



# “We want beer”: A content analysis of online posts written about the alcohol ban during Qatar’s Soccer World Cup

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## Introduction

The FIFA World Cup, the world’s largest sporting event, has a significant connection to alcohol as exemplified by its major sponsor, Anheuser-Busch. For the 2015 World Cup, Brazil adjusted its policies, by FIFA’s influence, to allow alcohol consumption in stadiums during the event. Qatar’s successful 2022 World Cup bid initially prompted dialogue about its strict public drinking regulations.

Despite assurances for alcohol availability in stadiums for the World Cup, these policies abruptly changed two days before the tournament began. This change ignited discussions about the role of alcohol in sport, particularly online. Thus, we aim to analyse content of online discourse about the alcohol ban.

## Methods

13 Nov



25 Dec

We collected all Tweets from one week prior to the tournament to a week after, using key words that referenced the World Cup, alcohol and the ban. Excluding retweets, \_\_\_ of the 5254 independent posts were coded by stance on the alcohol ban and underlying rationale.



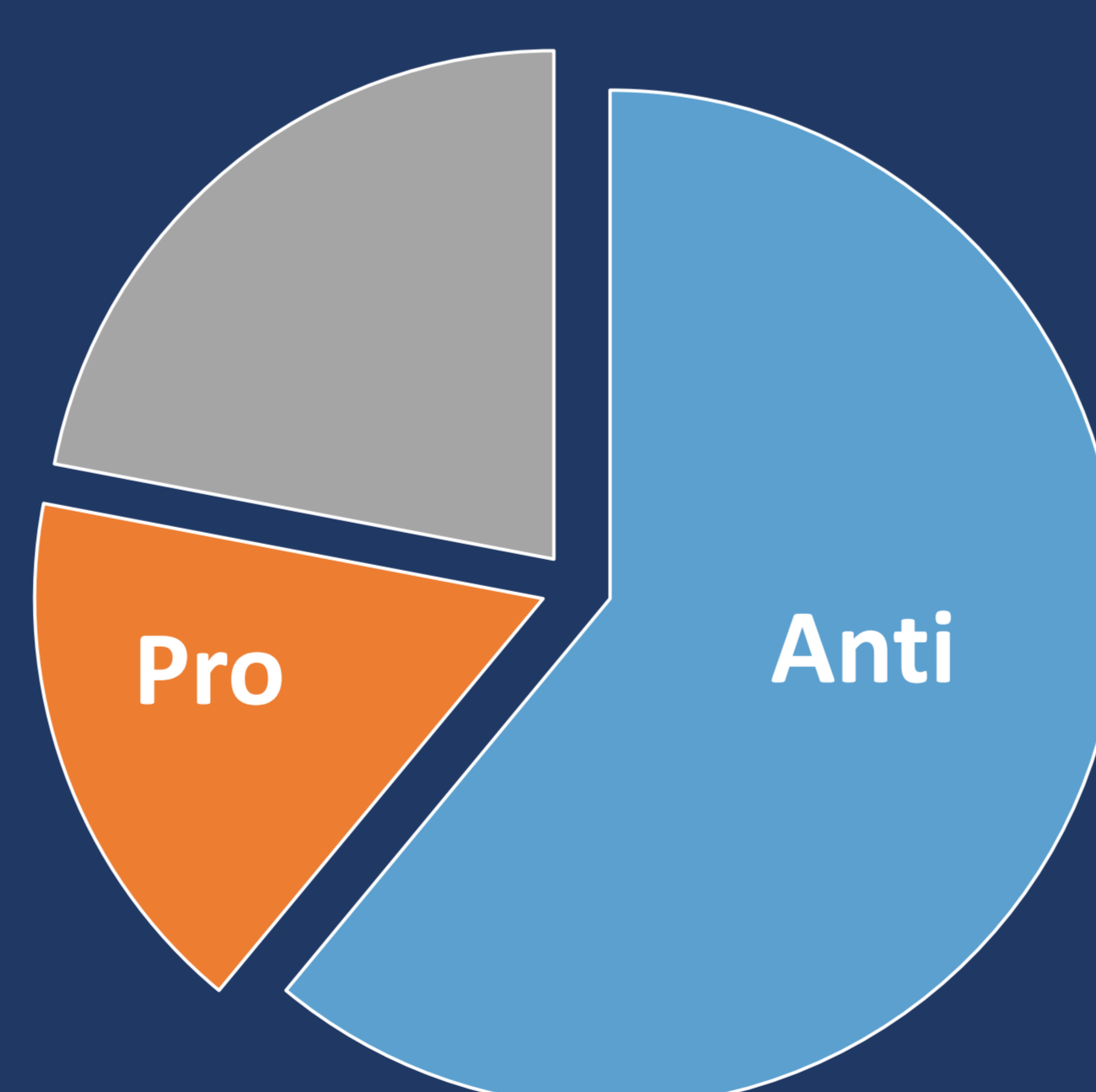
## Results

Anti-ban tweets dominated at 61%, with 17% pro and 22% neutral.

Pro-ban tweets highlighted:

**27%** the perceived insignificance of alcohol at sporting events,

**18%** The alcohol ban’s potential to mitigate hooliganism.



Frequent anti-ban themes included:

**37%** Discontent over its sudden implementation,

**24%** its perceived contribution to an already troubled World Cup,

**21%** Its adverse effects on Budweiser’s sponsorship.

## Conclusions and Policy

Contrary to the notion that alcohol and sports are closely linked, anti-ban sentiment was not against the act of prohibiting alcohol during the sporting event, instead critiquing its execution and its repercussions on sponsors.

Meanwhile, proponents of the ban pointed to the positive impact on the overall event environment. The issue of alcohol in sports continues to be significant, and examining online dialogues on platforms like Twitter can provide insights into public sentiment on the desirability and acceptance of such alcohol bans.