ilişkilerini inşa etmektedir. İyi-kötü, güzel-çirkin, politik-apolitik gibi her türlü dikotomik kurulumu bünyesinde barındıran bu ilişkisellik doğal bir kurguya sahip olabildiği gibi ideoloji yüklü hegemonik bir yapısallığa da dayanabilmektedir. Bireysel ve kolektif kültürün, kimliğin ve belleğin sürekliliğini sağlayabilirken aynı zamanda her türlü güç unsurunun yeniden üretimini metalaştırılabilmektedir. Dolayısıyla mekânın ilişkisel bağıntıları ancak ne zaman, nerede ve kim tarafından kurgulandığına bağlı olarak anlaşılabilmektedir. Bu ilişkiselliğin yoğun bir şekilde içerimlendiği futbol mekânları ise farklı aktörler tarafından farklı ölçeklerde sürekli olarak yeniden üretilmekte ve yeni bağlamlarıyla birey ve toplumların gündelik yaşam tüketimine sunulmaktadır. Bu kapsamda bu makalede, Katar Dünya Kupası örnekleminde futbol mekânlarının ilişkisel bağıntılarının analiz edilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Nitel araştırma yönteminin kullanıldığı çalışmada 2022 Dünya Kupası sürecinde Twitter kullanıcılarından elde edilen veriler içerik ve betimsel analiz tekniği ile çözümlenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda futbol mekânlarının hem birey hem de ideolojik aktörler ve sistemler tarafından kurgulanan çok katmanlı sosyopolitik, ekonomik ve kültürel bağlamlara sahip olduğu anlaşılmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Eleştirel Beşerî Coğrafya, Futbol, Hegemonya, İlişkisel Mekân, Kültür Endüstrisi, Kültürel ve Siyasal Coğrafya, Spor Coğrafyası

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As with all sub-disciplines of the social sciences, geography has been significantly influenced by the post-structuralist theory. These influences have been recognized in all aspects of geographical endeavors, especially in the study of the individual, society, and space, which are the three main research areas of human geography.

Post-structuralism has affected not only what geographers should analyze, but also how they should analyze, that is, their research methodology. Following this influence, geographers have begun to use innovative research methods to analyze a wider range of sociospatial phenomena than was previously possible. Another common feature of post-structuralism and (human) geography is the interest in *"relationality"*. When post-structuralists and geographers began to closely examine spatially located interactions, they began to realize that there are many different types of relations that pass in and around particular spatial locations (Murdoch, 2006, p. 2). The fundamental problem concerns the often poorly defined nature of the *"relations"* that constitute space and/or place. What are these relations? What is related? How is it that some things (places, etc.) are rich in relations, while in other places relations are weak? Who relates the actions? Is there anything that is not related (Cresswell, 2013, p. 220)? These questions are essentially an output of the multidimensional social, political, economic, etc. construction of space. On the one hand, this construction is unconsciously constructed by the subject himself according to the sociological, theological, psychological, and cultural characteristics of the subject, mostly within the basic rituals of his daily life, while on the other hand, the subject, which cannot be outside of power relations (Foucault, 1980), is defined by hegemonic constructions and shaped according to limited contexts. In the secondary situation where the subject is in the receptive position, power can redefine its relational contents in very complex ways (Leitner, Sheppard, & Kristin, 2008, p. 169) by fetishizing all kinds of space phenomena (language, religion, race, body, cultural values, entertainment, leisure, etc.) to produce the commodity it desires by its ideological form and ensure its continuity. Consumption of the emerging spatial relations by the subject without knowing the perpetrator, on the one hand, enables the natural succession of the relationship, on the other hand, the new relational dynamics that emerge in the implementation phase re-categorize the semantic and connotative dimensions of space. This situation has been a basic postulate of the late capitalist period in which the subject is made to exist only in consumption practices and is "thingified" through media tools and other manipulators of the market culture (Şimşek, 2016).

The postmodern period is based on the circulation of *"position"*, that is, the relationship between points and phenomena, rather than the spatial (point) foundations of space. Therefore, individuals maintain their ontology not in a space decorated by different colors separated by certain boundaries, but in heterotopias as a set of relations defined as positions irreducible to each other (Foucault, 2000, p. 294). In this natural context, there is no mention of a certain centrality in space. As there is no formal similarity, any phenomenon in space does not have a primary or secondary status vis-a-vis another, but is in a constant state of relation, becoming, and flow. The problem that is important in these principles regarding space is whether it is the subject itself or the power surrounding it and the ideological apparatuses it possesses that *"postpones, neutralizes or reverses"* (Foucault, 2000, p. 295) the totality of relations regarding the representations produced. The basic answer to this question lies in space and its relational dimension. Because space itself, which has a heterotopic context, has the specificity of difference in a tremendously diverse social geography. Therefore, space is perceived, produced, and consumed by both the subject and power in different thematic patterns and scales. In the spatial appearance that emerges and functions mostly based on the hegemony of power, the subject is mostly involved in the production of spatial relations within the boundaries determined and/or desired by the power.

One of the relational spaces where power is intensively involved in reconstruction and consumption is football pitches. The fact that football extends far beyond its spatial practice with its new contexts also makes it an important component of the geography of sport. Because the geography of sport is also influenced by the structural analyses brought by poststructuralist theory to cultural studies: (a) the relationship of organizations to sociopolitical, cultural, and economic connections (b) the correlates and distribution of spatial development (c) the consequences of hegemonic imposition after colonialism and postcolonialism (d) the historical development of sport, its massification and, especially with digitalization, the labels of information on sociospatial practices; and (e) the emotional and affective correlates that mobilize ethnic, religious, sectarian, and sexual collective influence (Bale, 2002 cited in Gregory et al, 2011, p. 718), analyzing the construction of an archaeological and anthropological geographical view of the sport. Thus, the deterministic approach focusing only on objective facts between sport and geography was overcome, and sociopolitical, cultural, and economic relations were focused on in accordance with the meaning world of critical thinking (Avcı, 2006, p. 107). Based on this theoretical context, football spaces, which Nelson

Rodrigues (as cited in Talimciler, 2005, p. 87) describes as *"If all you see is the ball, it means you see nothing.",* offer a unique area of investigation in terms of sports geography. Influenced by the imperialist global structure, it produces the interests of power and capitalist consciousness as an area of interest for all segments with billions of dollars of capital (Öcal, 2002, p. 128; Talimciler, 2008, p. 93). However, football spaces can also be functional as spaces of resistance against hegemony with their symbolic coding and practices based on participation. Therefore, football, with its multi-layered relations, has left behind its modest approach and has shown considerable variability.

Accordingly, this study analyzes the relational dimensions of football as a form based on spatial practice in the Qatar World Cup sample. In addition, the study examined whether football represents the resistance of individuals against the structure by transcending its physical boundaries and whether it is a place of reproduction of subjects as an apparatus of the culture industry.

## 2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. Structurality of the Relational Space

There are three fundamental key concepts that define and are identified with the discipline of geography: space, subject, and the consolidating relationship between the two. Although these words essentially shape the ontology of social sciences, the main phenomenon that constitutes their specific weight in geography stems from the discipline's attempt to analyze all kinds of dynamics, such as culture, identity, memory, power installations, etc., related to the subject by addressing human-environment, space, field studies, and geoscience traditions (Pattison, 2003; Arı, 2022) from a holistic perspective. At this point, space, which constitutes the basic conceptual plane of the research and derives from the Latin word *space* with the meanings of distance or distribution (Agnew, 2004, p. 81) It can be stated that the concept has been on the agenda of geographers intensively. Moreover, when the deconstruction of the hermeneutical context between the user and the user is analyzed, it can be stated that it is reduced to quite various contexts. Moreover, not only because of its relationship with the subject, but also because of its apriority context, space is too value-laden to be handled on an essentialist basis with its plural (cultural, political, concrete, abstract, social, relative, absolute, etc.) meanings (Bilgili, 2020, p. 89). This composite structure of the space, which contains a context which is more than the whole of its parts, experienced a significant change, especially in the 1950-1960 period. In the process in

which the modern world system was based on the axiom of positivist epistemology, geography abandoned its analytical approach to the relationality between space and subject and tried to quantify the general laws of space (Bekaroğlu, 2016, p. 130-131). In this Euclidean conception of space, which has a static, immutable, and quantitative context, the subject and thus the related social contexts are ignored (Ar, 2021, p. 10-11). However, especially after 1970, the shift from modernism's mechanistic understanding of society and science to postmodernism's pluralistic, local, and contextual epistemology has changed the positivist paradigm in the social sciences. In fact, in the words of Bekaroğlu (2016), this change, which signifies a return to the tradition of monocultural science, has enabled geography to return from the geometric and passive design of space to an active relational space that is shaped and constructed by different social contexts loaded with ideology, power, and government (Kaygalak, 2011, p. 5). The main element that gains importance in the lens of postmodern geography is clarifying the cultural, identity, and political contexts of the subject by tracing different meanings, organizations, and changes related to space (Kaya, 2013, p. 34). This is because the concrete boundaries of space are pragmatically shaped by material practices and processes that mediate the reproduction of everyday social life. In other words, all forms of social construction involve specific spatial patterns and thus practices (Ar, 2020, p. 168). This is the result of the mutual production of the individual and space based on their dichotomous necessity because it is natural for both space and subject to produce one another, to construct identical contexts, and to transform one another depending on the metaphor of time (Bilgili, 2016). The phenomenon that emerges at this point is *"relationality"* as the tertiary concept of geography. Studies that emerged as the antithesis of the understanding of absolute space and labeled as relational space in geography (Amin, 2004; Massey, 2013; Malpas, 2012) have increased significantly. The common feature of these studies is that they see space as a product of connections rather than a product of a basic self on the basis of relational thinking. This approach is an anti-essentialist way of thinking (Cresswell, 2013). Critical geography, in particular, has shaped the thematic position of space as active, dynamic, and composed of relations (Ar, 2023).

