

THE RESPONSE OF THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC) TO THE WAVE OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN INDIA

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Abstract

Islamophobia has led to discrimination against Muslims, including in India. Historical tensions rooted in religious divisions have evolved into systemic oppression under Hindutva ideology, leading to discriminatory policies, violence, and social exclusion against India's estimated 200 million-strong Muslim population. This study examines the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) response to Islamophobia in India, as the GCC is India's trading partner, focusing on the differences between its member states' economic priorities and their shared Islamic identities. The GCC's approach to the issue remains fragmented. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, and Bahrain prioritize strong economic ties with India, driven by interdependence in trade and energy. In contrast, Kuwait and Qatar have taken a more oppositional stance, condemning India's Hindu nationalist agenda and highlighting human rights violations. The study uses a constructivist framework to explore the interplay between regional identities, national interests, and intergovernmentalism in the GCC's decision-making process. The results show that the GCC's response reflects the interests of individual member states, highlighting the intergovernmental nature of the organization. This pragmatic approach emphasizes the prioritization of economic dependence over actions based on collective identity solidarity. The study concludes that although Islamophobia in India poses a moral dilemma for GCC members, economic interests dominate their bilateral relations.

Keywords: Islamophobia in India, Islam identity and Gulf Cooperation Council, Gulf states-India Relations, Muslim minority repression, GCC response

Abstrak

Islamofobia menyebabkan diskriminasi terhadap umat Muslim, termasuk di India. Ketegangan historis yang berakar pada perpecahan agama telah berkembang menjadi penindasan sistemik di bawah ideologi Hindutva, yang berujung pada kebijakan diskriminatif, kekerasan, dan eksklusi sosial terhadap sekitar 200 juta populasi Muslim di India. Penelitian ini mengkaji respons Dewan Kerjasama Teluk (GCC) terhadap Islamofobia di India, karena GCC merupakan mitra dagang India, dengan fokus pada perbedaan antara prioritas ekonomi negara anggotanya dan identitas Islam yang mereka anut. Pendekatan GCC dalam masalah tersebut tetap terfragmentasi. Arab Saudi,



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UEA, Oman, dan Bahrain memprioritaskan hubungan ekonomi yang kuat dengan India, karena didorong saling ketergantungan dalam sektor perdagangan dan energi. Sebaliknya, Kuwait dan Qatar mengambil sikap yang lebih oposisi, mengutuk agenda nasionalis Hindu India dan menyoroti pelanggaran hak asasi manusia. Studi ini menggunakan kerangka kerja konstruktivis untuk mengeksplorasi interaksi antara identitas regional, kepentingan nasional, dan intergovernmentalisme dalam proses pengambilan keputusan GCC. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa respons GCC mencerminkan kepentingan masing-masing negara anggota, menyoroti sifat intergovernmentalisme dalam organisasi tersebut. Pendekatan pragmatis ini menekankan pada prioritas ketergantungan ekonomi dibandingkan tindakan berbasis solidaritas identitas kolektif. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun Islamofobia di India menimbulkan dilema moral bagi anggota GCC, namun kepentingan ekonomi lebih dominan membentuk hubungan bilateral mereka.

Kata Kunci: Islamophobia di India, Identitas islam dan Dewan Kerjasama Teluk, respon GCC, represi minoritas muslim, hubungan negara teluk-India

INTRODUCTION

India is one of the countries in the South Asian region with a population of around 1.4 billion people (Worldometers, 2024), with a multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition. More specifically, based on the 2011 Indian government census, the composition of its society by religion is: Hindu 79.8%, Muslim 14.2%, Christian 2.3%, Sikh 1.72%, Buddhist 0.7%, Jan 0.37%, and others around 1% (find-easy.in, 2021). Based on the percentage composition, it can be said that Muslims are the largest minority in India, with an estimated 200 million people.

Historically, in 1946, a year before independence, there was a riot between Hindus and Muslims starting from Kolkata and spreading to Bengal to Punjab caused by the Muslim League led by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, wanting to establish the country of Pakistan, which caused Pakistan to become a separate country from India. However, a few days before December 15, 1947, when India achieved independence, there was a consolidation of peace between Hindu and Muslim groups mediated by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Then, the Indian government stated that it would become a secular democratic country that protects the rights of all its people, including Muslims (Guha, 2008).

