



The Dynamics of Qatar's Perspective on LGBTQ Issues during World Cup 2022

Ramdan Lamato^{1*}, Muhammad Abdul Azis²

^{1,2} Sriwijaya University, 30139, Indonesia

Email : ¹ ramdanlamato@fisip.unsri.ac.id *; ² muhammadabdulazis079@gmail.com

Abstract: *This paper examines the influence of Qatar's Islamic identity on its policies during the 2022 FIFA World Cup, with a focus on LGBTQ rights. Using a constructivist approach, the study explores how Qatar's adherence to Islamic principles, particularly Sharia law, shaped its regulations and responses to international pressures. Qatar's prohibition of LGBTQ symbols, despite assurances of safety for all attendees, including the LGBTQ community, drew significant criticism from Western nations and human rights organizations. The study highlights the tension between Qatar's cultural and religious values and global expectations surrounding inclusivity and human rights. It also explores the broader implications of Qatar's policies, reflecting its challenge of balancing traditional Islamic values while hosting a global event. Ultimately, this research sheds light on the complexities of cultural diplomacy and the difficulties nations like Qatar face in navigating conflicting global and local norms.*

Keywords: *Qatar Perspective, Islam, LGBTQ Issues, 2022 World Cup*

1. INTRODUCTION

The World Cup, widely regarded as the most prestigious international football tournament, is held every four years and captivates audiences around the globe. In a landmark decision on December 2, 2010, Qatar was officially selected as the host nation for the 2022 World Cup, marking the first time an Arab state had been given this honor. This decision not only placed Qatar in the global spotlight but also represented a significant milestone for the state and the wider Middle Eastern region. For Qatar, hosting the World Cup was more than a sporting achievement—it was an opportunity to present itself as a modern, progressive nation, showcasing its technological advancements, infrastructural development, and cultural richness. The tournament also offered Qatar a platform to project a positive image of Muslim-majority states, breaking away from negative stereotypes and highlighting their capacity to organize large-scale global events in line with international standards (Hapsari & Muhaimin, 2023).

However, the lead-up to the 2022 World Cup was not without controversy. Qatar's legal framework, deeply rooted in Islamic principles, clashed with the expectations of many Western nations, particularly regarding LGBTQ rights. In the run-up to the tournament, Qatar announced a series of regulations, including a ban on LGBTQ-related campaigns and symbols. This decision triggered sharp reactions from human rights advocates, who argued that such restrictions violated fundamental human rights. LGBTQ supporters, in particular, viewed Qatar's stance as a form of institutionalized discrimination and planned various

forms of protest during the tournament, including the wearing of rainbow-themed apparel as a visible show of solidarity (Hartana, 2021). These planned actions set the stage for a tense and highly publicized cultural confrontation between Qatar's Islamic legal system and the global advocacy for LGBTQ rights.

As a nation where the vast majority of the population adheres to Islam, Qatar's legal system has long been governed by Sharia law, which informs its policies on issues such as gender, sexuality, and family life. A key concept in Qatar's legal system is "Islamic nomocracy," which links the rule of law with Islamic principles, ensuring that the Quranic guidelines shape the state's legislative framework (Nur Rizki Pratiwi, 2023). Within this framework, the belief that humans are created as male and female, as clearly stated in the Quran (Surah An-Najm, 53:45 and Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:13), forms the foundation of Qatar's strict regulations regarding gender identity and sexual orientation. These teachings not only influence Qatar's domestic policies but also reinforce the state's approach to international events, such as the World Cup, where global expectations often conflict with local laws and cultural norms (Ermayani, 2017).