Since any sense of spatial solidity or permanence arises only from the coming together of connections and processes, Massey (2005) insisted that a relational understanding of space is a product of mutual relations, a field of multiplicity, and that it is always in process or in becoming. Since space consists of competing and co-existing relations, it has an unpredictable character that can produce "new spaces, new identities, new

relations, and differences" (Massey, 1999). Relational space becomes "a meeting place", a place where relationships intertwine and intersect (Massey, 2008). The relational construction of space is both a consensual and a contested process. "Consensual" because relations are often made up of agreements or harmonizations between two or more entities; "Contested" because the construction of a set of relations can lead to the exclusion of some entities (and their relations), while others are adopted and consumed through hegemonic processes based on coercion or consent. Massey (1999, p. 8) summarizes this complex process at the core of his approach in three basic propositions: (a) Space, as defined above, is a product of reciprocal relations. These interrelationships pass through different spatial scales, from the local to the global, and all points in between.  (b) Space is the sphere of the possibility of multiplicity. Since various relations "pass-through" space - that is, they constitute space - they can all exist spatially.  (c) Space is never closed and can never be fixed. In other words, space is always in the process of becoming as relations emerge: "always in time" there are connections yet to be established, juxtaposition yet to become interactions and relations that may or may not be realized. According to Soja (1998), all these "marginal" areas come together in what he calls the "third field. "This term is added to Soja's categories of 'first space' (the formal organization of things in space) and 'second space' (representations and concepts of space) found in the work of Lefebvre (2014). Soja defines the third space as follows: The third space [...] is portrayed as multifaceted and contradictory, oppressive and liberating, passionate and routine, knowable and unknowable. It is a field of radical openness, a field of resistance and struggle, and  a field of multiple representations that can be analyzed through their binary oppositions. It is a meeting space, a space of hybridity and mestizaje, and a margin or border beyond established boundaries, where ties can be broken, and new ties can be forged. It can be mapped but never captured in traditional cartographies, it can be imagined creatively but only makes sense when implemented and fully lived**.**

It is only possible to comprehend and analyze space if both are understood and functional together. As a result, space is not static but dynamically (re)shaped. It is also not absolute, depends on who is looking and can be perceived in different contexts depending on the position of the actors. In short, relational space is a "power-filled" space where certain alignments are constructed through the ideological, cultural, and social forms of the subject, but at the same time passively fetishized and dominated. These relational geographies, which Lefebvre (2014) describes as the epitome of politics, are as far removed as possible from a worldview of neatly enclosed compartmentalized worlds, which are intensely constituted by deeply structural forces and practices (Cresswell, 2013). Especially considering the fact that fluid modernity reorganized the individual and his/her geographical environment with intricate relations on the one hand and reconstructed the subject, which it spontaneously abstracted on this ground, through hyperreality in supermodernity, analyzing the latent/implicit production between the subject and space has become possible with the development of poststructuralism in geography. As Gregory (1994, p. 75-76) summarizes: The closures and certainties of the objectivist tradition in human geography have become increasingly suspect [...] a kind of strategic reversal has now come into force that constantly disturbs attempts to claim a summarized unity for the geographical project. Therefore, it has been argued that "critical human geography must pay attention to how meanings are spun around the topoi of different lifeworlds and woven into social practices and power relations." (Bell & Valentine, 1997).

## 2.2  Football as a Space of Culture Industry, Ideology, and Hegemony

As a fundamental component of physical and mental development, sports and practice spaces, with their different variants (athletics, gymnastics, volleyball, basketball, football, rafting, etc.) are an important dynamic of individuals' daily life practices. However, sport, which today exceeds the reality and conditions it has with its different dimensions from micro to macro scale, is no longer just a set of movements and events that occur internally but has become a reflection of the process of revealing the sociopolitical and cultural phenomena at the core of a community (Hognestad, 1997, p. 195). At this point, football, which stands out more in the global spectrum compared to other sports applications, has transcended the spaces in which it is mobilized and has multiple contexts with its deep structural relations that it establishes with the subject and is constructed on behalf of the subject.

Football was first played in China and Egypt between 5000 and 2500 BC (Erdoğan, 2008, p. 26). The process of evolving into a modern sport dates back to the English Football Association, founded on October 26, 1863, with the participation of 11 club representatives. After this date, the realization of the English Cup in 1871, the establishment of the English Professional Football League in 1888 (with the participation of 12 clubs), the formation of the International Football Associations Association (FIFA) on May 24, 1904, and the first World Cup in Uruguay in 1930 enabled football to spread in Europe, Latin America and Asia (Stemmler, 2000, p. 103). Industrialization, which forms the basis of today's

political and cultural relations, has had a great impact on the rapid development and worldwide spread of football. The change in social life practices with industrialization, urbanization, and the differentiation of working conditions with the emerging new social classes have necessitated the control of the masses. At this point, football has been used as an ideological device to keep bodies fit for more functional gains and to behave according to the dynamics determined by the hegemonic structure based on the understanding of managing the leisure time of workers who are under heavy conditions and exploited by Fordist practices (Öngören & Karadoğan, 2002, p. 214). The emergence of football as a sporting practice of the proletarians in the face of aristocratic games such as tennis and cricket (Şahin, 2010, p. 223) can be considered a semiological reflection of the inverse proportion between ball size and class position (the smaller the ball, the higher the class position) (Büker, 1992) on the relationship of exploitation. Although it has been subjected to significant transformations over time, the relationship between football and social life has moved to a different dimension due to globalization in the last quarter of the 20th century. While the symbolic values within it have increased its importance, economic developments have deepened the relationship between football and the ideological system. In the process of adopting consumption to the masses with neoliberal policies, football has paved the way for its commodification due to its ability to influence societies (Talimciler, 2008, p. 92). This situation, in which the Frankfurt School defines culture as "the thing" in which capitalist production relations are shaped by continuous production and which it defines as the culture industry, causes the masses who cannot attain the desired life to reach satisfaction without problematizing the structure in this deprivation (Adorno, 2007, p. 74). The return of football culture, with the changes that have taken place since the last decade of the twentieth century, has prepared the way for the industry to move from the realm of cultural pursuit to the multi-billion-dollar entertainment industry. Full integration of the game into the competitive arteries of world capitalism (IFA, 2013) has become one of the biggest expenditures in the sports and entertainment industry. So much so that football, which attracts the intense interest of exploited and elitist sovereigns with its capital worth billions of dollars, was established in the middle of stadium spaces. However, over time, it has become a "football industry" with its intermediary actors expanding hierarchically toward the periphery (Öcal, 2002, p. 128). In the football industry, where the audience is subalternised, many consumption concepts are offered through intermediate actors (club, football player, broadcast, etc.) (Yılmaz, 2002, p. 21). Among them, the betting industry, which has a capital of more than 1 trillion dollars and simultaneously markets the visible pleasure of the female body, is

used as an important tool (SABAH, 2023). In the football industry, the most important device that mediates the exploitation of societies by ensuring their control is the mass media. The opportunities provided by digital broadcasting have increased the industrial value of football. The (digital) media, which makes football an element of globalization, can, on the one hand, market the practice as a phenomenon of cyberspace by eliminating borders, and on the other hand, create formal and informal categories of production and consumption (betting, digital money trading, product marketing, etc.) for actors with the tools it has developed (Twitter, Discord, Instagram, Facebook, etc.).

