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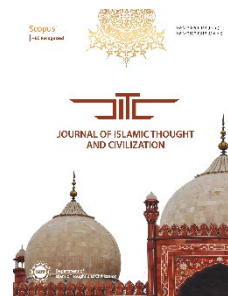
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Representing the Belief of Muslims: Role and Actions of Qatar to Encounter Islamophobia during 2022 World Cup

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Abstract

Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Islam was presumed and identified as a religion of violence and terror. However, in the last decade, there have been counter efforts from different Muslim countries against this opinion. One of them is Qatar, an Arab-Muslim country that organized and hosted the 2022 World Cup. The current research describes Qatar's progress as the host for the 2022 World Cup, with the data collected using qualitative methods, sourced from interviews and observations, investigating Qatar's strategy for playing out, to deal with Muslims, and fighting Islamophobia. Interviews and print media investigations helped to understand the context of Islamophobia. Qatar's role captures how the anti-Islamophobia show is built by painting a positive image of Muslims and Islam and then portraying what Islam really is. An empirical study was also conducted to analyze media discourse in order to describe the global impact of anti-Islamophobia in Qatar's roles and actions. According to a psycho-sociological perspective through role theory, this research determines that Qatar represents the Muslim community to promote peaceful Islam. The results show that the noble human values in the Al-Qur'ān-Ḥadīth which have been misunderstood so far have led to the marginalization of Muslims. Therefore, Qatar has a mission to spread the values of truth against the stereotypes of the world community towards Muslims which are detrimental to their existence. Moreover, this research provides evidence of psycho-sociological phenomena in a broad context.

Keywords: Al-Qur'ān Ḥadīth appearances, Islamophobia, Muslim society, Qatar actions, Qatar 2022 World Cup

Introduction

Scholarly and journalistic publications on the status of Muslims in Western Europe have proliferated over the past three decades.¹ This substantial growth is largely driven by domestic and international developments, such as the Iranian Revolution, the Rushdie affair, the Gulf War, and the one that occurred in the former Yugoslavia, the Afghanistan revolution, and increased political interest in Islam. Another important factor is the significant increase in Muslim migration to European Union (EU) Member States. Recently, the governments of these countries realized that their societies would continue to encounter many Muslims with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Unfortunately, this massive coverage in various places led to an increase in Islamophobia.²

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¹Gamal M. M. Mostafa, "Correcting the Image of Islam and Muslims in the West: Challenges and Opportunities for Islamic Universities and Organizations," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 27:3 (2007): 371-386, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602000701737210>.

²F. Uenal, R. Bergh, J. Sidanius, A. Zick, S. Kimel, J. R. Kunst, "The Nature of Islamophobia: A Test of a Tripartite View in Five Countries," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 47 (2) (2021): 275–292. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167220922643>.

Islamophobia is a phobia or a fear, hatred towards Islam or Muslims in general, especially when viewed from the perspective of Islamization and sources of terrorism.³ The scope and precise definition of the term Islamophobia, including its relation to race, has been the subject of much debate. Some scholars consider it a form of xenophobia or racism, while others argue that there is no connection between them; especially on the basis that religion is not the same as race.

The origin of Islamophobia is also an important topic of debate, especially among commentators who present their own arguments. Some of the reasons of its origination stated were the 9/11 attacks, the rise of militant groups, such as ISIS, terror attacks in various places, the increase in the Muslim population in Europe, and the United States since their governments accepted refugees from conflicted areas in the Middle East and Africa, the imposition of Islamic law, and others.⁴ This phenomenon is identified as a barrier that makes it difficult for nations, religious organizations, and civilizations to coexist. Islamophobia causes the people of East and West to exhibit unfair and irrational attitudes towards Muslims.⁵ This includes the usage of hate speech based on prejudice and hostility towards the Muslim community, religion, civilization, and symbols.⁶

Keeping the above mentioned situation in view, scholars, religious leaders, the elite, and decision-makers must work together to unravel this phenomenon and address the hatred and unfair judgments it generates concerning the rights of Muslims and the existence of their religion, society, and culture. The most critical task is to move humanity from isolation to communication, conflict to co-existence, and incompatible privacy to integrated universality.

The collective awareness of the Muslim community about the stereotypes imposed on them and the increasing Islamophobia in different parts of the world causes this group to counter these perceived unfair views.⁷ Gamal M Mustafa stated that the idea of correcting the image of Islam is based on universities. However, the efforts to guide Muslim minorities in the West to properly represent (models) Islam by participating in media programs in order to display the true image of this religion were promoted. Gamal advocates establishing local Islamic television channels and information centers in Western countries and communities to rectify the image of Islam. The role of universities in improving this distorted image by translating classical Islamic texts into different languages was also emphasized by Gamal. This also includes supporting Muslim students who were raised in the West to study in Islamic universities. Muslims are urged to establish branches of Islamic universities in the West and increase training programs for scholars using the Western language. This

³Mohammad Yaseen Gada, "Islamophobia And Its Historical Roots: Content, Context, and Consequences," *Hamdard Islamicus*, Vol. XL, No. 2 (2017): 35-58, <https://hamdardislamicus.com.pk/index.php/hi/article/view/149>.

⁴Kawtar Najib, and Carmen Teeple Hopkins, "Geographies of Islamophobia," *Social and Cultural Geography*, 21:4 (2020): 449-457, DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2019.1705993

⁵Kazeem Oluwaseun Dauda, "Islamophobia and Religious Intolerance: Threats to Global Peace and Harmonious Co-Existence," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, No. 2 (2020), DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/qjijis.v8i2.6811>

⁶Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, Jarman Arroisi, Muhammad Taqiyuddin, Mohammad Syam'un Salim, "Analyzing Islamophobia vs Hate Speech: Al-Attas' Views on the Corruption of Knowledge," *al-Qalam* 36, No. 1 (2019): 1-18 DOI: <http://Dx.Doi.Org/10.32678/Alqalam.V36i2.2313>

⁷Aliya A. Khan, Encountering Islamophobia in the Medical Profession, *CMAJ* June 13, 2022 194 (23) E815-E816; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.220455>

would enable them to engage in preaching without an interpreter, as conducted at Al-Azhar in Egypt.⁸ The provision of learning guides (and Activities) for Western Muslims is also extremely relevant.⁹

As an Arab-Muslim country, Qatar is also aware of all these. In the past two decades, this nation has massively promoted its social-historical background through various aspects. Qatar promotes a positive image of Islam through state diplomacy at the United Nations.¹⁰ Islamic moderation is also advocated through education and science, knowledge, and technology development. Even Qatar incorporates the values of Islamic beauty in tourism, for instance, by proposing to host the 2022 World Cup. The country availed this opportunity to showcase the importance of Al-Qur'ān and Hadīth which aligns with human values and civilization.