The tension between Qatar's religious values and the global advocacy for LGBTQ rights became particularly pronounced as the tournament drew closer. Out of the 32 states participating in the 2022 World Cup, 16 had laws that explicitly protected LGBTQ rights, reflecting a sharp contrast with Qatar's stance. These nations, including Australia, Canada, and several European states, view LGBTQ rights as an extension of universal human rights, advocating for non-discrimination and equal treatment of individuals regardless of their sexual orientation. Several of these states planned to use the World Cup as a platform to promote LGBTQ equality, with visible displays such as the "One Love" armband campaign, which became a symbol of solidarity against discrimination (Nur Rizki Pratiwi, 2023).

The "One Love" armband campaign, introduced by the Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB) in 2020, was one of the most prominent forms of protest planned by pro-LGBTQ nations. Worn by team captains, the armband signified opposition to discrimination of all forms and promoted inclusivity. However, Qatar took a firm stand against this initiative, banning the use of LGBTQ symbols, including the armband, both inside and outside stadiums. The government justified this ban as part of its broader effort to maintain its cultural and religious values, emphasizing that all visitors to the state, including players and fans, were expected to respect local customs and laws (Clara, 2017). These laws extended beyond LGBTQ issues, covering restrictions on alcohol, public

displays of affection, dress codes, and public behavior, all aimed at ensuring that the event conformed to Qatar's Islamic principles (Nur Rizki Pratiwi, 2023).

In addition to these internal regulations, Qatar's bid to host the World Cup included a formal legal document submitted to FIFA, outlining the potential risks and legal conditions associated with hosting the tournament. Among the key legal points highlighted in the document were Qatar's adherence to Sharia law and the associated restrictions on certain goods, services, and activities, including LGBTQ campaigns. FIFA accepted these legal conditions, acknowledging Qatar's sovereignty and legal autonomy. However, this acceptance placed FIFA in a difficult position, as the organization had previously championed inclusivity in football, particularly through its engagement with the LGBTQ community. Qatar's legal framework, based on what scholars have termed the "Legal Unboundedness of State's Power," meant that FIFA had little authority to challenge the host state's regulations (Legal and Government Guarantees).

The concept of "Legal Unboundedness of State's Power" underscores the fact that Qatar, as a sovereign state, exercises full control over its legal and political decisions. This legal sovereignty limited FIFA's ability to enforce its own inclusivity policies, particularly regarding LGBTQ rights. While FIFA had previously sought to create a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTQ individuals within the football community, it was now forced to navigate Qatar's legal constraints, which were deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. As a result, FIFA faced a dilemma: prioritize the smooth execution of the tournament, or uphold its values of inclusivity, potentially at the cost of straining its relationship with the host nation.

The clash between Qatar's Islamic values and the global movement for LGBTQ rights during the 2022 World Cup sparked widespread debate and highlighted the larger cultural and political tensions surrounding the event. While many Western nations viewed the issue as one of fundamental human rights, Qatar remained persistent in its rejection of LGBTQ symbols and campaigns, positioning itself as a defender of Islamic principles. This divergence in perspectives brought to light the complex relationship between cultural values, international human rights, and the role of global sporting events as platforms for advocacy. Ultimately, the controversy surrounding LGBTQ rights at the 2022 World Cup illustrates the delicate balance that states like Qatar must navigate when hosting global events that invite scrutiny from diverse cultural and political perspectives.

The discussion surrounding the LGBTQ campaign during the 2022 Qatar World Cup is particularly compelling, as it elicited a wide range of responses toward Qatar as the host nation. There was a clear contrast between Qatar's stance and that of many participating states, which openly supported LGBTQ rights during this high-profile event. As a predominantly Muslim state, Qatar firmly expressed its opposition to LGBTQ-related elements, especially the use of the rainbow symbol. This study examines these dynamics, focusing on how Qatar managed the intersection of its cultural identity, legal sovereignty, and the global expectations for inclusivity, particularly in relation to LGBTQ rights. By analyzing media coverage, policy decisions, and international reactions, this research provides insights into the broader implications of hosting such a high-profile event in a state with a deeply rooted religious and legal framework.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In conducting this research, the author reviewed several key studies to build a solid foundation on the role of media in shaping diplomacy and international relations, particularly within the context of Qatar's global standing and its cultural identity. Retno Sri Wahyuni's study, *Agenda Setting of Al Jazeera in the Egyptian Conflict of 2013: An Analysis of the Media's Role as a Diplomatic Actor for Qatar*, emphasizes how Al Jazeera, a state-sponsored media outlet, played a pivotal role in shaping diplomatic narratives during the Egyptian conflict. Through critical and bold reporting, Al Jazeera acted not only as a media channel but as a diplomatic instrument, elevating public voices that were previously marginalized by official government narratives. This study reveals the powerful intersection of media and diplomacy, showing how Qatar strategically utilized its media presence to assert influence in regional conflicts, a theme that resonates with Qatar's broader international strategies.