Although the football industry attempts to dominate actions and orientations by influencing the human mind through mass communication (Özdağ, Duman, & Fişekçioğlu, 2011, p. 15). At the same time, it is also a space of oppositional organization against hegemonic structures as a place of resistance, resurrection, and politicization based on mass media. As a state of being intertwined with the politics, this situation produces common grounds for communities and builds geographies of resistance between concrete and cyber spaces. These spaces become centers of the search for freedom as geographies where crowds can express all kinds of sociopolitical reactions (criticism of exploitation, culture and identity politics, sexist installations, etc.) against power structures. At the same time, as spaces where historical constructions are reconstructed, football is reconstructing national consciousness as spaces where the postcolonial struggle is carried out, and on this basis, the cult of exploitation is kept alive in social memory. This context, in which at sense of integration emerges, also has a function in which nationalist discourse is produced and the identity of "us" is constructed through the creation of the "other" (Hobsbawm, 1995, p. 170), and mediates the development of a democratic, resistant, and alternative culture.
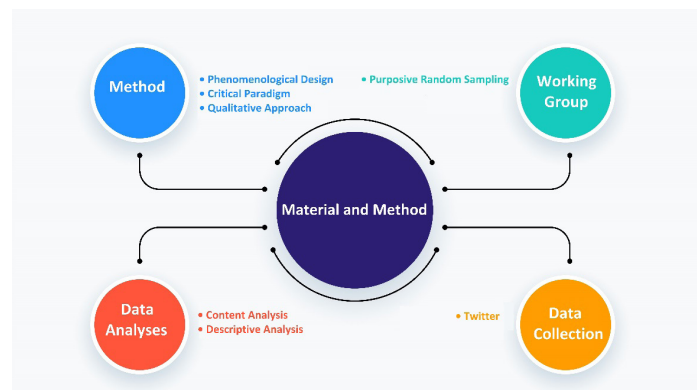
## 3. MATERIAL AND METHOD



**Figure 1:** Material and method.

A phenomenological design was used in this research, which aims to analyze the type of relationships individuals develop through football spaces and the dynamics that are effective in revealing such relationships. As one of the five basic types of approaches used in social science studies, the phenomenological design provides significant advantages to researchers in explaining the views, perceptions, and thoughts of the phenomenon/subject about a concept, event, or phenomenon (Rose, Beeby, & Parker, 1995, p. 1124). The underlying factor underlying the choice of the phenomenological perspective is the attempt to illuminate the context between the individual, society, and space by centering the critical paradigm in the study. Because discovering the power and structural construction relations in the datasets obtained from individuals' acquisitions by the researcher and categorizing them through the main themes, performing scientific analyses for change, and analyzing the areas of domination, alienation, and struggle (Morrow & Brown, 1994) necessitates the selection of a research paradigm suitable for the study design based on the study design. In this direction, qualitative research was used to study of the critical nature of the research**.** Thus, it enabled the researcher to address the subject of the study in a sociopolitical and cultural context and enabled the integrity between approach, paradigm, and method in the research by enabling its unique reflectivity and specificity in its analyses (Creswell, 2015, p. 45).

### 3.1. Working Group
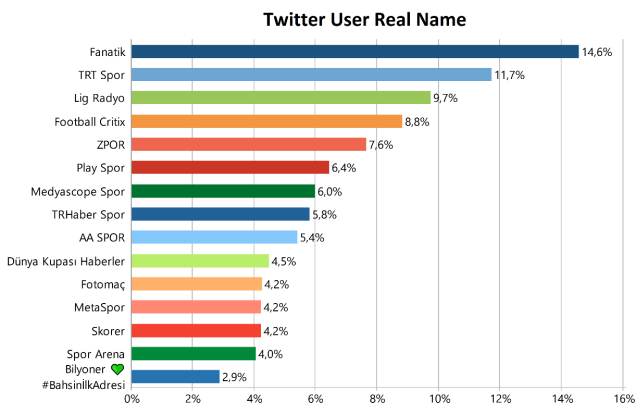


**Graphic 1**: User information and sharing rates in Twitter activity.

Purposive random sampling was used in the study to obtain richer dataset and to increase the validity/reliability of the study (Flick, 2010). In random sampling, a sample group is first determined from the universe, and then the subgroup that is thought to contribute the most to the research within this study group is determined (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). In this context, the study group consists of users who use the social

media platform Twitter during the 2022 Qatar World Cup. After determining Twitter users as the population group within the scope of purposive random sampling, the participants were limited to the subgroup that shared the hashtag study related to the World Cup for the purpose of the research. The information of the 15 corporate users based on the research and their data weights in the sample group are shown in Graphic 1.

### 3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

In the analysis of social media data, the data obtained from the selected sample group can be used directly in a user-centered manner or can be analyzed in the context of word-based criteria. In the user-centered criterion, data collected from limited accounts determined within the scope of simple purposive sampling by the purpose of the study can be analyzed, whereas in the word-based criterion, predefined tags (hashtags) or key concepts can be analyzed as a result of the snowball-like increase in messages and responses to them (Einspänner, Dang-Anh, & Thimm, 2014, p. 99). In this direction, the Twitter social media tool was used as the data source of the study, and the data of the study were collected by following three stages: In the first stage, the dataset was obtained through the Twitter hashtags "*Qatar2022, #Morocco, #FIFAWorldCup, #FIFAWorldCup2022, #BoycottQatar2022*" initiated by the purposive random sampling group and retweeted by other participants. First of all, the hashtags ranked on Twitter related to the Qatar World Cup between 20 November-18 December 2022 were followed and necessary notes were taken. The hashtag data were then extracted and recorded from the Twitter system through the MAXQDA program for a period not exceeding one week. The main reason for such an application is that the MAXQDA web collector feature used for data collection allows only the last week of Twitter data to be stored. This process was repeated for each hashtag, and a total of 209,455 tweets were recorded.

In the second phase, it is the stage in which the collected data are sorted by the purpose and basic problem of the study. The dataset obtained in this phase was sorted through a computer-aided program, and 135,088 tweets were classified for direct use in the study. In the third stage, the data obtained were analyzed in depth using content and descriptive analysis techniques. Content analysis, as an analysis technique used significantly in the qualitative research methods, is an in-depth and patterned application of the subject included in the research. Content analysis, as an effort to make a meaningful whole by revealing the relationships and consistency in multidimensional qualitative data (Patton, 2014), is an application carried out for visual

expression as well as concepts. In this regard, all kinds of words and phenomena involved in the information process are considered as texts (Neuman, 2014). The data decided to be analyzed by the researcher are grouped under certain concepts, subthemes, and main themes, each of which is related to the other, and designed to appeal to the meaning world of the reader. Finally, the correlation between descriptive analysis and content analysis is ensured by quoting the memos obtained during the analysis process for each category and the data classified by the weight assignment method. In this context, the data were analyzed using the MAXQDA 2022 computer-aided software program, which has visual and statistical tools for visualization and thematization. Since coding is a cyclical practice and it is not possible for the researcher to produce perfect coding at one time, the two-dimensional cycle technique, which is frequently used in content analysis, was used. After the precoding process is completed, the first coding process of the data is carried out by selecting the ones suitable for the purpose of the study among the seven basic practices (grammatical, basic, affective, literature and language-based, exploratory, procedure-based, and thematizing the data). The second coding cycle is the process of reorganizing the data obtained in the first cycle. At this stage, facts that are perceived as irrelevant are associated with each other in a logical way. Codes, sub-codes, and main categories are harmonized with each other. For this purpose, patterned, focused, axial, theoretical, exploratory, and longitudinal coding techniques can be applied in the second cycle of coding (Saldana, 2019, p. 69). Nevertheless, in both the first and second coding cycles, one sub-coding technique for each dimension can be selected, or the coding function can be performed by operating multiple application techniques together. At this point, in the first coding process of the study, the descriptive, process, and In Vivo coding techniques under the basic application technique were applied together. By using the axial coding technique, the coding process

that will provide code, sub-code, and main category integrity in the second cycle of the coding process was completed.

## 4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Within the scope of the study, the data obtained from Twitter users were analyzed through content analysis, and the relational dimensions put forward in the context of the 2022 Qatar World Cup were categorized in a way to form meaningful integrity, and the main differences were examined. At the same time, the relational dimensions representing the conceptual summary of the expressions on football spatiality are specified under 4 main categories and 11 sub-categories. In this framework, the frequency ratios of the data analyzed through the Twitter hashtags "*Qatar2022, #Morocco, #FIFAWorldCup, #WorldCup2022, #BoycottQatar2022*" are shown in Table 1.

When the opinions of the users about the 2022 Qatar World Cup on Twitter were analyzed, it was determined that the *political* main category had a higher percentage than the total rates of all other main categories, with a frequency rate of 55.36% in terms of total rates. It was followed by the *theological* (18.76%) and *cultural* (15.72%) main categories in second and third place, respectively. Among the main categories, the main category with the lowest frequency percentage in terms of total proportions was *sports marketing* with 6.34%. In terms of subcategories, the concepts of *the boycott of exploitation* (31.48%), *postcolonial reaction* (21.90%), and *the spread of Islam (*18.04%) under the *political* main category and *the theological* main category, respectively, were the first three categories with the highest frequency percentages. On the other hand, the conceptual expressions with the lowest frequency percentages were determined as: *Muslim stance* in *the theological* main category (0,72%), *political identification* in the *political*