The phenomenon described above is discussed in the current study using a social psychological approach. In this context, social psychology analyzes the behavior of an individual, group, or specific community unit. Furthermore, in this situation, Qatar represents the Muslim community or group that faces a larger global social context. The current research used the role theory to explain Qatar's actions during the 2022 World Cup. Role theory is a sociological and social psychological perspective that considers most of the daily activities played out by socially-defined categories, such as mother, manager, and teacher. A social role is a set of rights, obligations, expectations, norms, and behaviors that needs to be adhered to by an individual or community. In this perspective, the Muslim community - represented by Qatar - adheres to the rights, obligations, expectations, norms, and behaviors on the world stage to fulfill its role and face various relevant challenges.¹¹

According to B. J. Biddle, role theory is quite useful in predicting the future actions of an individual or community by observing their social reactions and behaviors. Therefore, it not only examines a person's or community's behavior, however, it also orientates its study, based on social position and other factors.¹² Role theory is also connected to two science disciplines, namely psychology and sociology.

In role theory, theater, stage, or arena is an important metaphor used by a person or specific community to showcase certain performances. The research assumes that Qatar used the 2022 World Cup as a stage to showcase the Muslim community's new role and combat negative views and stereotypes towards Islam.

C. S. Collins and C. M. Stockton stated that in qualitative research, role theory describes role indicators. Firstly, the role of an individual or community is based on social interactions that lead to societal evaluations and labeling. Secondly, it emanates from behaviors shaped by the norms and expectations of a wider social life. Thirdly, this role is usually executed by an individual or

⁸As'ad, D. I. Ansusa Putra, and Arfan, "Being Al-Wasatiyah Agents: The Role of Azharite Organization in the Moderation of Indonesian Religious Constellation," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 11 (2) (2021): <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.112.07>.

⁹Gamal M. M. Mostafa, "Correcting the Image of Islam and Muslims in the West: Challenges and Opportunities for Islamic Universities and Organizations," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*. 27, No. 3 (2007): 371 – 386, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13602000701737210>

¹⁰Alya Ahmed S. A Al-Thani, "The Draft Resolution of International Day to Combat Islamophobia," *Qatar Speeches*, 2021-12-06, A/76/PV.44, URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3983633?ln=en>

¹¹A. M. Koenig, and A. H Eagly, "Evidence for the Social Role Theory of Stereotype Content: Observations of Groups' Roles Shape Stereotypes," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 107 (3) (2014): 371–392, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037215>.

¹²B. J. Biddle, "Recent Developments in Role Theory," *Annual Review of Sociology* 12 (1986): 67-92, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.12.080186.000435>

community referred to as the actor. Fourthly, the role of an individual or community receives reactions from another person or group, either in the form of rejection or other social pressures.¹³

In order to understand the Qatar 2022 World Cup phenomenon, it is relevant to apply the role theory. However, Jeanne Jackson criticized the role theory by questioning its accuracy in describing human behavior.¹⁴ Jeanne identified five of its weaknesses in sociological studies. The suitability of indicators, social positions, and factors underlying the Muslim community are relevant to the use of role theory in order to explain the phenomena that occurred during the Qatar 2022 World Cup. These were empirically tested against the actions and performances on the world stage. The current study also highlights the conflicts that tend to occur when one is expected to perform multiple roles simultaneously.

2. Methodology

The major research question is how can an individual or group understand the phenomenon of promoting Islamic values by Qatar during the 2022 World Cup from the social psychological perspective? This question was answered using three indicators. Firstly, what is the role of the Muslim community in a global society? Secondly, what are the expectations of the Muslim community from Qatar during the 2022 World Cup? Thirdly, how do Qatar's actions fulfill the Muslim community's expectations? Furthermore, it also describes the challenges faced by Qatar in fulfilling its role with respect to other social communities.

To answer the above questions and the formulation of research problem, this study used a descriptive qualitative method. The data was collected from interviews and observations. Interviews were directed to the committee of Country Hassan Al-Thawadi as Secretary General Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy Qatar World Cup 2022. These interviews were held on 10th January, 2023. On the other side, interviews were conducted from Lolwah Al Marri as President Qatar Women's Sport Committee on 12th January, 2023. These interviews helped to investigate Qatar's strategy for playing out how to deal with Muslims and fight Islamophobia.

Media observations and investigations are set as selected data to understand the context of Islamophobia and Qatar's commitment to fighting these issues. An empirical study was also conducted to analyze media discourse to describe the global impact of anti-Islamophobia on Qatar's roles and actions.

3. Social Role of the Muslim Community: A Paradoxical Reality

The social role of the Muslim community is evident in its status worldwide. This is realized by evaluating their behavior in response to the social environment.¹⁵ The social role of the Muslim community collectively affects society at large which is a long and tiring debate. Several kinds of literature discuss the social role of the modern Muslim community. Based on the intellectual categorization of social roles in this modern era, there are three groups of Muslims. Firstly, those

¹³C. S. Collins, and C. M. Stockton, "The Central Role of Theory in Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17(1) (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918797475>.

¹⁴Jeanne Jackson, "Contemporary Criticisms of Role Theory," *Journal of Occupational Science*, 5:2, (1998): 49-55, DOI: [10.1080/14427591.1998.9686433](https://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.1998.9686433).

¹⁵Asaf Hussain, "Beyond Islamic Fundamentalism," *Islamic Studies* 32, No. 2 (1993): 241-243, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20840125>.

associated with terrorism, secondly, moderate Muslims, identified based on their role in initiating peace, and thirdly, the secular ones characterized with respect to affirming westernization.¹⁶

Firstly, the debates and discourses over the last three decades that labeling Muslims as terrorists. However, Caroline Mala Corbin, in an article entitled "Terrorists Are Always Muslims but Never White: At the Intersection of Critical Race Theory and Propaganda," stated that the label of terrorism is media's propaganda and the political interests of certain groups.¹⁷

The labeling of the Muslim community as terrorists impacts on social interaction and even relevant policies implemented by the Western and Eastern worlds. Jocelyne Cesari, in a journal entitled "Muslims in the West after 9/11 Religion, Politics, and Law", stated that the situation and status of Islamic terrorism have made European countries and the US to enact immigration, multiculturalism, and secularism policies shaped by the new international context as an evidence of the 'war on terrorist's attacks'. However, the labeling of 'Islamic terrorism'—even suicide attacks—is not an Islamic phenomenon by definition.