In a similar vein, Rosania Ayu Ningtyas explored the role of Al Jazeera in the diplomatic severance between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, focusing on the Riyadh Agreement of 2013 and 2014. Her study highlights how Qatar's refusal to comply with certain provisions of the agreement, particularly through its use of Al Jazeera to challenge Saudi Arabia's narratives, contributed to escalating tensions between the two nations. By focusing on this diplomatic crack, Ningtyas underscores the significance of media in the broader geopolitical power dynamics of the Gulf region, where media outlets often serve as tools for statecraft. Qatar's strategic use of media to resist regional pressure from Saudi Arabia illustrates how the state has positioned itself as a resilient actor within the contentious landscape of Middle

Eastern politics. Further expanding on Qatar's media strategy, Salsabila Arini Kusuma and colleagues, in their research titled *Public Diplomacy and Media: The Use of Al Jazeera's Broadcasting Network in Qatar's Diplomatic Crisis 2017-2019*, examined Qatar's response to the diplomatic crisis involving several Arab states. The study reveals that Qatar employed a nuanced communication strategy, integrating routine, strategic, and long-term messaging to frame its narratives and manage its image on the global stage. By leveraging Al Jazeera's broadcasting capabilities, Qatar was able to clarify its position, challenge the legitimacy of its isolation, and maintain diplomatic resilience. This analysis highlights how media can be deployed as a form of soft power, enabling states like Qatar to counterbalance hard geopolitical pressures through controlled messaging and public diplomacy.

A different perspective is offered by Wildan Rahman Alief's study on media framing of the LGBTQ campaign at the 2022 Qatar World Cup. His research, *News Framing of the LGBTQ Campaign at the Qatar 2022 World Cup by Bola.Com Media*, illustrates the intricate balancing act Qatar performed between upholding its cultural and religious values and adhering to FIFA's inclusivity mandates. The study identified two major themes in media reporting: respect for Qatar's cultural and religious norms, and respect for FIFA's global standards of diversity and inclusivity. This analysis shows how international media, particularly from non-Western perspectives, handled sensitive social issues like LGBTQ rights with caution, ensuring that cultural sensitivities were respected without openly defying global human rights norms. Such careful media framing is indicative of Qatar's broader approach to managing cultural controversies in a way that preserves its domestic identity while attempting to meet international expectations. Together, these studies offer a clear view of how Qatar strategically uses media, especially Al Jazeera, to navigate both regional diplomatic crises and broader cultural challenges. They show how Qatar leverages media not only to assert its influence in a politically competitive region but also to balance its Islamic identity with global expectations, such as those surrounding LGBTQ rights during the 2022 World Cup. These insights form the basis for this research, helping to understand how Qatar manages its image on the world stage through media, diplomacy, and cultural politics.

3. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on the analysis of Qatar as the host of the 2022 World Cup and its policy concerning the ban on LGBTQ campaigns. Data for this research was collected from a variety of secondary sources,

including books, journal articles, reports, and news articles. The data was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which comprises three key stages. The first stage, Data Reduction, involves summarizing and selecting essential data, which is then categorized to provide a clearer understanding of the subject and facilitate subsequent stages of the research. The second stage, Data Display, presents the data in the form of concise descriptions, diagrams, and categorical relationships, helping to better comprehend the phenomenon under study. The final stage, Conclusion Drawing and Verification, entails deriving conclusions from the analyzed data, allowing for the clarification of the core issues identified in the research (Miles & Huberman, 1992).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islam as Qatar's Moral Identity

Qatar is a Middle Eastern nation situated on the Arabian Peninsula, with Saudi Arabia to the south and the Persian Gulf bordering the rest of the state. Spanning only 11,571 square kilometers, Qatar is one of the smaller Arab nations by land size. On September 3, 1971, Qatar achieved independence from British rule, marking a pivotal moment in its modern history (Azisi, Noer, & Qomaruddin, 2021). Since the early 19th century, the state has been governed by the Al Thani family, with Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani founding the state. The evolution of Qatar's history is deeply intertwined with the power dynamics of the ruling dynasty. A significant shift in its foreign policy and decision-making occurred in 1995, when Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani ascended to power. This period saw Qatar increasingly prioritize soft power strategies, using its influence across diplomacy, media, culture, education, tourism, sports, economy, and humanitarian efforts. Under Sheikh Hamad's leadership, Qatar sought to project itself as a mediator in regional conflicts, balancing its relationships with both Western and Arab states (Kamrava, 2013). By using soft power, Qatar positioned itself as an influential player on the global stage, hosting diplomatic initiatives and international events such as the FIFA World Cup, which further enhanced its visibility. Moreover, the nation's growing investment in education and cultural diplomacy signaled its ambitions to extend influence beyond its size, making Qatar a key player in addressing geopolitical and cultural challenges in the Arab world and beyond.

During the reign of Emir Hamad, Qatar adopted a more active role on the international stage. The state began promoting democratic values among Arab nations and supporting more progressive movements. Under Sheikh Hamad's leadership, Qatar's foreign

policy underwent significant expansion, greatly enhancing the nation's influence globally. One of the most notable diplomatic achievements was Qatar's successful bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup. This success serves as tangible evidence of Qatar's effective diplomatic strategy, showcasing the ability of this small nation to compete and excel on the international level. Furthermore, this accomplishment reflects Qatar's growing role and influence within the global community, particularly in the realms of sports and cultural diplomacy (Sari, Sinulingga, & Permata, 2021).

Since gaining independence, Qatar has adopted an absolute monarchy as its system of governance. In this system, ultimate authority rests with the ruler, known in Qatar as the emir. A key characteristic of this absolute monarchy is the hereditary transfer of leadership through familial succession. In 2003, Qatar's political system underwent a significant development when the vast majority of its population (98%) approved a new constitution through a referendum. One of the key provisions of this constitution is the direct election of 30 out of the 45 members of the Legislative Council by the people. Islam plays a central role in this new constitution, serving as the fundamental basis for the state's laws and regulations. This is clearly reflected in Article 1, Chapter 1 of the Constitution on the State and the Principles of Governance, which states: "Qatar is an Arab State, sovereign and independent. Its religion is Islam, and the Islamic Law is the main source of its legislations. Its system is democratic, and its official language is the Arabic language. The people of Qatar are part of the Arab Nation." The constitution affirms Qatar's identity as an Arab Islamic state, while also emphasizing democratic elements within its governance system, reflecting an effort to balance tradition with modernity in the nation's political administration (Oxford University Press, 2003).

With the adoption of these laws into the national system, Islam and its values have been accepted as an integral part of Qatar's societal identity. From a constructivist perspective, this identity serves as a key driving factor in shaping Qatar's national policies. This policy orientation is reflected in the state's decision-making processes at the state level. As a consequence, Qatar's identity as an Islamic state significantly influences the decisions made by its government. A clear example of this influence can be seen in Qatar's policies regarding LGBTQ issues during the 2022 World Cup. The Qatari government imposed a ban on the display of LGBTQ-related symbols for all participants in the event, including spectators, teams, and crew members. This policy reflects Qatar's adherence to Islamic Sharia law, which views homosexual practices as contrary to religious teachings. Thus, this

decision illustrates how Qatar's Islamic identity shapes state policies, even in the context of an international event like the World Cup.