**Table 1:** Frequency analysis of the opinions of users in the context of football spatiality.

| Main Category | Intermediate category | #BoycottQatar2022 | #worldcup2022 | #FIFAWorldCup | #Morocco | #Qatar2022 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Political (%) | Boycott of exploitation | 56.10 | 11.30 | 20.30 | 13.20 | 56.50 | 31.48 |
| | Postcolonial reaction | 0.19 | 20.70 | 17.60 | 57.20 | 13.80 | 21.90 |
| | Iranian resistance | 2.00 | 0.20 | 0.00 | 0.70 | 3.00 | 1.18 |
| | Political identification | 2.00 | 0.60 | 0.20 | 0.90 | 0.30 | 0.80 |
| | Subtotal (%) | 60.29 | 32.80 | 38.10 | 72.00 | 73.60 | 55.36 |
| Theological (%) | Muslim stance | 1.20 | 0.20 | 0.50 | 1.10 | 0.60 | 0.72 |
| | Spread of Islam | 6.90 | 28.00 | 33.30 | 12.70 | 9.30 | 18.04 |
| | Subtotal (%) | 8.10 | 28.20 | 33.80 | 13.80 | 9.90 | 18.76 |
| Cultural (%) | Arab culture | 2.50 | 4.70 | 5.30 | 1.80 | 1.70 | 3.20 |
| | Europe saw civilization | 1.90 | 4.10 | 4.40 | 2.70 | 1.10 | 2.84 |
| | Cultural capitalism | 4.30 | 25.80 | 12.00 | 4.30 | 2.00 | 9.68 |
| | Subtotal (%) | 8.70 | 34.60 | 21.70 | 8.80 | 4.80 | 15.72 |
| Sports marketing (%) | Women and betting | 1.10 | 1.30 | 3.40 | 2.40 | 4.80 | 2.60 |
| | Online betting | 2.90 | 3.20 | 3.00 | 2.80 | 6.80 | 3.74 |
| | Subtotal (%) | 4.00 | 4.50 | 6.40 | 5.20 | 11.60 | 6.34 |

main category (0,80%), and *Iranian resistance.* In addition, when the highest and lowest frequency ratios related to sub-concepts in terms of main categories were evaluated, the following results emerged: The subcategories of *the boycott of exploitation* (31.48%) and *political identification* (0.80%) in the *political* main category, *the spread of Islam* (18.04%) and *Muslim stance* (0.72%) in the *theological* main category, *cultural capitalism* (9.68%) and *Europe saw civilization* (2.84%) in the *cultural* main category, and *online betting* (3.74%) and *women and betting* (2.60%) in the *sports marketing* main category were the concepts with the highest and lowest frequency rates, respectively.

When analyzed in the context of Twitter hashtags, the following results were obtained in terms of main categories: In the *political* main category, the subcategory of *postcolonial reaction* (57.20%) under the hashtag #Morocco had the highest frequency rate. In the *theological* main category, the subcategory of the *spread of Islam* (33.30%) under the hashtag #FIFAWorldCup had the highest frequency percentage, while in the *cultural* main category, the subcategory of *cultural capitalism* (25.80%) under the hashtag #worldcup2022 had the highest frequency percentage. Finally, in the *sports marketing* main category, the *online betting* subcategory (6.8%) under the #Qatar2022 hashtag was the concept with the highest frequency percentage.

Figure 2 shows the concept network of the main category *political*. When the relevant figure was analyzed, it was determined that the main category formed by Twitter users' expressions on the relationality between football and politics consisted of 4 subcategories and 31 concepts. In the subcategory *boycott of exploitation*, which has the highest concept frequency among all subcategories in the *political* main category, the concepts of *oil and the power of money* (14528) and *capital exploitation (10149),* and the expressions *exploitation of labor* (9627), *starvation and waste* (1691), and *America* (238) under *exploitation of capital* were the subcodes most frequently mentioned by the users, respectively. On the one hand, these concepts highlight the unequal geographies created by global capitalism, and on the other hand, they reflect the reaction that intensely implies the labor power that the elitist hegemony commodities and exploits on this basis. In particular, the fact that the concept of *FIFA bows to money* ranked third with 2052 frequencies under the subcategory *boycott of exploitation* also refers to the relational categorization of the liberal dynamics of capital exploitation, such as being supposedly transparent, egalitarian, and democratic. These relational dimensions related to the *political* main category were confirmed by user expressions:

"This football system, controlled by the rulers, one of the most important areas of ideological hegemony, intertwined with finance
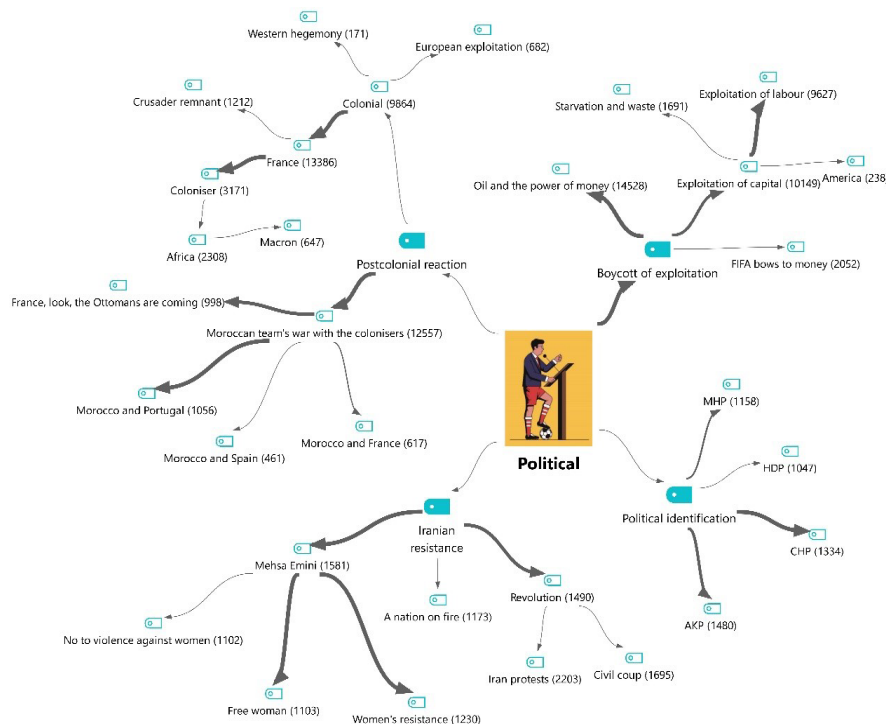


**Figure 2:** Code-subcode concept network for the political main category.

capital, is an opium." (#BoycottQatar2022)

"2 million Muslim slaves worked in the construction of these stadiums under the harshest conditions, some of them returned to their countries without even receiving their money, and many of them lost their lives." (#BoycottQatar2022)

"They spent so much money on the World Cup that with that money, every hungry and miserable Syrian would have been satisfied." (#worldcup2022)

The subcategory of *postcolonial reaction* (Figure 2) under the *political* main category was the subcategory in which users produced discourse based on historical, cultural, and political affiliations during the World Cup, which Turkey could not participate in. At this point, it was determined that the sub-code of the *Moroccan team's war with the colonizers* (12557) with the sub-expressions of *Morocco and Portugal* (1056), *Morocco and France* (617) and *Morocco and Spain* (461) was the concept with the highest frequency density. It was followed by the sub-concept of *colonial* with a frequency density of 9864. Under this concept, expressions such as *European exploitation* (682) and *Western hegemony* (171) are generally associated with the contextual dynamics of Western geographical colonialism. In a specific sense, the expression *colonizer* (3171) under the concept of *France* (13386), the subcodes *Africa* (2380), *Macron* (647), and the concept of *crusader remnant* (1212) were the postcolonial output of the historical struggle between the Ottoman Empire and France.

"#France defeated Morocco, the pride of Africa in the World Cup, with players recruited from Africa, again exploitation, again exploitation..." (#Morocco)

"The Franco-Moroccan struggle is a match between the exploited and the slaves of the exploiter. 80% of the French team is African." (#Morocco)

"A big halal to Morocco for sending the Spaniards, who were disturbed by the sound of the call to prayer, back to their country with a prostration of thanksgiving after the victory 👋 Allah" (#Morocco)

In Figure 2, *Iranian resistance is* another sub-code that stands out in the *political* basis category. This subcategory was determined by the reflection of Twitter user expressions on the events that started with the murder of a woman in Iran and the national football team participation in protests by not singing the national anthem at the 2022 Qatar World Cup. Under the subcategory of *the Iranian resistance*, the concept with the

highest frequency number was *Mehsa Emini* (1581). In relation to this expression, the concepts of *women's resistance* (1230), *free women* (1103) and *no to violence against women* (1102) were frequently mentioned. The second sub-code was a *revolution (*1490) with the concepts of *Iran protests* (2203) and *civil coup* (1695), followed by the concept of *a nation on fire* with a frequency of 1173.

"People are being slaughtered in the streets of Iran for demanding basic human rights." (#worldcup2022)

"Violent behavior against women in Iran violates their civil rights. Women do not have the right to freedom to watch or play football and other sports matches." (#Qatar2022)

"Iran national team footballers support #MahsaAmini protests: The footballers refused to sing the national anthem, while the fans supported the protests by holding banners reading "Women, Life, Freedom." (#worldcup2022)

Another relational dimension that emerged especially in the context of users, was the reproduction of political identity. At this point, when Figure 2 is analyzed, it is determined that the last subcategory that emerged under the main category of *political* is *political identification*. In the sub-code systematic where users frequently emphasized the concepts of *AKP* (1480), *CHP* (1334), *MHP* (1158), and *HDP* (1047)[1] respectively, the relationality of the ideological construction between football and national dimension through political identity emerged.

