

## Shiite and Secular Approaches to Gender Minorities: A Comparative Study of Iran, Turkey, and Germany

**Authors :** Morteza Azimi

**Abstract :** The demand for recognition among LGBTQIA+ groups has grown significantly in modern times, particularly since the second half of the twentieth century, when human rights discourse became increasingly prominent, especially in the West. In contrast, the classic readings of the Quran and Hadith, whose roots lie in pre-modern times, and the Shiite Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) seem not to be updated and responsive to the need for recognition by gender minority identities. Moreover, the recognition of such minority identities within Shiite Islam and its intersection with secular frameworks remains an underexplored topic. This paper explores what Islamic texts, such as the Quran, Hadith, and Shiite Fiqh, address regarding the recognition and rights of gender minorities. It further examines the Islamic Republic of Iran as an example of a dominant Shiite political system, comparing it with Turkey and Germany as secular models. While Turkey, a secular state, is deeply influenced by its predominantly Muslim population and culture, Germany represents a Western model characterized by the widespread recognition of LGBTQIA+ rights. The rationale for this comparative approach lies in understanding how different political systems influence the recognition of gender minorities. Moreover, the study investigates whether Shiite Islamic frameworks can provide solutions to these demands or whether secular systems, as exemplified by Turkey and Germany, are more effective in addressing issues of gender minorities. Hence, this study offers a novel perspective by juxtaposing Shiite Islamic textual interpretations with secular legal frameworks to explore the evolving recognition of gender minorities, demonstrating how varying political and cultural contexts shape the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals in Iran, Turkey, and Germany. This research relies on secondary literature as the primary data source, especially regarding the issue of gender in Shiite Islamic texts. The author employs a comparative textual analysis of Shiite Islamic texts (e.g., Quran, Hadith, and Fiqh) and secular legal frameworks in Turkey and Germany to explore how different systems address the recognition of gender minorities. Findings reveal that classical interpretations of Islamic texts and Shiite Fiqh employed by the Islamic Republic of Iran fail to provide laws and frameworks that recognize LGBTQIA+ identities. This gap contributes to the marginalization of gender minority identities, fostering environments of suppression, violence, and exclusion. The findings of this study could inform policymaking and advocacy efforts by shedding light on the necessity of a change toward inclusive legal and cultural frameworks for gender minorities in Muslim countries like Iran.

**Keywords :** gender minorities, LGBTQIA+ recognition, shiite islam, comparative analysis

**Conference Title :** ICGSDS 2025 : International Conference on Gender, Sexuality and Diversity Studies

**Conference Location :** Berlin, Germany

**Conference Dates :** May 15-16, 2025