The relationship between Qatar and Islam is deeply intertwined, with Islamic values and norms forming an integral part of both the lives of its people and its leadership. The organization of the World Cup in Qatar cannot be separated from the Islamic values that underpin the state's societal fabric. In this context, Qatar's religious diplomacy played a crucial role throughout the event. Religious diplomacy, as a form of cultural diplomacy, is a reflection of the state's use of soft power to influence international relations. Through this approach, religion serves as a key factor in shaping Qatar's foreign policy and its interactions with other nations on the global stage. By engaging religious diplomacy, Qatar sought to balance the demands of hosting a major international event with its commitment to Islamic principles. This strategy allowed Qatar to project its Islamic identity while fostering constructive diplomatic relations with the diverse states participating in the World Cup, each with their own cultural and religious backgrounds (Curanović, 2012). Through this blend of religious identity and diplomacy, Qatar navigated the complexities of global expectations while remaining true to its national and religious values.

During the opening ceremony of the World Cup, Qatar used the opportunity to introduce Islamic values to a global audience. One notable approach was featuring Ghanim Al Muftah, a prominent Qatari figure, who recited verses from the Quran. In a dialogue with famous actor Morgan Freeman, Al Muftah recited the thirteenth verse of Surah Al-Hujurat, which delivers a universal message of human diversity. The verse states that Allah created mankind from a male and female, and then made them into different peoples and tribes, with the purpose of fostering mutual understanding and recognition. In addition to this, Qatar further disseminated Islamic values through more subtle methods. Across various public facilities in the state, visitors could find quotes from the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad displayed on walls. These efforts were part of Qatar's broader campaign to introduce Islamic teachings to international visitors. These actions reflect Qatar's attempt to blend its Islamic identity with its role as the host of a major global sporting event. By doing so, Qatar sought to promote universal Islamic values such as brotherhood and mutual understanding, while demonstrating that these values align with the spirit of global unity and sportsmanship celebrated by the World Cup (Hapsari & Muhaimin, 2023).

According to the 2020 data from Boston University's World Religion Database, Islam is the predominant religion in Qatar, with 78.5% of the population identifying as

Muslim. The religious composition of the state is as follows: Muslims make up 78.5% of the total population, Christians 13.1%, Hindus 3%, atheists and agnostics 2.2%, and Buddhists 1.8%. Qatar's total population is approximately 2.6 million, including 313,000 Qatari nationals and 2.3 million expatriates or foreign residents. Despite Islam being the majority religion, the Qatari constitution guarantees religious freedom for all citizens and residents, allowing non-Muslims to practice their faiths freely, provided these practices do not interfere with public order. This policy illustrates Qatar's effort to balance its Islamic identity with principles of religious tolerance. Qatar's approach to religious freedom demonstrates an attempt to accommodate the state's diverse population, particularly given the significant proportion of expatriates. This balancing of religious values with inclusive governance highlights Qatar's pragmatic approach to maintaining social harmony while preserving its Islamic character (Office of International Religious Freedom, 2022).

The moral identity and ethics of a state serve as the foundation for its behavior both domestically and internationally, shaping its policies, governance, and responses to global challenges. Rooted in cultural, religious, or philosophical traditions, these values influence how a state navigates complex issues such as human rights, diplomacy, and social justice (Kertzer et al., 2014). Whether upholding democratic ideals or religious principles, a state's actions reflect its moral compass, which can either enhance its credibility or expose tensions when moral ideals conflict with practical interests. The balancing act between ethical commitments and pragmatic considerations reveals the depth of a state's moral identity, demonstrating how it seeks to maintain legitimacy and influence in the global arena while staying true to its core values. Ultimately, a state's behavior is a reflection of the moral framework it upholds, whether in protecting its citizens, engaging with global norms, or asserting sovereignty in the face of external pressures.