"HDP members should go and defend America in Iran vs America match, after all, they are brothers in fate." (#worldcup2022)

"The match between Morocco and Spain is a struggle between poles as different as AKP and CHP. The struggle between the exploiting CHP and the nationalist AKP and MHP 💪💪💪 who revolt against exploitation... "(#FIFAWorldCup2022)

The *theological* main category, which indicates the concepts that users put forward in the context of the relationship between religion and football in the context of the 2022 Qatar World Cup, consists of 2 subcategories and 9 concepts (Figure 3). The fact that the World Cup, which is the locomotive component of the football industry, was held for the first time in a country whose official religion was declared as Islam (Qatar) was intensely reflected in the conceptual emphasis of Twitter users. At this point, when Figure 3, which shows the *theological* main category, is analyzed, it is determined that the sub-code of the *spread of Islam* has a higher frequency number. Under the related concept,

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1    The AKP, CHP, MHP, and HDP are political parties representing different ideologies in Turkey.
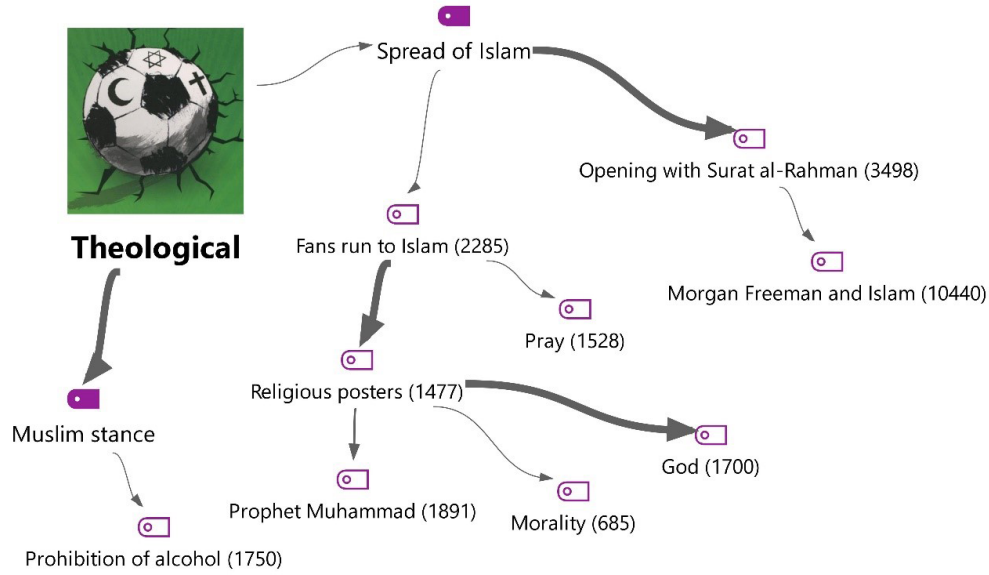
**Figure 3:** Code-subcode concept network related to theological main category.

*opening with Surat al-Rahman* (3498) and the expression *Morgan Freeman and Islam* (10440) expressed in relation to this concept came to the forefront, while in the second place, the *Muslim stance* sub-code and the concept *prohibition of alcohol* (1750) emphasized in relation to this concept were frequently mentioned.

"I could swear that even atheists are chanting Allah Allah in those stadiums in Qatar, but I can't prove it 😊😊😊😊😊😊😊" (#Qatar2022)

"In the World Cup, where the West constantly criticized the drinking ban and regulations because it is a Muslim country, Qatar became the host of one of the most exciting cups in the world with a successful organization from opening to closing, from stadiums to matches, with a surprise like Morocco." (#Qatar2022)

"At the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, a Mexican fan who was attracted to Islam became a Muslim by bringing the Kelime-i Shahada. They saw the truth. Moreover, there are so many Muslims that it was worth Qatar spending so much money hahaha..." (#worldcup2022)

Another main category shaped by the expressions put forward by the users through football relationality, which is also seen as a fundamental element of cultural geographical transmission, is the *cultural* basis category (Figure 4). It was determined that the
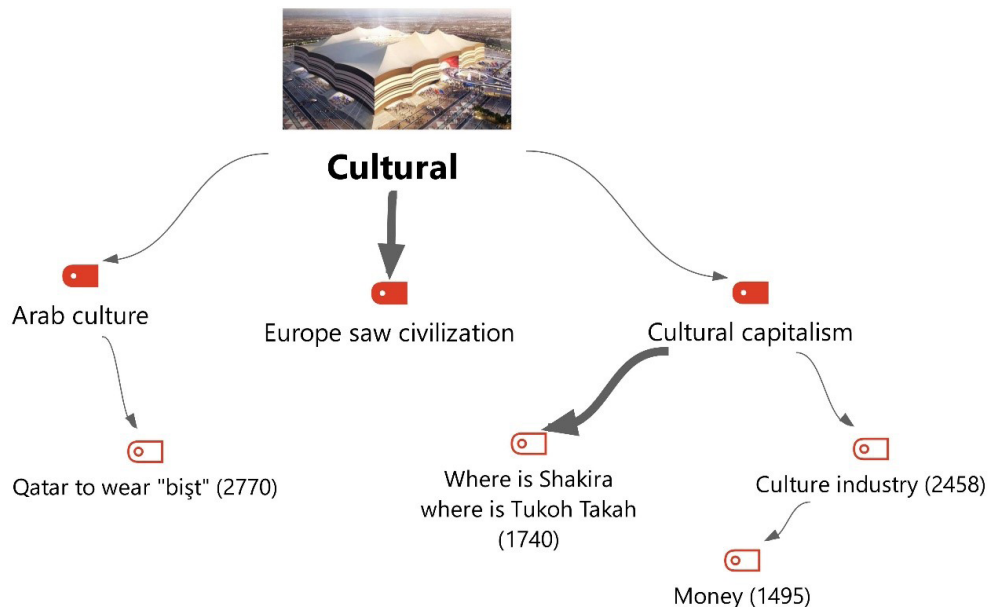


**Figure 4:** Code-subcode concept network for the cultural main category.

*cultural* main category, which signifies the area where popular culture is fetishized, consists of 3 subcategories and 4 concepts. The subcategory with the highest frequency was *cultural capitalism*, which consists of the concepts of *cultural industry* (2458) and *money* (1459) in relation to this concept and *where is Shakira where is Tukoh Takah* (1740), respectively. The *Arab culture* subcategory, under which the concept of *Qatar to wear "bist"* (2770) is also included, was the category with the second highest frequency density, followed by the subcategory of *European saw civilization.*"We must realize once again that civilization and culture can be bought with money." (#Qatar2022)

"When did it go from Shakira's Waka Waka to Myriam Fares' Tukoh Taka 😛😂" (#Qatar2022)

"Westerners love the toilet with a tap in Qatar. Maybe you can learn some civilization, uneducated Bedouins 😬😬😬😬" (#worldcup2022)

of 2 subcategories and 34 concepts. With its frequency and concept density, the online betting subcategory was determined to be the subcategory where expressions related to both legal games of chance such as, football-based betting (671), and prohibited games of chance such as casino (306) and trial bonus (362), came to the fore. In addition, the female body can be transformed into a means of pleasure through the practice of football. At this point, another subcategory that shows that the female body is made the object of games of chance is *women and betting*.

"💸Winning with BetitBet tastes completely different! ⚽" (#worldcup2022)

"💵Ratio 3.70 👆💵Subscribe and start winning with the number 1🍀" (#Qatar2022)

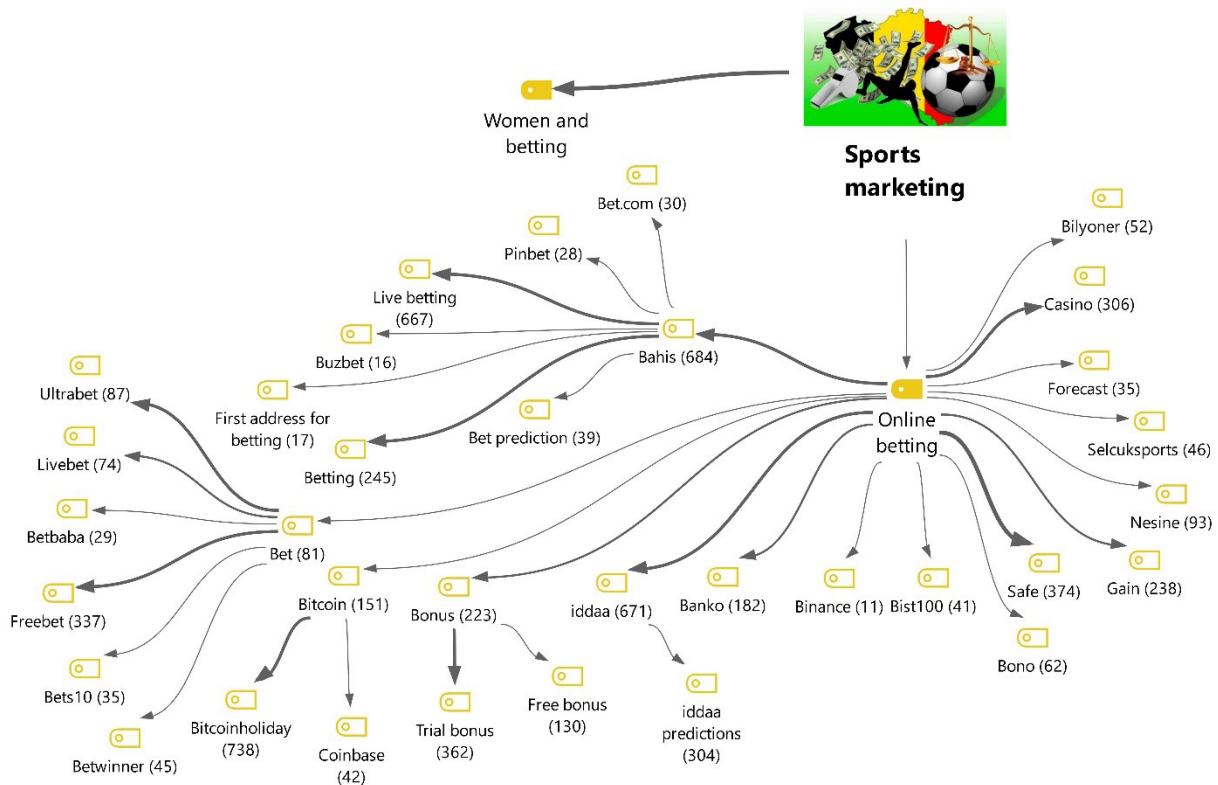"Friend, am I going to look at the girls on this betting site or am I going to bet 😊😊😊😊😊😊😊" (#worldcup2022)