Anti-Muslim sentiment resurfaced after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in January 1948 by Nathuram Godse, who considered Gandhi a Muslim accomplice and, therefore, deserved to die. Then in the 1980s, the issue of religion was used by the Indian National Congress (INC) to gain votes, followed by

the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which was affiliated with the Hindu fascist (Hindutva) ideological organization, namely the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) which then discriminated against the Muslim community (narasinewsroom, 2022), marking a turning point in India's "secular" history (Ushama, 2020). The Hindutva movement promoted by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has instilled Islamophobic ideas in Hindus since their inception (Guha, 2008) which in 2024 controlled the government.

In 1992, the Babri mosque was destroyed in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, because the Hindu community believed that the mosque stood on the ruins of a temple and the birthplace of the god Rama, which was destroyed by the Mughal Empire (monday.com, 2017). Ten years later, in 2002, there were violent riots in Gujarat that killed 790 Muslims (BBC, 2005). Then, in 2007, there was a train bombing from India to Pakistan that killed around 44 Pakistanis (Nizazi, 2009), which was admittedly masterminded by Hindu priest Swami Aseemanand, who targeted Muslims (Jaffrelot, 2011; Ramesh, 2018). Then in 2015, one year after Narendra Modi came to power, BJP supporters killed 49 Muslim farmers for selling and slaughtering cows (narasinewsroom, 2022) (BBC, 2022), which was associated with the politics of cow protection which was the BJP's agenda (humanrightswatch, 2019). In 2019, the amendment to the citizenship law for non-Muslim immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh made the process easier (narasinewsroom, 2022).

In 2022, two officials, Nupur Sharma and Naveen Jindal, who are high-ranking representatives of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), made very controversial comments and angered Muslims around the world about the Prophet Muhammad (CNN, 2022). Then, in 2023, there was some racism against the Muslim community, starting from violence against Muslim students in schools, shootings to death (Faisal, 2023), extrajudicial executions (BBC, 2022), burning of houses and communal violence (AJ+, 2023b), the removal of content of the Mughal dynasty of Islam from Indian history texts (AJ+, 2023a), and so on.

Based on the above explanation, it can be said that the level of Islamophobia in India is very high and has reached a critical point because it threatens the lives of the Muslim community in the country. India is included as the eighth largest importer and the 10th largest exporter in international trade (WTO, 2022), where some of its main trading partners are countries with Muslim majorities, such as member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Yemen, Oman, and Qatar. In 2022, India's priority exports of goods include refined petroleum, diamonds, packaged medicines, jewelry, and rice (OECDWorld, 2024).

The table shows that the GCC member countries are export markets that absorb around UAE is the main market for Indian exports that absorb around 10.13% with details of 6.75% UAE, Saudi Arabia 2.17%, Kuwait 0.53%, Yemen 0.23%, Oman 0.9%, and Qatar 0.45%. In addition, India is also an importer of crude oil and gas, some of which are imported from the UAE and Saudi Arabia (OECDWorld, 2024). Furthermore, the GCC itself is an important trading partner for India because the percentage of its trade from 2022 to 2024 reached 15.8%, which is a larger figure when compared to the percentage of its trade with other regions such as the European Union (Solanki, 2024).