Dynamics of LGBTQ Issues in Qatar

The history of the LGBTQ community in Qatar has been marked by various forms of discrimination, criminalization, and lack of recognition. Despite some positive developments, the LGBTQ community continues to face significant challenges to this day. Prior to the World Cup, the lives of LGBTQ individuals in Qatar were overshadowed by fear and strong social stigma. They were forced to conceal their true identities and expressions from the public. This situation is largely a result of Islam's position as the primary source of Qatar's constitution. According to the interpretation of Islamic law adhered to by the state, LGBTQ activities are seen as deviations from the values and norms that prevail in Qatari

society. This perspective has created a social and legal environment that is highly unfavorable for the LGBTQ community, forcing them to live in secrecy and fear of legal or social consequences if their identities are exposed. This condition reflects the tension between traditional values rooted in religious interpretation and modern issues of human rights and individual freedoms (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

In Qatar, all sexual activities outside of heterosexual relationships are considered illegal, based on the principles of Sharia law that guide the country's legal framework. These Islamic values and identity are reflected in various regulations enacted by the Qatari government. As a result, the LGBTQ community and all forms of its expression face criminalization, as they are deemed to be in violation of local morality. This phenomenon aligns with the constructivist theory in international relations, which asserts that the identity and norms adopted by a state play a significant role in shaping its national interests. In turn, these national interests determine the direction of a state's policies and actions (Zamzama, 2023).

When Qatar hosted the 2022 World Cup, global attention was focused on the situation of the LGBTQ community in the country. This sparked movements aimed at raising awareness and advancing the fight for LGBTQ rights. However, Qatar remained firm in its stance. On the contrary, the Qatari government implemented policies prohibiting all forms of LGBTQ activities and propaganda during the world's largest football tournament (Human Rights Watch, 2021). In the lead-up to the World Cup, an event shook Qatar when one of its citizens publicly disclosed his sexual orientation. Dr. Naser Mohamed became a pioneer as the first Qatari to openly identify as queer in an exclusive interview with the BBC. This decision came with severe consequences. Dr. Mohamed faced estrangement from his family and lost his inheritance rights. As a result, he sought asylum in the United States, citing the threat of persecution he faced in Qatar due to his sexual orientation, which was in conflict with the norms of his country (Harding, 2022).

Following the public disclosure of his identity, Dr. Naser Mohamed furthered his advocacy by founding the Alwan Foundation in 2022. The organization functions as a dedicated platform for the LGBTQ community in the Middle East, with a particular emphasis on Qatar. Through the Alwan Foundation, Dr. Mohamed expanded his efforts to promote and defend LGBTQ rights in the region, leveraging his personal experiences to inspire LGBTQ individuals globally. The foundation's core mission is to advance LGBTQ rights across the Middle East, with a specific focus on the Gulf states. To achieve these

objectives, the Alwan Foundation employs three key strategies: providing support to LGBTQ individuals, engaging in advocacy efforts, and conducting research on the status and development of LGBTQ issues in the Gulf region (Alwan Foundation, 2022).



Figure 1 Alwan Foundation Website Homepage

In an interview with TIME, Dr. Naser Mohamed highlighted the complexities faced by the LGBTQ community in Qatar. He emphasized the numerous challenges that the community continue to encounter in their fight for rights. One of the primary obstacles is the deeply entrenched conservative views and strict interpretations of religious doctrines that dominate the state. Dr. Mohamed underscored that security is a significant concern for LGBTQ individuals in Qatar, as they are frequently exposed to threats of harassment, persecution, violence, and even arrest. Such conditions pose a grave danger to their safety and well-being. Moreover, he explained that LGBTQ individuals often face social exclusion, even within their own families. In many cases, parents sever ties with their children upon discovering their differing sexual orientation, exacerbating the psychological and social burdens faced by the LGBTQ community in Qatar (Naser, 2022).