**Figure 5:** Code-subcode concept network for the main category of sports marketing.

Another main category that emerged as a result of the analysis of Twitter user expressions was the main category of *sports marketing* (Figure 5). The main category of *sports marketing* is reflected in user expressions in football relationality, which has become a very large industry with its dependent informal consumption systematic in addition to formal marketing areas (advertising, product sales, broadcasting respaces, etc.), consists

Among the Twitter hashtags "*Qatar2022, #Morocco, #FIFAWorldCup, #FIFAWorldCup, #WorldCup2022, #BoycottQatar2022*," which constitute the basic dataset of the research, the 19 most frequently used common concepts related to *Qatar2022 and #WorldCup2022*, where the highest code frequency was obtained, are shown in Figure 6. When the hashtags #Qatar2022 and #worldcup2022, which came to the
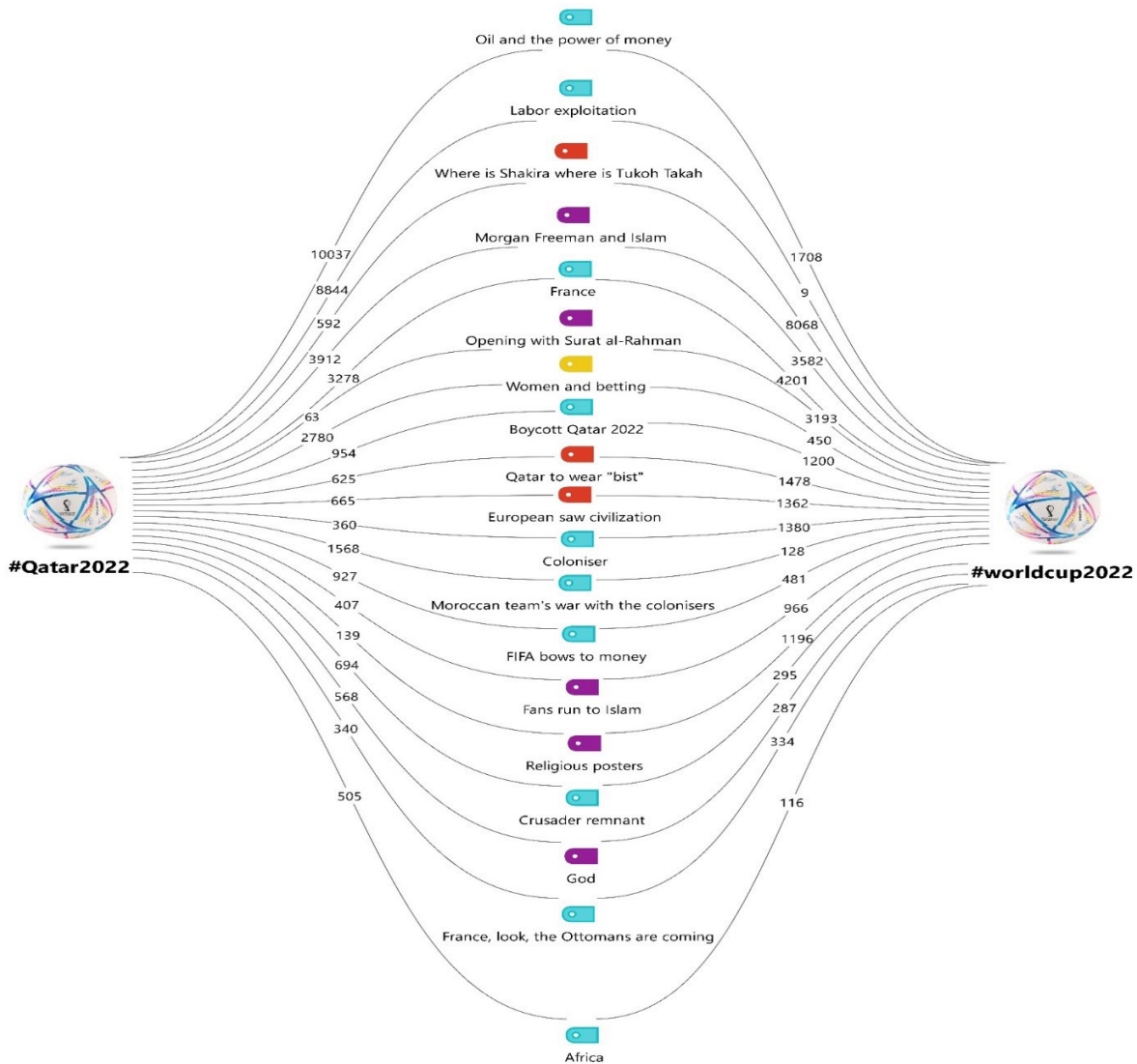
**Figure 6:** Qatar2022 and #worldcup2022 the most frequently used common concept network on twitter.

fore in the Twitter activity in which users were involved at different times, were analyzed on the basis of main categories, it was determined that the *political* main category ranked first with 10 common concepts. The *theological* (5), *cultural* (3), and *sports marketing* (1) main categories follow it, respectively. The top five concepts with the highest number of expressions with common concept usage in both datasets are: *oil and the power of money* (11745) and *labor exploitation* (8853), which are under the *political* main category; *where is Shakira and where is Tukoh Takah* (8660), which are under the *cultural* main category; *Morgan Freeman and Islam* (7494), which are under the *theological* main category; and *France*, which is also under the political main category. On the other hand, the common conceptual expressions with the lowest number of frequencies were: *Africa* (621) and *France, look, the Ottomans are coming* (674) in the *political* main category; *Allah* (855) in *the theological*

main category; *crusader remnant* (989) in the *political* main category and *religious posters* (1335) in *the theological* main category. The most balanced common concept emphasis in both Qatar2022 and #worldcup2022 Twitter hashtags was the phrase *France, look, the Ottomans are coming* under the *political* main category, which had frequency densities of 340 and 334 in Qatar2022 and #worldcup2022 hashtags respectively. However, the expression with the most irregular frequency distribution in the common concepts between the two datasets was the concept of *labor* of *exploitation*, which is also connected to the *political* basis category. The concept of *labor exploitation*, which has a frequency number of 8844 in the hashtag *#Qatar2022 (8844), has a* frequency number of 9 in the hashtag *#worldcup2022*.

When Figure 7, which shows the conceptual relations and the intensity of these relations that users put forward through football
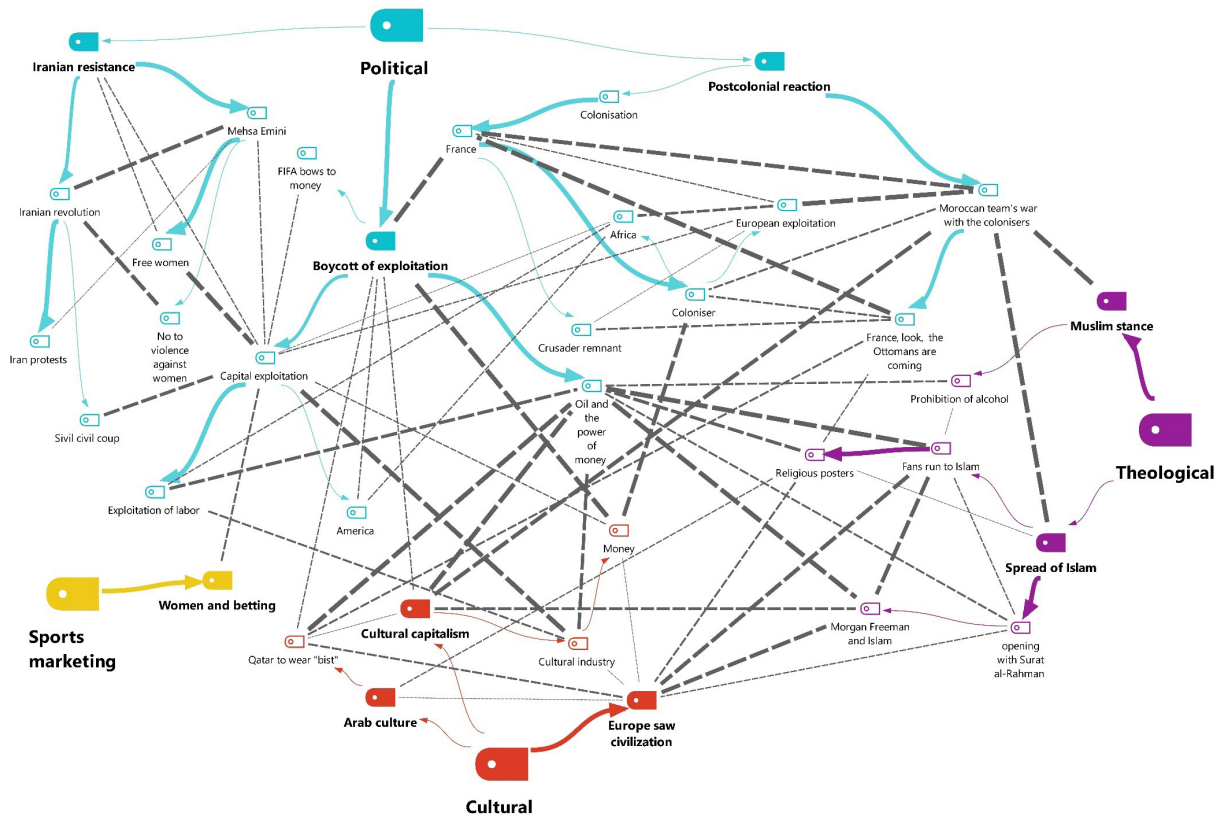
**Figure 7:** Twitter users' conceptual association network related to the 2022 World Cup context.