This has sparked a fundamental debate in the West and the Muslim community regarding the relationship between Islamic actions and teachings. Most Western analysts feel hesitant to identify similar actions as the true teaching of one of the world's major religions. They view it as a fundamentally peaceful and tolerant deviation. Western leaders, such as George W. Bush and Tony Blair have repeatedly stated that the war against terrorism has no connection to Islam, rather it is to counter crime.¹⁸

However, the statement mentioned earlier has been opposed by figures, both within and outside the Muslim world, since there is no connection between Islam and terrorism including Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the academician Bruce Lawrence.¹⁹ Former US President Barack Obama explained why the term "terrorism" was used instead of "Islamic terrorism". Obama found the irresponsible attitude of terrorist organizations to claim the cloak of Islam as a barbaric and violent act. Therefore, Obama urged the entire world to be careful not to equate the killers (terrorists) with the billions of Muslims globally.²⁰ This group is referred to by various terms, such as Muslim fundamentalists and Islamists. Secondly, although some countries still identify Islam with acts of terrorism, in the last decade, the discourse on moderate Muslims that strikes a balance with the assessment of the world community about their roles has become stronger. However, the question of who are those referred to as "moderate Muslims" and "radical Islamic terrorists" remains

¹⁶Umma Farida, "Radikalisme, Moderatisme, Dan Liberalisme Pesantren: Melacak Pemikiran Dan Gerakan Keagamaan Pesantren Di Era Globalisasi," [Radicalism, Moderateism, And Liberalism Of Islamic Boarding Schools: Tracing Islamic Thoughts And Religious Movements Of Islamic Boarding Schools In The Era Of Globalization], *Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 10, No 1 (2015): 145-163, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/edukasia.v10i1.789>.

¹⁷Caroline Mala Corbin, "Terrorists Are Always Muslim but Never White: At the Intersection of Critical Race Theory and Propaganda," *Fordham Law Review* 86 (2): (2017): 455, <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr/vol86/iss2/5>

¹⁸Mervat F. Hatem, "Discourses on the "War on Terrorism" in the U.S. and its Views of the Arab, Muslim, and Gendered "Other", *The Arab Studies Journal* 11/12, No. 2/1 (2004): 77-97.

¹⁹Aarish Ullah Khan, "The Terrorist Threat and the Policy Response in Pakistan," *SIPRI Policy Paper* No. 11; Bárbara Motta and David P. Succi Junior, "Legitimation through Collectivization: Al Qaeda and US Discourses on the Use of Force," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (2021), DOI: [10.1080/1057610X.2021.1961673](https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.1961673)

²⁰Trevor McCriskin, "Ten years on: Obama's War on Terrorism in Rhetoric and Practice," *International Affairs* 87, No. 4 (2011): 781-801.

unresolved.²¹ Moderate Muslims are viewed from the actions of some leaders who deny any connection between their religion and terrorism. On the other hand, they cannot deny that many terrorists claim to act in the name of Islam.²² Alex P. Schmid researched to discover the position of 1.6 billion Muslims globally towards terrorism. It also distinguished between jihadists, Islamists, conservative, and pluralist Muslims. Schmid also viewed the criteria used to distinguish "moderate Muslims" from others.²³

Schmid identified the role of moderation in Islam by focusing on global movements that originated in Malaysia. Research stated that Indonesia is an example of moderate Muslims led by Islamic organizations, that is, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. However, some leading scholars emphasized that moderation is a core Islamic value and many Muslims dislike being called "moderate" since they do not want to be seen as pro-Western.²⁴

While performing their social role, moderate Muslims oppose against Islamic terrorism, although this is often ignored by Western media. Meanwhile, their stance is connected to sources rooted in Islam and contextualized with external institutions. The most contextual external institution is humanism's value which serves as a middle ground for moderate individuals of all religions and political persuasions.²⁵ For instance, NU advocates for the division of three types of solidarity: human, Islamic, and national solidarity (*ukhuwwah insaniyah, ukhuwwah islamiyah and ukhuwwah wathoniyyah*) as the knowledge and social role to determine their stance in the global community.²⁶

Najib Burhani stated that Muhammadiyah is dominated by members who have a moderate religious background. However, some of its citizens tend to be exclusive or puritan in theological terms. The role of Muhammadiyah in providing social services is a factor that has succeeded in neutralizing this organization from being trapped in Islamism.²⁷

Thirdly, secular Muslims' social role differs from that of Islamic fundamentalists in assessing human performance. These Muslims are referred to as secular because their religious principles reject the idea of the non-existence of God. Secular Muslims emphasize social roles concerned with innovative exploration that adhere to the changing times. Additionally, these individuals have a long lineage in the tradition of Islamic law and theology.

²¹Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Al-Tawassuṭ wa-l I'tidāl: The NU and Moderatism in Indonesian Islam," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 40 (2012): 564-581, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-12341262>

²²Margaretha A. van Es, Nina ter Laan, and Erik Meinema, "Beyond 'Radical' versus 'Moderate'? New Perspectives on the Politics of Moderation in Muslim Majority and Muslim Minority Settings," *Religion* 51: 2 (2021): 161-168, DOI: 10.1080/0048721X.2021.1865616.

²³Alex P. Schmid, "The Revised Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 6, No. 2 (2012): 158-159.

²⁴Alex P. Schmid, "Moderate Muslims, and Islamist Terrorism: Between Denial and Resistance," *ICCT Research Paper* (2017), DOI: 10.19165/2017.1.09.

²⁵Bassam Tibi, "Islamic Humanism vs. Islamism: Cross-Civilizational Bridging," *An Interdisciplinary Journal* 95, No. 3 (2012): 230-254, <https://doi.org/10.5325/soundings.95.3.0230>.

²⁶Masdar Hilmy, "Whither Indonesia Islamic Moderatism? A Reexamination on the Moderate Vision of Muhammadiyah and NU," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 7, No. 1 (2013), DOI: [10.15642/JIIS.2013.7.1.24-48](https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2013.7.1.24-48)

²⁷Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Pluralism, Liberalism and Islamism: Religious Outlook of Muhammadiyah," *Studia Islamika, Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 25, no. 3 (2018): 433-470, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v25i3.7765>.