Qatar's constitution explicitly criminalizes sexual relations between adult men over the age of 16, irrespective of religious background. Violations of this law, as outlined in Article 285, carry a maximum prison sentence of seven years. Furthermore, Qatari legislation mandates prison sentences of one to three years for individuals found guilty of "inciting" or "persuading" another man to engage in acts described as "sodomy or immorality," as stipulated in Article 296. Article 288 provides for more severe penalties, including up to ten years of imprisonment for individuals involved in consensual sexual

relations outside of marriage with persons over the age of 16, a provision that applies to both same-sex and heterosexual relationships (Qatar Legal Portal, 2004). Qatar's legal framework is deeply rooted in Islamic principles, with the constitution recognizing Islam as the official state religion and Sharia law as the primary source of legislation. Alongside the Penal Code, Qatar enforces Sharia-based legal interpretations that criminalize same-sex relations between men. Within this context, the death penalty is a potential sanction for individuals convicted of such offenses. This legal structure underscores the profound influence of Islamic law on Qatar's judicial system and highlights the strict penalties imposed on same-sex relationships within the state.

Qatar's Perspective on LGBTQ Restrictions during 2022 World Cup

Qatar's approach to the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) community has been the subject of considerable debate and controversy, particularly in the context of its role as the host nation for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The country enforces stringent laws regarding LGBTQ rights, where homosexual activity and other related practices are classified as illegal. These regulations are deeply rooted in Qatar's adherence to Islamic Sharia law, which views homosexuality as a criminal act. Penalties for such offenses range from imprisonment and corporal punishment to, in certain cases, the death penalty. The legal and social framework surrounding LGBTQ individuals in Qatar has drawn sharp criticism from international human rights organizations. These groups contend that Qatar's policies foster an environment of discrimination and insecurity for LGBTQ individuals, creating significant concerns about the protection of human rights. The strict enforcement of these laws has been criticized for not only limiting personal freedoms but also for perpetuating a climate that is at odds with global human rights norms, particularly in the context of international events like the World Cup, where inclusivity and diversity are increasingly emphasized. As such, Qatar's legal stance on LGBTQ issues highlights the tension between its cultural and religious values and the international expectations surrounding human rights and personal freedoms.

Prior to the commencement of the 2022 World Cup, Qatar, as the host nation, submitted a detailed document outlining the regulations that would be enforced during the tournament. This proposal received formal approval from FIFA. Despite the strict legal framework concerning LGBTQ issues in the country, the Qatari government expressed its commitment to ensuring the safety and comfort of all participants and visitors, including

those from the LGBTQ community. However, the Supreme Committee of Qatar implemented a ban on the use of LGBTQ-related symbols, such as captain's armbands and other campaign materials, during the World Cup. Constitutionally, LGBTQ behavior is considered contrary to Qatari law and classified as a criminal offense. Article 296 of Qatar's Penal Code specifically addresses this, stating that individuals found guilty of "leading, inciting, or persuading a man in any way to commit sodomy or immoral acts" can face imprisonment for one to three years (Jamba, 2023). This regulation reflects the state's adherence to Islamic principles and highlights the ongoing tension between its domestic laws and the international norms surrounding LGBTQ rights, particularly in the context of hosting a global event like the World Cup.

Qatar's policies regarding LGBTQ rights sparked strong reactions from Western nations and international organizations. Countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark publicly condemned Qatar's stance, expressing their support for the LGBTQ community. International human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, argued that Qatar's actions violated fundamental human rights principles and called for the removal of the restrictions. Additionally, several football players and national teams demonstrated solidarity with the LGBTQ community by wearing rainbow-colored armbands. Western media outlets provided extensive coverage of Qatar's controversial policies and the broader situation within the country, further amplifying global attention. This controversy highlighted a significant clash of values between Qatar's legal and cultural framework and the more progressive Western perspectives on LGBTQ rights. The resulting diplomatic tensions and global debates underscored the challenges of hosting international sporting events in countries where social views and legal systems differ from widely accepted global norms, particularly on sensitive issues such as LGBTQ rights (Murley, 2022).