spatiality in the context of the 2022 World Cup, is examined, it is determined that the subcategory of *women and betting* under the main category of *sports marketing is* frequently mentioned together with the concept of *capitalist exploitation* in the *political* basic category. The subcategory of *Iranian resistance* under the main category of *politics* is frequently mentioned with the concept of *capital exploitation* under the subcategory of boycott exploitation. This concept is also heavily associated with the notion of *free women* under the concept of *Mehsa Emini*. Both the concepts of *Mehsa Amini* and *free woman* are densely intertwined with the concept of *capital exploitation*, which is in the subcategory boycotting of exploitation. In addition, the concept of *Mehsa Amini* in the *Iranian resistance* subcategory was frequently associated with the *Iranian revolution* and the *Iran protests* related to this concept. The concept of the *Iranian revolution* was frequently emphasized together with the concept of *no to violence against women* under the expression *Mehsa Amini* and with the concept of *capital exploitation* in the *boycott of exploitation* subcategory of the *civil coup* expression under the *Iranian revolution.*

The concept of *boycotting* of *exploitation* in the *political* main category is associated with the concepts of *Qatar to wear*

*"bişt", cultural capitalism,* and *money* under the *cultural* main category, while at the same time, it is frequently emphasized with the expression *France* in the *postcolonial reaction* subcategory. Again, the concept of *FIFA bows to money* under the subcategory *boycotting* of *exploitation was* frequently mentioned together with the expression *capital exploitation* in the same subcategory, while the concept *of capitalist exploitation* was frequently mentioned together *with the* expressions *European exploitation* and *Africa* in the *postcolonial reaction* subcategory and with the concepts of *money* and *culture industry* under the main category of *culture*. The expression *America, which is* related to the concept of *capital exploitation under the* subcategory *boycott of exploitation,* is frequently mentioned with the concept of *Africa* in the *postcolonial reaction* subcategory, while the concept of *labor of exploitation*, which is also under *capitalist exploitation, is* intensively coded with both the concept of *Africa* and the *cultural industry* in the main category of *culture* and the concepts of *oil* and *the power of money in* the subcategory *boycott of exploitation*. Again, the concept of *oil and the power of money under the* subcategory of a *boycott of exploitation* was frequently associated with the *cultural* main category of *cultural industry, cultural capitalism, Qatar to wear "bist"* and the *theological* main category of

opening *with Surat al-Rahman*, *fans run to Islam, prohibition of alcohol, religious posters* and *Morgan Freeman and Islam*. The concept of the *Moroccan team's war with the colonizers* under the subcategory of *postcolonial reaction* under the main category of *politics* is intensely emphasized with the concepts of the *colonizer*, *France*, and *European exploitation* in the same subcategory. The concept of *Muslim stance* under the *theological* main category is frequently mentioned in terms of the *spread of Islam*, as well as the concept of *cultural capitalism* under the *cultural* main category. In addition, the concept of *France, look, the Ottomans are coming* under the expression of *the Moroccan team's war with the colonizers is* intensely associated with the concepts of *France* and the *crusader remnant and colonizer* concepts under the *postcolonial reaction* subcategory.

*The cultural* main category was the second category with the highest relationship density after the *political* main category. The *Europa saw civilization* subcategory under this main category, *Qatar to wear "bist"* under the *Arab culture* subcategory, and the *fans run to Islam*, *Morgan Freeman and Islam* under the *theological* main category, were frequently mentioned together with the concepts of *religious posters* and *opening with Surat al-Rahman*. The subcategory of *cultural capitalism* was frequently emphasized with the concepts of *Qatar to wear "bist"* under the *Arab culture* subcategory and *Morgan Freeman and Islam* under the *theological* main category. Again, the expression of *Qatar to wear "bist"* under the *Arab culture* subcategory was frequently emphasized together with the concept of *France, look, the Ottomans are coming* in the *political* main category. Finally, the theological main category is the one in which the relational contexts of Islam and its basic dynamics are presented. Under this main category, the concept of *fans run to Islam* was frequently emphasized with the *opening with Surat al-Rahman, prohibition of alcohol, Morgan Freeman and Islam* in the same main category, while the concept of *religious posters* under this concept was frequently emphasized with the concept of *Arab culture* in the *cultural* main category.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Relationality, as the fundamental dynamic of the discipline of geography in general and [critical] human geography in particular, creates a dichotomous context by shaping the semiology of dialogical networking between subject and space. These spaces, which can develop in multidimensional forms in the world of meaning of individual and collective memory, are the spaces where social, political, and cultural construction is constantly reconstructed at different scales. The findings

obtained in the context of football spaces within the scope of the research clearly support the dimensions of this relationality.

When the themes that emerged in the context of the main categories in the study were analyzed, it was determined that the *political* main category came to the fore with the subcategories of the *boycott of exploitation, postcolonial reaction, Iranian resistance,* and *political identification* (Table 1). This situation is actually parallel to the chronological adventure of the first emergence of football. Because it is unthinkable that football, which emerged as a tool of the bourgeoisie to numb and intimidate the proletariat, should be isolated from power relations as an alternative field of resistance against hegemonic installations in the process of evolution, as a place of oppositional feelings and emancipation (Arık, 2004, p. 180). In this context, football as a space of revolt against sociopolitical inequality (Rowe, 1996, p. 23) Football continues to be a series of politically charged articulations. Considering the Janus-faced relationship between football and politics, since the subject(s) are actors in this context, they can mobilize by building common ground in different areas of daily life. Therefore, the concept of *Iranian resistance* (Figure 2) categorically emerged in Twitter user expressions depending on the actual situation in the 2022 Qatar World Cup. In this categorization, where the construction between ideology and politics gives rise to social reaction through the female body, football spaces have become oppositional spaces where social strata are organized and the discourse that is expressed/not expressed on the streets is resonated. This is reflected in user expressions through the subcategories of the *boycott of exploitation* and *postcolonial reaction* (Figure 2), which have the highest frequency in the main *political* category. Football spaces, where the image of us and the other is revealed/exposed with sharp boundaries, show that historical realities, conflicts, polarizations, and xenophobic stances are reconstructed at the representation level. As it is understood from the user findings, this relational dimension can inwardly construct the context of *"I"* with *"us"* (as in the subcategory of *political identification*), while determining the distance and legitimacy of *us with the other, thus* ensuring identity formation and continuity. At this point, the concepts of *European exploitation, colonizer, France, Moroccan team's war with the colonizers, France, look, the Ottomans are coming,* and the relations established between them (Figure 7), which are reflected in user expressions through the dialectic of East and West, refer to historical consciousness on the one hand, and on the other hand, they enable the reconstruction of political, social, cultural, etc. identity by constructing the *"self/us"* categorization. Of course, this situation, which takes place in a systemic dimension, is reflected in the frequency density in the subcategory of the *boycott of exploitation* with the concepts of *oil and the power of*
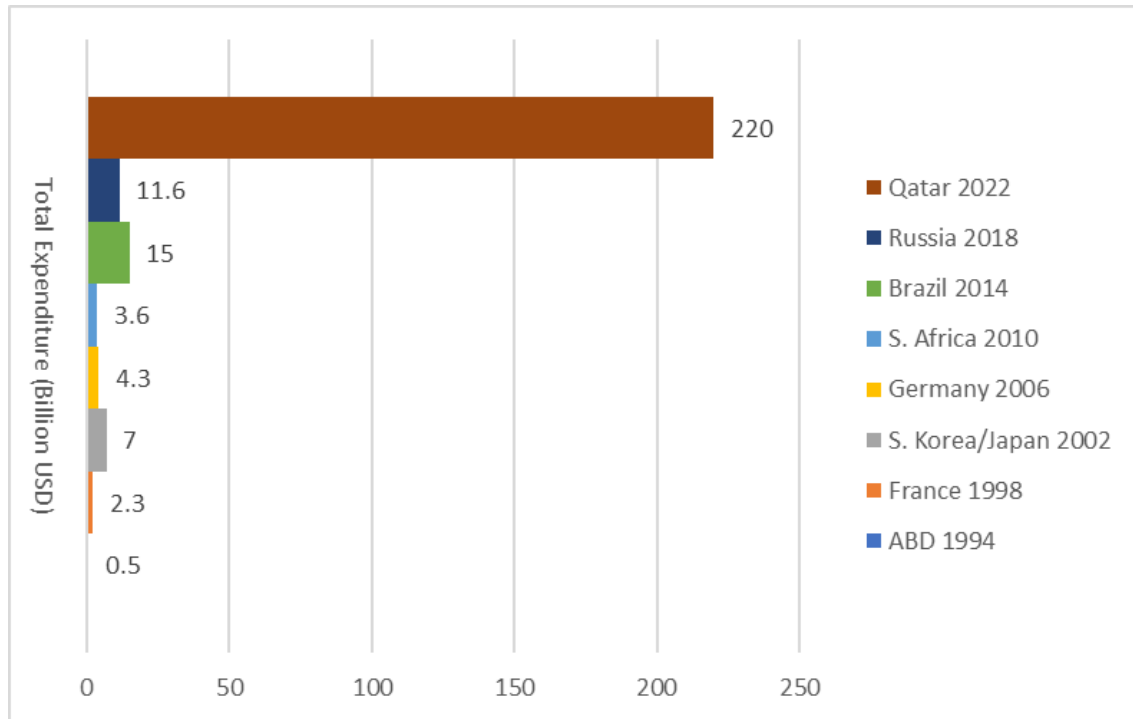
**Graphic 2:** World Cup expenses by year (Bizimungu, 2022).