When Harsha Senanayake discuss the ongoing social role in the Muslim community—they are usually faced with the struggle between Islamism and the proponents of modernity and moderation.²⁸ It is assumed that the social role of secular Muslims, whether in the Islamic State or West, does not occupy a serious place. This is due to the widespread belief that Islamic societies do not really need the role of secular Muslims. Meanwhile, any secular Muslim residing in the Middle East or diaspora is perceived as a fringe figure with no real influence or role. This widespread rejection makes it difficult to find public diplomacy focusing on secular Muslim figures and their supporters, as in Egypt, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Several researches have stated that secularism, in general, is only discussed briefly since it is unacceptable for the Muslim community.²⁹ On the other hand, Western scholars appreciate the fact that the social role of secular Muslim figures is most compatible with Western political and social values. It is recorded that these individuals have succeeded in contributing to the advancement and development of third-world countries. Adopting secular ideas marks this, thereby coloring power, legitimacy, and even popularity. The Muslim community's resistance to these individuals makes it less significant than fundamentalist and moderate ones.

These three social roles lead to a paradoxical reality about the Muslim community in the world. Historically, the social role of Muslims has an extremely significant social dimension.

Normatively, Islam is a religion that pays attention to an individual's relationship with those around them. Therefore, as a Muslim, one must be prepared to integrate with other people and must not live by themselves. This is because there are certain social obligations that a Muslim needs to fulfill in order to live in a society.³⁰ For instance, good behavior, helping others, charitable acts, and educating the youth. These examples are part of the social responsibility of all Muslims in the world.

The teachings of Islam are studied in depth. Therefore, it concludes that the goal of teachings of Islam is to create a just and balanced human society where every individual plays a vital role in the developmental process and everyone is responsible for themselves.³¹ The major and only source of all Islamic teachings is God, the Creator of the universe itself. God's creations cannot and would never be ignored, therefore, the teachings are based on universal justice. Islam guides humanity in all aspects, for instance in the household, social, economic, or political fields.³² These teachings aim to create an exemplary society enriched with happiness, prosperity, tolerance, and mutual respect. Islam proposed the terms *Husn al-Sulūk* (good behavior), *al-Birr* (piety), *al-A'māl al-Ṣāliḥah* (good deeds), *Ḥuqūq wa Farā'id* (rights and obligations), and *Ta'āwun 'alā al-Birr wa alTaqwā* (co-

²⁸Harsha Senanayake, "Hollywood and Wicked Other: The Identity Formation of "Western Us" Versus "Muslim Others"," *Open Political Science* 4, no. 1, (2021): 64-67.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/openps-2021-0007>

²⁹Murat Somer, "Moderate Islam and Secularist Opposition in Turkey: implications for the world, Muslims and secular democracy," *Third World Quarterly* 28, No. 7 (2007): 1271 – 1289,
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20454998>.

³⁰Abdul Rashid Moten, "Ummah: The Islamic Social Order," in *Political Science: An Islamic Perspective* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 63–81,
https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230377578_5.

³¹Ejder Okumuş, "Islam, Muslims, and Social Change". *Tevilat* 1/2 (2020): 479-506,
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4672960>.

³²A. J. Halepota, "Islamic Social Order: A Study Based Mainly on Sūra al-Nahl," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 14, No. 2 (1975): 115-122.

operation in virtue, refrain from cooperating in wrongdoing). These are discussed at length in the current research since their importance and meaningful role creates solidarity in society.³³

Normatively, the social role of Muslims anticipates the emergence of problems in the world, such as bloodshed, looting, chaos, lawlessness, obscenity, disobedience, the spread of moral decadence, and bad behavior. Islam believes that applying universal, ethical, moral principles, and values creates social solidarity, happiness, and prosperity. Every Muslim must actively ensure peace and harmony in the community and social welfare. Nevertheless, these individuals are faced with the burden of maintaining social behavior. This simply means that a Muslim's social responsibility is oriented towards God, directly impacting social balance.³⁴

4. Expectations of the Muslim Community for Qatar (Muslim Community's Belief in Qatar)

Journalism deals with daily events. It focuses on a central theme concerning the relationship between the West and the Islamic world, as well as Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe and North America, alongside various publications, which also helped to contribute to the connection amongst the parties involved. However, the feedback is mainly based on stereotypes, as proven by multiple media reports that perceive Muslims as discriminatory, irrational, primitive, militant, and dangerous. Generalizations and simplifications indicate that imagination dominates when expertise is lacking. Meanwhile, emotions also play a central role in coordinating feedback processes when there is inadequate knowledge.³⁵ Unfortunately, its narrative in the Western context has created stereotypes about Islam and Muslims and has even spread uncontrollable Islamophobia attitudes.³⁶

Islamophobia creates an imbalance in the social, political, and cultural life of the communities globally. This disharmony is evident in the fact that a mosque was attacked in New Zealand due to a wave of hostility, fear, and hatred towards Muslims.³⁷ This phenomenon, commonly known as Islamophobia, has become a notorious mindset in America and Europe. However, Muslims have been generalized and equated with militant extremism and terrorism carried out by a small minority group, ignoring that they constitute the majority of the victims. This significantly impacts the spread of Islamophobia and domestic politics that threaten civil liberties and the mental health of Muslims.³⁸

³³Badrane Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectual Foundations of Malek Bennabi's Approach to Civilization* (London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2013), 21.

³⁴Hayatullah Laluddin, "Conception of Society and Its Characteristics from an Islamic Perspective," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 6, (2014), <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.6.2014.002>.

³⁵Nadin Abu Khalaf, Ashley B. Woolweaver, Roslyn Reynoso Marmolejos, Grace A. Little, Katheryn Burnett and Dorothy L. Espelage, "The Impact of Islamophobia on Muslim Students: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *School Psychology Review* 52: 2 (2022): 206-223, DOI: [10.1080/2372966X.2022.2075710](https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2022.2075710)

³⁶Ayman Talal Yousef, "Stereotyping Islam in Western Perceptions between Fundamentalism and Phobia: Analytical and Critical Reading," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture* 1(1), (2013): 12-26.

³⁷Areza Ali, "The impact of Islamophobia on the Muslim American community: accounts of psychological Suffering, Identity Negotiation, and Collective Trauma," Masters Thesis (Smith College, Northampton, MA, 2017), <https://scholarworks.smith.edu/theses/1879>.

³⁸Siham Elkassem, Rick Csiernik, et al., "Growing up Muslim: The Impact of Islamophobia on Children in a Canadian Community," *The Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 12, No. 1 (2018), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.10381607.0012.101>.