In an official statement, Major General Abdul Aziz Abdullah Al Ansari, Director of the Department of International Cooperation and Chair of the National Counterterrorism Committee, affirmed that LGBTQ individuals would be welcomed in Qatar. However, he also emphasized the prohibition of displaying LGBTQ flags during the 2022 World Cup. It is important to note that this policy does not imply that Qatar would prevent LGBTQ individuals from attending matches or condone violence against them. Fatma Samoura, Secretary General of Qatar's football organization, reinforced this message by stating, "Regardless of your race, religion, or social and sexual orientation, Qatar is ready to

welcome you with the best hospitality you can imagine” (Harris, 2022). As cited in Dailymail, the Qatar 2022 World Cup organizers committed to welcoming all visitors, regardless of their sexual orientation, and assured that no one would face exclusion. The restrictions were primarily aimed at limiting the display of symbols associated with the LGBTQ community, rather than targeting LGBTQ individuals themselves. This approach reflects Qatar's attempt to balance its traditional values with international expectations as the host of a global sporting event, while striving to create an inclusive environment for all visitors (Abdillah, 2022).

Despite criticism from many Western countries regarding Qatar's policies, some World Cup participants chose to respect the host nation's regulations. One notable example is Hugo Lloris, captain of the French national football team. When asked by journalists about his opinion on wearing a rainbow-colored captain's armband, Lloris emphasized the importance of "respecting" Qatar's culture. He drew a parallel with France, stating, "In France, when we host foreign visitors, we expect them to abide by our rules and respect our culture. I will do the same when I visit Qatar." Lloris's response reflects a different approach to addressing cultural and policy differences, underscoring the importance of mutual respect and adapting to local norms when in another country, despite potential disagreements. His position highlights an attempt to bridge cultural divides and minimize conflict while participating in an international sporting event (Lewis, 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

Qatar operates under an absolute monarchy, with the emir serving as the highest authority. In 2003, a new constitution was ratified through a national referendum, establishing Islam as the foundation of the country's legal system while incorporating elements of democracy. Article 1, Chapter 1 of the Constitution on the State and Principles of Governance states: "Qatar is an Arab State, sovereign and independent. Its religion is Islam, and the Islamic Law is the main source of its legislations. Its system is democratic, and its official language is the Arabic language. The people of Qatar are part of the Arab Nation." This constitutional framework highlights Islam as a core element of Qatar's governance and legal identity. This Islamic identity plays a significant role in shaping Qatar's policies, including its approach to hosting the 2022 World Cup.

The implementation of Islamic-based laws within Qatar's governance system has firmly established Islamic values as a fundamental component of the nation's identity. From

a constructivist perspective, this identity acts as a key driving force shaping Qatar's national policies. Qatar's close relationship with Islamic teachings is evident in the integration of religious principles into both the daily lives of its citizens and the conduct of its leaders. LGBTQ activity is explicitly prohibited under Qatar's legal framework, which is based on Islamic Sharia law, and carries strict criminal penalties. This legal stance was formalized ahead of the 2022 World Cup, when Qatar submitted its tournament regulations to FIFA. While the Qatari government assured that the safety of all visitors, including LGBTQ individuals, would be protected, it maintained its prohibition on LGBTQ campaign symbols during the tournament. Legally, LGBTQ behavior is considered criminal in Qatar, with penalties including imprisonment. However, the government reiterated that LGBTQ visitors would be welcomed, albeit without the display of LGBTQ flags or symbols.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions that contributed to the completion of this research.

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