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The Qatari Controversy

The FIFA World Cup is the biggest and most followed sporting event in the world. Occurring once every four years, only a select country or countries are given the privilege to host the tournament. In previous years, some of the most popular and economically successful World Cups were held in the United States in 1994, Japan and Korea in 2002 (Lee and Taylor), Germany in 2006, and South Africa in 2010 (“Economics”). This shouldn’t come as a surprise considering these countries’ love and passion for the game, rich and diverse cultures, acceptance of all people, and prospective or prosperous economies. For the upcoming 2022 World Cup, serious questions have been raised regarding the selected host country: Qatar. From repeated human rights violations and alleged slavery to corruption and discrimination (Montague), many are asking why and how Qatar was selected to begin with. But now that they have been selected and are showing signs of being a controversial host for the World Cup, fears of what will happen when the tournament gets underway in November of next year have emerged. Unfortunately, these fears are far from irrational as a Qatari-hosted World Cup has already resulted in the deaths of thousands and undeniably risks the health and lives of many more unless the venue country is changed. With efforts being hugely unavailing, a boycott may be in order.

The 2022 World Cup will be the first World Cup to take place in the Arab world. Qatar, a small country on the northeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, is no exception of political and

social beliefs that are commonly held in this part of the world. For example, male homosexuality is illegal and punishable by up to three years in prison (“LGBT”). Furthermore, Muslims, under Sharia Law, can be sentenced to death (“LGBT”). Players are unlikely to be directly affected by these laws, but there is no telling what could happen to any number of the potential homosexual fans that attend the World Cup. Regardless, this anti-LGBTQ sentiment present throughout society and government in not only Qatar but most, if not all, Arab countries, creates an extremely negative, unwelcoming, and dangerous environment that will, at the very least, discourage certain fans from attending the tournament.

Since the announcement of Qatar being the 2022 World Cup host in 2010, the building of the infrastructure required to hold the tournament has begun. This brought its own set of issues. Qatar has been accused of abusing and mistreating the workers, largely migrant ones, that they hired. This includes the inability to change jobs and leave the country without permission (Montague) and being forced to sign false statements of receipt of wages (“2022 FIFA”). Sharan Burrows of the ITUC equated the workers to slaves (Montague). As per The Guardian, “Nepalese workers died at a rate of almost one a day...” and “thousands of Nepalese, who make up the single largest group of labourers in Qatar, face exploitation and abuses that amount to modern-day slavery...” Workers claim to be denied salaries, drinking water and ID cards, reducing them to illegal aliens stricken by “brutal conditions” and the unbearable desert heat (Pattison). Although the World Cup will contribute an estimated \$20 billion to the country's economy (Foxman), this does, in no way, justify the mistreatment and deaths of thousands of innocent workers. In addition, whichever country hosts the World Cup is anticipated to have their economy stimulated in tourism, construction, real estate, etc.; this is not exclusive to Qatar.

Therefore, economic benefits are not reasonable evidence to support Qatar being World Cup hosts.

With all the offenses taking place in Qatar leading up to the World Cup, a responsibility to act has been placed on the professionals who will be playing in the tournament. In Steven Brown's article "'Political' Footballers urged to 'boycott World Cup!' Premier stars told to act on Qatar", he talks about the amalgamation of politics and soccer. A fundamental point he makes is that the professionals in the sport have the power to make change. It is discussed how because professional soccer players have been "political" and outspoken about certain topics in the past, especially recently surrounding the Black Lives Matter protest and issues of racism, it is their duty to now take action against a World Cup hosted by Qatar. What is ultimately suggested in Brown's article is a boycott of the tournament. Although it is unclear whether such a drastic protest will occur, some teams have spoken out. The Dutch national team wore shirts saying, "Football supports change". Norwegian players wore ones saying, "HUMAN RIGHTS" and "On and off the pitch". German players wore shirts that spelled out "HUMAN RIGHTS", but their football association said they are against boycotting the World Cup (Brown). It is understandable that any nation's football association may be against a boycott; it would be an incredibly debated stance and undoubtedly have unintended consequences. The idea of tampering with the World Cup in such a fashion is not one, at face value, that would come across very positively. But, with the chance of FIFA stripping Qatar of its host title being essentially zero (they did select Qatar in the first place, after all) and merely writing things on shirts not being enough, a boycott is one of the only viable solutions and would be for the greater good of the soccer world.

Human rights violations. Prejudice against members of the LGBTQ community.
Mistreatment of migrant workers. Alleged slavery. Systematic abuse. These are not

characteristics of a nation that should host the biggest and most popular sporting event in the world. For the safety and even lives of workers, players, and fans, Qatar should not host the 2022 World Cup and should never have been approved to. Now, with the event to begin in just over a year, it is time for players to refuse to play in the tournament unless changes are made to accommodate for the social and political climate in the country. If nothing is done, it is a sad reality that the 2022 World Cup might go down as one of the worst, most horrific World Cups in history.

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Reflection

I really appreciate all the feedback Yeidi gave me. Her impression of my work is very similar to my own. It sounds like she received the message I was trying to project. It also sounds like my argument was clear and understood. However, having read her feedback, I was aware of some issues regarding lack of detail/expansion, introduction of my own ideas and differentiating between them and outside sources, and placement of certain fundamentals of my argument. All of her feedback was clear. I do not disagree with any of her feedback. I agree the most with her critique of my lack of expansion on some ideas.

I thank you for the feedback, professor. I think our impressions of my writing have few differences. Having read both your and Yeidi's feedback, I realized that the ordering of some statements on my position within my argument needed to be reconsidered. I also knew then that I must make it clearer when I am expressing my own ideas versus an idea from an outside source. Lastly, in general, I had to expand on some concepts that I presented but failed to detail in full. I do not disagree with any of your feedback. All of your pieces of feedback are clear. The feedback of yours that I agree the most with is about signaling the different voices throughout my argument. I can see how it might be confusing for a reader to differentiate between which ideas are mine versus from one of my sources. I think that is probably the most important revision I made, along with expansion upon certain ideas.

The part of the FA1 process that was most challenging was the reviewing my peers' papers. The part of the FA1 process that was most rewarding was what I am doing right now: writing the reflection. This is because it signifies the end of the FA1 process. Furthermore, it is satisfying to see my finished work knowing how much time and effort I put into it. The part of the FA1 process that was most frustrating was having to cut down on content and sources for my

essay. It was frustrating to reach the approximate word count and have to limit my writing. The most illuminating part of the FA1 process was receiving feedback from my peers because it showed to me the flaws in my writing and ways I could improve. The FA1 writing process felt incredibly similar to the process I have used to write papers in the past because it was essentially the same. For the FA1 writing process and the process I have used to write papers in the past, I decided on a topic, did preliminary research, formulated some form of question to center my essay around, found evidence, cited sources, built an argument, wrote a draft, had peers review it, and lastly revised the draft into a final product.