To counter this, majority of the Muslim countries adopted a moderate stance voice out against all the stereotypes targeted.³⁹ It was recorded in the past decade that has been a massive movement of Muslims to change the world's view regarding Islam. They have started introducing Islam as a peaceful religion and even agreed to disassociate radical Islamic groups.⁴⁰

Different campaigns are continuously being voiced out at various events to counter this issue. One of the sports events that received the attention of the entire global population, the World Cup, is an important opportunity to campaign for peaceful efforts against the de-generalization of Islamic terrorism. Despite being held every four years, the FIFA Men's World Cup scheduled its 22nd edition in Qatar. The international soccer tournament commenced on Sunday and ended on December 18 and the teams representing 32 countries competed in 64 matches.⁴¹ This was the largest international soccer tournament and one of the popular sports event worldwide. The first FIFA World Cup was held in Uruguay in 1930, with teams representing 13 countries. The competition ended with Uruguay becoming the first world champion by defeating Argentina 4-2. Since 1930, the World Cup has been held every four years, except in 1942 and 1946 when the tournament games were canceled due to World War II.⁴² Each World Cup organization attracts more than 1 million fans to attend the competition. It also increased because there are 3 billion global television viewers at home, with more than 1 billion estimated to watch the final match.⁴³

Interestingly, Qatar is the first Muslim or Arab nation to host the World Cup. It has beaten the United States (US), Australia, Japan, and South Korea in a bid to win in 2010. After being granted the opportunity to host the competition, Qatar has built environmentally-friendly stadiums equipped with solar-powered cooling technology to maintain adequate temperatures and with unique designs that respect the heritage and culture of the region.⁴⁴

Qatar has a mission to raise the hopes of the Muslim community globally as the host country for 2022 World Cup.⁴⁵ The world cup event is perceived as an appropriate opportunity to carry out international diplomacy.⁴⁶ The Muslim pride of Qatar has used the World Cup to reach out to hundreds of thousands of visiting fans in order to change their minds or even convert to Islam.

³⁹Hasbi Aswar, "The Strategy of Muslim Communities In Encountering Islamophobia In The United States," *Jurnal Afkaruna*, 17 No. 1 (2021), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v17i1.11468>.

⁴⁰Sa'adi, "Countering Islamophobia in Portugal: Experience of Indonesian Muslim Expatriates," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 1 (2021): 29-53, DOI: 10.18326/ijims.v11i1.29-53.

⁴¹Bijen Ramdas, Reinette van Gaalen, Jordy Bolton, "The Announcement Impact of Hosting the FIFA World Cup on Host Country Stock Markets," *Procedia Economics, and Finance* 30, (2015): 226-238, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671\(15\)01290-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(15)01290-3).

⁴²Brian Sturgess, and Chris Brady, "Hosting the FIFA World Cup Economic Boon or Winner's Curse?" *World Economics* 7, No. 4, (2006).

⁴³J. L. Nicolau, and A. Sharma, "A Generalization of the FIFA World Cup Effect," *Tourism Management* 66, (2018): 315-317.

⁴⁴Khalifa Al-Dosari, "An Evaluation of the Implications of Mega Sporting Events On Cross-Cultural Interactions: A Case of the 2022 Fifa World Cup In Qatar," *IOSR Journal of Business and Management* 22, No. 8. (2020): 4-22, DOI: 10.9790/487X-2208050422.

⁴⁵Lina Khatib, "Qatar's Foreign Policy: The Limits of Pragmatism," *International Affairs*, 89: 2 (2013): 417-431.

⁴⁶Judit Trunkos, And Bob Heere, "Sport Diplomacy: A Review of How Sports Can Be Used to Improve International Relationships, Case Studies in Sport Diplomacy," (West Virginia, FiT Publishing A Division of the International Center for Performance Excellence West Virginia

When Qatar was given the opportunity to host the World Cup 2022, many Muslims worldwide saw it as an opportunity to expand conversations about the values of diversity, tolerance, fighting, and discrimination against them. However, Qatar faced unprecedented criticism campaigns targeted at the Arab Muslim nation as the first host country from media commentators, sports experts, and human rights groups, focusing on their limited football history and restrictive social laws.⁴⁷

Qatar has consistently advocated for counter-Islamophobia worldwide through the United Nations General Assembly with a unanimous vote approving the resolution, thereby declaring March 15 as the International Day against Islamophobia. The resolution, presented on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Pakistan, was sponsored and supported by Qatar, among many other nations. Speaking at the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Ahmed bin Saif Al Kuwari, Deputy Head of the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the UN, reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to support and welcome all UN efforts to promote a peaceful culture and inter-religious dialogue.⁴⁸

Qatar stated that the draft resolution emerges from serious concerns about escalating and inciting violence and discrimination against Muslims motivated by Islamophobia and unfortunately these tend to occur around the world. The resolution and the day adopted by the United Nations General Assembly makes a significant contribution. This is realized by the promotion of tolerance and peace at all levels based on respect for human rights and diverse religious beliefs.⁴⁹ Qatar has long followed this policy to promote global peace through dialogue, assisting peace processes, and resolving conflicts worldwide. For instance, Doha has hosted and facilitated peace talks and negotiations for the Darfur and Afghanistan peace processes for several years, alongside ongoing negotiations in Chad.⁵⁰

5. Qatar's Actions in World Theatre

Hundreds of thousands of visitors were seen flocking to Qatar during the 2022 World Cup, and for most people, this was their first visit to an Islamic country. People close to the stadiums and luxury hotels witnessed some of the religious practices in the country. For instance, hearing the call to prayer and witnessing Muslims performing prayers, both in stadiums, hotels, and other places. However, religious leaders and the government of Qatar are quite accommodating for those who are curious to learn more about Islam.⁵¹

This is perhaps the first time that the visitors have attended the World Cup match, a big sports event in a friendly Islamic nuance. According to *Samaa*, in every direction, from the guest accommodation to the stadium, the Qatar government ensured that the message of Islam was

University, 2017), <https://www.eusportdiplomacy.info/files/2-chapter1-trunkosheere-sportdiplomacyreviewinternationalrelationships.pdf>

⁴⁷L. Luerdi, "Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022: Sustainability and Foreign Policy," (2022) <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/rqx47>.

⁴⁸Ignacio Álvarez-Ossorio, Leticia Rodríguez García, "The Foreign Policy of Qatar: From a Mediating Role to an Active One," *Revista Española de Ciencia Política*. Núm. 56. (2021): 97-120.

⁴⁹Osman Antwi-Boateng, "The Rise of Qatar as a Soft Power and the Challenges," *European Scientific Journal* 9, No. 31 (2013).