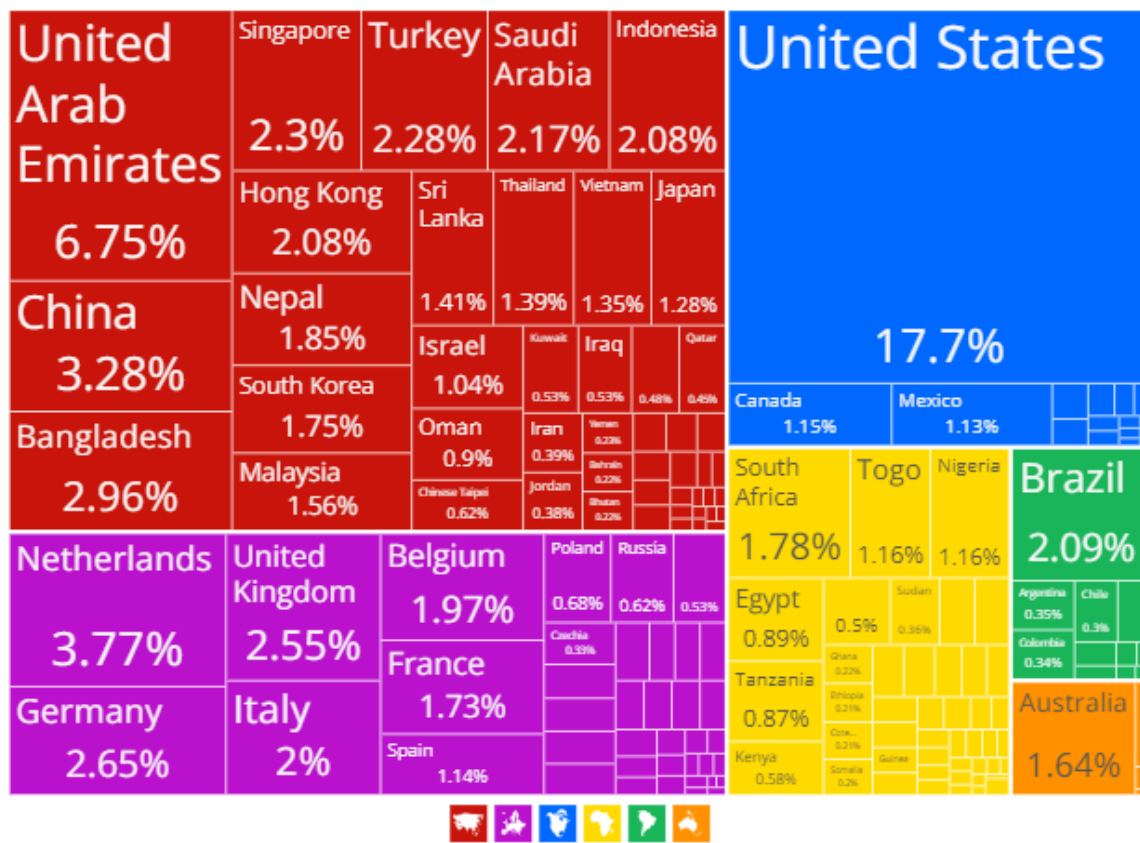
Based on this background, this article will explain how the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member countries responded to the wave of Islamophobia in India. the article is divided into three parts. The first part will explain the social discrimination experienced by the Muslim community in India due to Islamophobia; the second part will explain the Construction of GCC Regional Identity between Islam and national interests; and the third part will explain the GCC's reaction to Islamophobia through the lens of intergovernmentalism.

Table 1. Muslim discrimination events in India

Year	Location	Damage/ number of victims
1992	Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh	Demolition of Babri Mosque
2002	Gujarat	790 Muslims killed
2007	Kereta menuju Pakistan	44 Pakistani Muslims killed
2015	Uttar Pradesh	49 Muslim cattle farmers killed
2019	Nasional	Citizenship Amandemen Act
2022	Media sosial X	Biasphemary against Prophet Muhammad
2023	Various locations	Violence against Muslim students, shooting of Muslim passengers, destruction of several homes

Source: Author based on several sources

Figure 1. Proportion of Destination Countries for India's Exports



Source: OEC World, 2024

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN INDIA

Islamophobia is a terminology that can be interpreted as public anxiety towards Islam and Muslim culture that is largely untested but is already deeply embedded in society. This anxiety is manifested in a sense of otherness or differentiation from others. The spread of Islamophobia has occurred since the crash of the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001, where at that time, the President of the United States, George Bush, claimed that the attack was carried out by an Islamic terrorist group led by Saddam Hussein from Iraq. So western society, especially the United States, suspects Muslims as terrorists and views Islam as something dangerous (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008).

The wave of Islamophobia spread from the United States to Europe with issues of violence

and the Islamization of Europe, which then gave rise to hatred, hostility, and discrimination in public spaces (Kozaric, 2023). Even such discrimination is institutionalized in government-sponsored policies such as banning the wearing of headscarves in public (Najib & Hopkins, 2020), and considering Muslims as not well-integrated (Lean & Esposito, 2012). Since 9/11, the media seems to have framed Muslim men and Muslim women as enemies of America (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008), and the impact is that some Muslims are a socially discriminated group.

Discrimination is defined as the treatment carried out by members of a privileged group by excluding and exploiting members of a subordinate group to protect their group interests, which is caused by prejudice (Reskin, 2000) due to differences in social group identity such as race (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004) or religion (Rowatt & Al-Kire, 2021). These acts of discrimination occur at the in-

dividual, institutional, or organizational level (DiTomaso, 2020), and culture in the form of verbal abuse and direct physical violence to institutionalized scales such as through policies (Dovidio & Ikizer, 2019), both of which have direct or indirect impacts.