*money, capital exploitation, America, starvation and waste, exploitation* of *labor* in the *political* main category, and the concepts of *online betting, women and betting* (Figure 2) in the main category of *sports marketing* (Figure 5). In this regard, the commodification of football by abstracting it from being an alternative field based on the resistance of the subject to democratic foundations is reflected in the concept network through two basic contexts: First, it reveals the relationship between football and capital. In particular, the financial expenditure that arises as a result of the mass dissemination of the consumption industry to produce the economic objectives of capitalist exploitation is emphasized through the context of unequal geographies (such as the concept of *starvation and waste*).

For example, the fact that many urgent humanitarian emergencies in the African continent could be eliminated with the 220 billion dollars spent by Qatar during the 2022 World Cup (Graphic 2) is one of the important indicators of this inequality. The second, related to the first issue, is the fetishization of individuals and their bodies in the context of football and the diversification of consumption concepts for them in order for capital to gain more profit. In this regard, the main category of *sports marketing* (Figure 5), which came to the fore with the concepts of *online betting, betting, and women* in user statements, was a basic reflection of this relationship. So much so that while the online betting market creates a new exploitation area with its huge capital (1 trillion dollars), it also creates masses who want to get a share of economic rent through systematic constructions

based on consent. The female body is the most important phenomenon instrumental in integrating these masses into the betting market offered through football relationality. As it is understood from the user findings (Figure 5 and Figure 8), the female body is put forward as an element of *"pleasure"* in the consumption of the product (Figure 8). This situation, which objectifies individuals, reveals perceptual relations through the sense of emotional/physical curiosity, and creates the desire for consumption through contextual setups between the environment and the subject, is a scopophilic hegemonic structuring situation in which looking is dematerialized as a source of pleasure (Mulvey, 1997). In fact, the transformation of the female body into a marketing tool is not a new phenomenon but constitutes the basic impulse of capital functioning. However, this increasingly intensive use of football, which is based on a masculine construction with its practical forms, is a result of the categorical relational consumption of capital through the entertainment sector. Thus, both physical and digital spatial appearances are coded through scopophilic relations, and the individual can legitimize the system of exploitation of which he is the object.

Another important result obtained from the research findings is the relationship between sport, religion, cultural value transmission, and preservation. In this framework, it is observed that *the theological* basis category (Figure 3) with its subcategories of *Muslim stance (prohibition of drinking)* and *spreading Islam (fans run to Islam and opening with Surat al-Rahman)* comes

second in terms of frequency density (Table 1). Given the fact that the World Cup was organized in a Muslim country for the first time, the link between Islam and sports has been on the agenda more intensely than ever before. In addition, the fact that it is based on an ideological antagonism between Eastern and Western civilizations has led to the establishment of the relationship between religion and sport on this ground. For example, in terms of concept density, the fact that the phrase "*Moroccan team's war with the colonizers*" under the *political* main category was frequently mentioned together with the concept of the *spread of Islam* under the *theological* main category (Figure 7) was a result of this relationality constructed through symbolic practices. However, another important phenomenon is efforts to maintain conservative attitudes through the correlation between religious
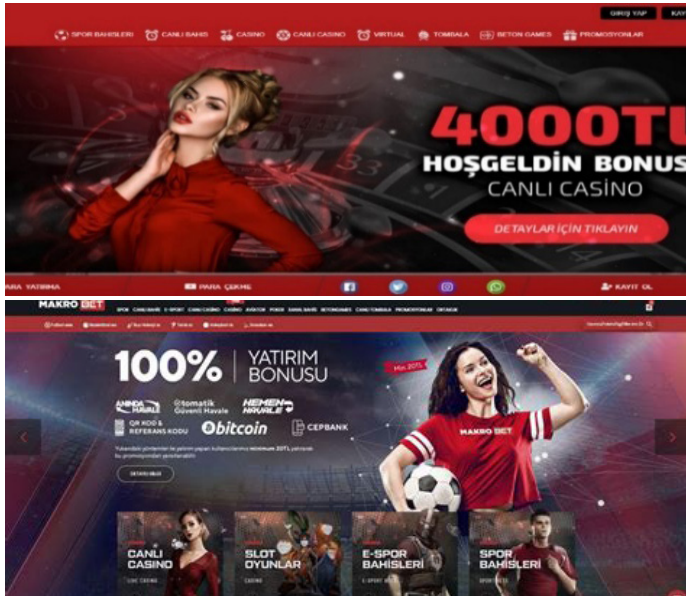


**Figure 8:** An example of an advertisement showing the marketing of betting games through the female body
**Source: h**ttps://www.casinomaxi708.com/tr/hesap-ac?from=GmxISJ1o
TyDMnYCv0X82xmNd7ZgqdRLk-AO0853447337&poduct
=common Accessed 04.01.2022.



**Figure 9:** Lionel Messi's scene wearing the Qatar Bist in the 2022 World Cup Final (Kilani, 2022).

change and adaptation to global trends. In particular, the alcohol debates that emerged during the 2022 World Cup and the alcohol regulation of the Qatari administration have been aimed at ensuring this harmony and conservative attitude. However, aggressive marketing and visibility of alcoholic beverages in sports through sponsorships and TV advertisements during football competitions is an important component. (Bodet & Amara, 2015). Qatar has tried to reconcile these two diametrically opposed spectrums by allowing the sale of alcohol in licensed spaces in the country but not in stadiums. Thus, it tried to balance the steps toward modernization with the preservation of tradition. In addition, sports competitions play an important role in cultural transmission between individuals and societies with different social values in different geographies, as in the relationality between religion and football (especially accelerated by digital information tools). This transfer, which usually occurs as a result of rational practices, is made functional in parallel with the means of capital exploitation. Moreover, as an outcome of the hegemonic nature of the context between capitalist capital and liberal democracy, it can be stated that it is the semiotic manifestation of power-oriented legitimacy (Figure 9). At this point, the fact that the concepts of *Arab culture (Qatar to wear "bist"), Europeans saw civilization* and *cultural capitalism (where is Shakira where is Tukoh Takah, culture industry)* (Figure 4) under the main category of *culture (*Figure 7), which were among the findings of the study, were intensively emphasized by the users together with the expressions of *boycott of exploitation* and *spread of Islam (Figure 4)* was a reflection of this relationality.

As a result, it was determined in the research that football spaces have multidimensional relations that are constructed by different actors rather than a static and apolitical structure. It is understood that football pitches, where spatial boundaries are significantly exceeded as application areas, can construct relational contexts with many forms of daily life such as identification, acculturation, politicization, and resistance against the structure of individuals and societies. It can also be stated that they can be instrumentalized in the functioning of the exploitation system as places that ensure the continuity of capital, which commodities all kinds of social phenomena. Therefore, it is concluded that football spaces, which are not directly seen as a hegemonic apparatus due to both explicit and implicit dynamics, play a role as an important component in their increasing sociopolitical, economic, and cultural relations.

**NOTES**
**1** Figure 7, which shows the relationships between main categories, subcategories, and concepts shaped by the expressions of Twitter users, was created according to the following dynamics: (a) Each main category is constructed as a separate network of relationships. (b) The

main category is located at the center of the network and subcategories and concepts are designed to radiate from this center to the periphery. (c) The main category, subcategory, and related concepts are shaped in different colors to facilitate distinction. (d) The main category, subcategory, and concept links are shown with colored, continuous lines and the arrow directions indicate the subordinate-superior hierarchy of the code system. Relationships between subcategories and concepts are shown with discolored and dashed lines. (e) The thicknesses of both the colored, continuous lines showing the main category, subcategory, and code connection between the concepts and the colorless, dashed lines showing the relationship between them were created in a way that their thicknesses are directly proportional to the frequency rates.

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