⁵⁰Mehran Kamrava, "Qatari Foreign Policy and the Exercise of Subtle Power," *International Studies Journal* (ISJ), Vol. 14, No. 2, (2017), 91-123.

⁵¹"Qatar World Cup: Doha's Guests Welcomed with Introduction to Islam – report," *Jerusalem Post*, December 18, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-725177>

conveyed indirectly.⁵² Islamic-based rules were tightened, such as the consumption of alcohol which is prohibited, likewise wearing revealing clothing and extramarital sexual relations.

Qatar is the first Islamic country to host the World Cup,⁵³ therefore, it took advantage of this medium to introduce Islamic teachings to the visitors and to uphold the values of Islam. The government employed several methods and approaches to introduce Islamic values directly and indirectly. This initiative commenced with the opening ceremony which featured the reading of verses from Al-Qur'ān, the sound of the call to prayer was also heard in the stadium until the closing part, where the players were given a robe which is often associated with Islamic culture.⁵⁴ The World Cup's opening ceremony officially commenced on Sunday, November 20, 2022, at the Al Bayt Stadium.

Several actions exhibited by Qatar were identified as efforts to counter Islamophobia. This includes, firstly, the introduction of peaceful Islamic values through reading verses from Al-Qur'ān at the opening ceremony of the 2022 World Cup. The recitation of verses from Al-Qur'ān, such as the recitation of Surah Al-Hujurāt verse 13 also enlivened the event. It was read by Ghanim Al Muftah, a Qatari YouTuber. At the same time, Ghanim was accompanied by Morgan Freeman, a famous actor from the United States (US). Ghanim and Freeman engaged in the recitation of the verses of Al-Qur'ān that explained the equality of human beings before God.⁵⁵

Ghanim Al Muftah was born on May 5, 2002. He suffered from *Caudal Regression Syndrome* (CRS), a rare condition that occurs in human beings. CRS made it seem like Ghanim was born without a lower body. Therefore, in carrying out daily activities, Ghanim needed a wheelchair.⁵⁶ Before reading the Al-Qur'ān verses, Ghanim had several conversations with Freeman. Furthermore, Ghanim, already on stage, was approached by Freeman, who sat next to Ghanim while discussing specific sentence fragments related to culture and religion in the world. Ghanim then recited Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 with a melodious and loud voice.⁵⁷

Second is the quoting of Al-Qur'ān and Ḥadīth mural and according to Doha News, the murals of Ḥadīth were displayed in several places. The murals welcomed visitors from other countries. Additionally, Qatar introduced Islamic values through the Ḥadīth of Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*).⁵⁸

⁵²<https://www.republika.co.id/berita/rlq9rl430/cara-qatar-kenalkan-islam-melalui-piala-dunia-2022>

⁵³Danyel Reiche, "Introduction in Qatar and the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Politics, Controversy, Change," <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-96822-9>, *Palgrave Macmillan Cham* (2022).

⁵⁴"FIFA World Cup 2022: What Qatar is Doing to Spread Message of Islam- Qatar is First Muslim Country to Host Grand Event," *SAMAA Web Desk*, Nov 21, 2022, <https://www.samaaenglish.tv/news/40021849/sports-fifa-world-cup-2022-what-qatar-is-doing-to-spread-message-of-islam>

⁵⁵Rahma Harbani, <https://www.detik.com/hikmah/khazanah/d-6421616/4-cara-qatar-kenalkan-islam-lewat-piala-dunia-2022>.

⁵⁶Ghanim Al Muftah, Sosok Difabel Pelantun Ayat Al Qur'ān di Pembukaan Piala Dunia 2022 Senin, 21 [Ghanim Al Muftah , A Person with Disabilities Chanting Verses of the Qur'ān at the Opening of the 2022 World Cup Monday, 21], November 2022, <https://www.viva.co.id/bola/bola-sejagat/1546135-ghanim-al-muftah-sosok-difabel-pelantun-ayat-al-quran-di-pembukaan-piala-dunia-2022>

⁵⁷<https://www.liputan6.com/citizen6/read/5131048/dilantunkan-di-pembukaan-piala-dunia-qatar-2022-ini-arti-surah-al-hujurat-ayat-13> [Here is the meaning of surah al-hujurat verse 13 recited at the opening of the 2022 qatar world cup]

⁵⁸<https://www.detik.com/hikmah/khazanah/d-6421616/4-cara-qatar-kenalkan-islam-lewat-piala-dunia-2022> [4 ways Qatar introduces Islam through the 2022 World Cup].

The mural contained various goodwill messages originating from the words of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), such as mercy and good deeds. The Ḥadīth mural provided an understanding of Islam's real essence before guests watching the World Cup until the closing ceremony on December 18, 2022.⁵⁹ The murals are also available in English along with the Ḥadīth in the Arabic language. This initiative was intended to make it easier for visitors in order to understand the meanings contained in the Ḥadīth.⁶⁰



Figure 1. Al-Qur'ān-Ḥadīth Quotes during Qatar World Cup 2022

Thirdly, the barcodes were used as an introduction to Islam, which is in addition to the distribution of Ḥadīth murals in several locations in Qatar. For instance, in several hotels in Doha, barcodes are specifically designed in the guest rooms of World Cup spectators.⁶¹ Aljazeera reported that the barcodes were displayed in various languages and served as a medium to introduce Islam. Immediately, after the barcodes were clicked, the user was directed to the Qatar Ministry of Waqf and Islamic Affairs website. The first screen displayed several language options to select from. After the selection process, it would lead one to the introduction of Islam. Apart from hotels, the buses that conveyed the World Cup spectators to the stadium were also given a barcode that can be scanned. When these barcodes were scanned, they provided information or teach the user about Islam and Al-Qur'ān.⁶²

Qatar is among the four Islamic tourist attractions which is one of the reasons that the country allocated a large budget for the World Cup 2022 to transform the country into a tourist destination, specifically during the event. Islamic-themed attractions were the main focus. For instance, the local mosques provided tours in various languages. The Islamic Cultural Center in Doha also provided virtual reality tours of Mecca. In addition, brochures about Islam and Al-Qur'ān were also provided for free at tourist sites.

Billboards were placed in various locations in Doha, which portrayed many Muslim figures and athletes including Ibtihaj Muhammad, a player on the United States (US) Olympic team. This form of introduction aids the visitors to learn more about Islam. In the stone-paved alleys of *Souq Waqif*,

⁵⁹<https://www.republika.co.id/berita/rljla4366/qatar-kenalkan-islam-lewat-piala-dunia-2022> [Qatar introduces Islam through the 2022 world cup]

⁶⁰<https://voi.id/en/sports/223347/20-hari-menuju-piala-dunia-qatar-ingin-perkenalkan-islam-dengan-cara-unik-lewat-mural-berisi-hadist-nabi-di-tiap-sudut-kota> [20 days before the world cup, Qatar wants to introduce Islam in a unique way through murals containing the hadiths of the Prophet in every corner of the city]

⁶¹<https://www.detik.com/hikmah/khazanah/d-6421616/4-cara-qatar-kenalkan-islam-lewat-piala-dunia-2022> [4 ways Qatar introduces Islam through the 2022 World Cup].

⁶²“Qatar World Cup: Doha's Guests Welcomed with Introduction to Islam – report,” *Jerusalem Post*, December 18, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-725177>

the oldest bazaar in the capital, Al-Qur'ān and brochures about Islam in various languages are also provided. Not far from there, tourists can walk to the Abdullah Bin Zaid Al-Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Center, which offers a stunning spiral architectural design and is also used for Friday prayers.⁶³

The Islamic Art Museum in Doha also provides general information about the beliefs and religious rituals of Islam. Visitors can learn about the five pillars of Islam, the six pillars of faith, prayers, charity, fasting, and Hajj or *Umrah* from the holy city of Mecca. They are also able to learn about different funerary customs in Islam. JAT, a museum visitor wearing the national jersey, stated that the most important and fascinating part of the facility is the section about Islamic culture.⁶⁴

Fifth security, many visitors have reported about lost valuable items, such as bags and wallets. However, their lost items were recovered by security operatives. Qatar is known to be safe from theft crimes because such acts rarely occur in this country. A visitor expressed surprise when an expensive designer bag was left untouched on a seat while the surrounding area was extremely crowded. This is reinforced by the data from the Numbeo Crime Index Country 2022, indicating that Qatar is the safest nation of the 142 countries surveyed. Incidentally, it has a crime and safety index of 13.78 and 86.22, respectively.⁶⁵

6. Qatar and Social Pressure

Since Qatar was the host of the 2022 World Cup, it received heavy criticism for human rights issues, specifically the treatment of migrant workers from various countries. Other allegations include "sports washing" or attempting to use the event's prestige in order to restore its image.⁶⁶ Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, stated that Muslim countries in the Arabian Peninsula were criticized for being hosts of the World Cup including "fabrication and double standards".⁶⁷

Qatar's leader or emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, stated that the campaign against Qatar included "fabrication and double standards, and was aggressive. Unfortunately, it made many people question the real reasons and motives behind the campaign." As a Muslim, it is believed that the campaign against Qatar was rooted in colonial and orientalist ideologies in which Western culture constructs Muslims and Arabs as inferior, static, unchanging, and always in need of their salvation. Last month, FIFA President Gianni Infantino stated that "Qatar will deliver the best edition of the FIFA World Cup" and "everything and everyone are ready and welcomed."

Despite some social pressures, Qatar still tightened regulations that were not in line with its ideology. They implemented many regulations that were not found in previous World Cup events, such as:

Firstly, the prohibition of alcohol (hard liquor), Qatar applies Islamic rules in the nation and state. In Islam, beer consumption is forbidden and considered an illegal act. Qatar also strictly

⁶³Luis Andres Henao, "Qatar offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam," *AP NEWS*, December 17, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/religion-qatar-islam-doha-1fd7e9e6ac1b6f6bdcfa0b21ca271ab4>

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Hazar Kilani, "Traces of Islamic teachings embraced at the World Cup," *Doha News*, December 31, 2022, <https://dohanews.co/traces-of-islamic-teachings-embraced-at-the-world-cup/>

⁶⁶"The Case against Qatar Host of the Fifa 2022 World Cup," *ITUC Special Report*, March 2014, https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/the_case_against_qatar_en_web170314.pdf

⁶⁷<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/25/qatar-emir-slams-unprecedented-campaign-against-world-cup-hosts>

prohibits such actions. A beer ban was set at all stadiums, although, FIFA specifically urged the organizing committee to allow the audience from Latin America and Europe. According to detikSport, alcohol can only be sold in the FIFA Fan Festival zones, which number 40,000 in Al Bidda Park center in Doha. An organizer said that beer was not sold throughout the day as in previous World Cups, rather it was sold at certain times permitted by the local government.⁶⁸

The second prohibition in the World Cup 2022 in Qatar was on support for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender" (LGBTQ). The Qatar government also prohibited various attributes and symbols of LGBTQ or those that appear to support the movement during the World Cup event. LGBTQ+ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. For visitors who would not comply with these regulations, the government of Qatar, through the organizing committee, prepared sanctions for violators, even football teams for not complying with the regulations. The stance taken by Qatar was criticized by many who considered it to be some sort of discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community.⁶⁹

Thirdly, the ban on casual sex. Islam prohibits people from having sexual intercourse with anyone other than their lawful partner or through a marriage that is in accordance with Islamic teachings. This policy was also tightened during the World Cup event and the visitors were strictly prohibited from having casual sex. It was also emphasized in the QR code attached to hotel guests, which teaches about Islam. *Aljazeera* reported that Islamic and Qatar culture were provided in various languages in the form of QR codes displayed in hotel rooms.⁷⁰

Qatar is an ultra-conservative Sunni Islamic country that practices the doctrine of Wahhabism, considered by some as an extreme doctrine.⁷¹ Although, Qatar and Saudi Arabia both practice Wahhabism, based on different doctrines. The similarities are both nations prohibit the sale of alcohol and premarital sex.⁷² Saudi Arabia and Qatar also implement a legal system in their governance based on Islamic law.⁷³

However, there are differences, such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia's strict regulations for women. Saudi Arabia implements stringent rules for women, such as not appearing publicly without a mahram (male companion). They are also not allowed to drive vehicles, watch movies, attend concerts, engage in yoga practices, and rarely participate in other activities. Qatar still has tight policies, however, there are differences. For instance, women are permitted to work, even the highest percentage of female workers are found in the Arab Gulf countries. Although, in art, Qatar looks a bit lax as compared to Saudi Arabia, it freely sponsors exceptional masterpieces. In addition, women are allowed to participate in government and tourism in order to make tourists feel comfortable.⁷⁴

⁶⁸“Interview with Hassan Al-Thawadi.” Secretary General Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy Qatar World Cup 2022, 10th January, 2023.

⁶⁹“Interview with Lolwah Al Marri,” President Qatar Women’s Sport Committee, 12th January, 2023

⁷⁰<https://www.muslimwomenscouncil.org.uk/media/news/qr-codes-qatar-hotel-rooms-introducing-islam-world-cup-fans>

⁷¹A. Nizar Hamzeh, “Qatar: the Duality of the Legal System,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 30:1,(1994): 79-90, DOI: [10.1080/00263209408700984](https://doi.org/10.1080/00263209408700984)

⁷²James M. Dorsey, “Wahhabism vs. Wahhabism: Qatar Challenges Saudi Arabia,” (2013). SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2305485> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2305485>

⁷³“Qatar World Cup: Doha's Guests Welcomed with Introduction to Islam – report,” *Jerusalem Post*, December 18, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-725177>

⁷⁴Luis Andres Henao, “Qatar offers World Cup Visitors an Introduction to Islam,” *AP NEWS*, December 17, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/religion-qatar-islam-doha-1fd7e9e6ac1b6f6bdcfca0b21ca271ab4>.

Fourth is the cultural debate, besides it is a known fact that Qatar adheres to a culture based on Islam. This was included in the World Cup performances by the organizing committee, Muslim football players, and even supporters. Moreover, several criticisms were raised by various parties who did not approve of their culture, such as when the *Bisht* (cloak) was presented to Lionel Messi at the closing of the world cup event. Several media, reported by Telegraph, stated "the bizarre act that ruined the greatest moment in World Cup history," while Australian outlets declared Qatar of "hijacking" Messi of his moment,⁷⁵ and so forth. Even though, the gift of bisht to Lionel Messi is a form of unity, the tribute to the mother of the Moroccan players was also criticized by some media. Since it is known in Islam, mothers are highly respected. One of the Moroccans' actions was also perceived as a form of mockery for those who detest Islam. "With outrage as 'racist', Danish channel compares Moroccan players' embrace with mothers to monkeys." Khaled A. Beydoun stated that whether it was the headscarf worn by a Moroccan student studying at a European university or the bisht worn by the Argentinian star player at the closing ceremony at the Lusail stadium, Islamic symbols were constantly and explicitly desecrated.

7. Qatar 2022 World Cup Impact on World Society

The Qatar World Cup did not really benefit the country financially. This was due to the many costs incurred to prepare for the Qatar 2022 World Cup. Qatar has poured out money estimated to cost more than \$ 200 billion. This makes the 2022 Qatar World Cup the most expensive in football history when compared to the previous most expensive World Cups, namely the 2014 tournament in Brazil and the 2018 edition in Russia, both of which costed less than 15 billion dollars.

The impact targeted by Qatar as the organizer of the World Cup stands out in the non-material aspects.⁷⁶ Qatar has a lot of influence on the positive image of Islam around the world. Qatar, as the venue for the 2022 World Cup, is a non-Islamic society, many of whom want to get to know, learn more about, and put their trust in embracing Islam, believing that Islam is not a religion based on terrorism, that the matches run in a conducive manner and that there is no harassment of women.

Qatar introduced Islam in the world community, as a religion that teaches about peace, humanity, compassion, and discipline. Thus, it is hoped that the narrow views of the people infected with the Islamophobia virus would fade away with Islamic teachings through this event of World Cup.⁷⁷

The theatrical appearance of Morgan Freeman and Qatari YouTuber, Ghanim Al-Muftah at the opening of the 2022 World Cup, succeeded in capturing the attention of netizens who judged the quote from Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 that was read in accordance with the theme of the 2022 World Cup this time.⁷⁸

⁷⁵Khaled A. Beydoun, "OPINION: Undressing the Islamophobia wrapped around Messi, Qatar and the 2022 World Cup," *Doha News*, December 19, 2022, <https://dohanews.co/undressing-the-islamophobia-wrapped-around-messi-qatar-and-the-2022-world-cup/>

⁷⁶Hossain Mohammed Naimul Hoque, and Latifa Menadi Al-Kaabi, "Islam as a Soft Power for the State of Qatar in Organizing the FIFA World Cup 2022," *Tajseer Journal* 3 (2), (2021), <https://doi.org/10.29117/tis.2021.0071>

⁷⁷Rob Harris, "Muslim nations proposed World Cup armband to raise awareness of Islamophobia," *Sky News*, December 09, 2022, <https://news.sky.com/story/muslim-nations-proposed-world-cup-armband-to-raise-awareness-of-islamophobia-12764302> accessed in 02/02/2023

⁷⁸Asmahan Qarjouli, "Qatar, other Muslim Nations Pushed for Anti-Islamophobia Armband at World Cup: Reports," *Doha News*, December 09, 2022, <https://dohanews.co/qatar-other-muslim-nations-pushed-for-anti-islamophobia-armband-at-world-cup-reports/> accessed in 02/02/2023

The verse explains how God created human beings in different backgrounds and ethnic conditions. This shows how much the 2022 World Cup helped to bring the whole nation together. Additionally, many scattered Hadīths of the Prophet (*SAW*) were posted in the corners of the cafe as da'wah messages for tourists from abroad who came to watch the Qatar World Cup.

Not to mention the virality of the many sudden converts or at least the increasing number of non-Muslim spectators whose views on Islam began to change positively after they came to Qatar, where the number of visits by non-Muslim tourists to mosques in Qatar was described during this World Cup event. This is because they witnessed a lot of beauty of Islam in Qatar which was in contrast to what they have seen in the mainstream media of their country in the West which suffers from Islamophobia.⁷⁹

8. Conclusion

The Qatar 2022 World Cup is a breath of fresh air for the Islamic world after several decades of stereotypes directed at the Muslim community. This ultimately creates a wave of Islamophobia worldwide, causing instability in people's lives. The Muslim community hopes that Qatar would join the counter-campaign against Islamophobia. It is also expected that the appointment of Qatar as the organizer of the 2022 World Cup is a starting point for changing the terrorism label attached to the Muslim community for a long while. Qatar took several world-stage actions to promote peaceful and friendly Islamic values. The phenomenon displayed during its hosting of the World Cup proves that Qatar has a mission to act as a representative of the world's Muslim community to introduce and counter negative views about Islam. At the same time, it was emphasized that the terrorist behavior and other violence cannot be generalized to all Muslim communities worldwide.

Conflict of Interest

Author(s) declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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⁷⁹Rachael Bunyan, "Muslim nations 'Proposed Islamophobia World Cup Armband in Style of Palestinian Headscarf - but Were Told it Would Break FIFA Rules,'" *Daily Mail*, December 09, 2022, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/fifa-world-cup/article-11520253/Muslim-nations-proposed-Islamophobia-World-Cup-armband-told-break-FIFA-rules.html> accessed on 01/02/2023

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