Historically, Islamophobia in India occurred around May 1857, when Muslims and Hindus attacked for their respective independence; the Indian Muslim League in 1906, with an interest in protecting the interests of the Muslim minority in India with its leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Then, during the Indian National Congress incident with the Indian Muslim League, Ali Jinnah made demands to build his own country, namely Pakistan, in August 1947 and caused a tragic conflict between Muslims and Hindus, with fatalities reaching around 4000 people and 10,000 people injured (Febriansyah, 2023). Then, there was a migration on November 21, 1947, between the Muslim community heading to Pakistan and the Hindu and Sikh communities to India (Sarkar, 2017). Until now, after the two countries have declared their independence, the conflict continues, especially most Hindus and Buddhists in India who condemn the Muslim community. Then, hatred towards Muslims increased after the tragedy of September 11, 2001, with support from Hindu-based parties.

The Hindutva ideology has a vision of India as a Hindu nation, and Islam is considered a foreign power that threatens India through war and invasion. This ideology gave rise to the Hindu Mahasabha or Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) group, which protects Hindu interests and discriminates against Muslims (Sukma & Asy'ari, 2024), and continues until the BJP comes to power nationally. In 2019, the Indian Citizenship Act underwent changes or amendments that took into account religions that were considered to exclude Muslims (DW, 2019), and gave other priorities to other religions such as Jains, Parsis, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Hindus from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The policy considers Muslims as infiltrators and non-Muslims as refugees, which has an impact on the protection of Muslim refugees who fled their home countries and were instead deported (Lingga & Shara, 2022).

In 2020, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, the BJP passed a regulation restricting interfaith relationships called the "Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance," which regulates the process of converting, which is intended to prevent converting Hindu women to Islam who are considered to be deceived by Muslim men through marriage or known as "love jihad" (Frayer, 2021). Since the enactment of this regulation in that year, 79 Muslim men have been arrested for allegedly deceiving Hindu women into converting to Islam (humanrightswatch, 2021). Then, the regulation underwent changes, but the changes were more extensive in expanding the scope, the reporting deadline from 60 days to 30 days, and the fine amount increased from 50,000 to 100,000 rupees.

Often, the policy of the Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance is used to arrest Muslim men who marry Hindu women. From the perspective of the Muslim minority group, the policy is hateful and intolerant. In addition, several statements by leaders of Hindu political parties, such as the Mahasabha, expressed the need to check the Muslim population because of the pressure that is disrupting India's health and education systems, so fighting love Jihad is a reason to address the problem. Around 80 people in Uttar Pradesh were jailed on charges of love jihad, and nationally, there were 3000 murder cases in 2020, including those related to interfaith marriages. Many people who have been labeled as love jihadists get hatred because they are considered to have wronged women, which causes the surrounding community to want to punish the person (Frayer, 2021).

In addition to the policy of religious conversion, other policies have a violent impact on the Muslim minority community, such as the prohibition of slaughtering and selling beef. The ban occurred because in Hinduism, cows are considered sacred animals in several states, such as Haryana, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh, and violators are subject to a 10-year prison sentence (Muhaimin, 2017). The policy caused hatred towards Muslims to increase, and several Muslims were executed outside the court process by BJP supporters. In addition, in the school environment, some also spread hatred

Table 2. The national population of the GCC member states and the law sources

State	Population (Bel-Air, 2022)	Muslim population (CIA.gov, 2024)	Law system (CIA.gov, 2024)
Bahrain	1.472.204	74.2%	Mixed legal system: sharia islam , English Common law, Egyptian civil
Kuwait	4.816.592	74.6%	Mixed legal system: English common law, French civil law and sharia law
Oman	4.578.016	85.9%	Mixed legal system: Anglo-Saxon dan sharia law
Qatar	2.833.679	65.2%	Mixed legal system: civil law and Shariah law
Saudi Arabia	35.013414	97 %	Mixed legal system: Islamic (Sharia) law with some Egyptian, french and customay law.
UEA	9.282.410	74.5%	Sharia and civil law
Total	57.996.315		

Source: Author based on several sources

by saying that Muslims are a threat to Hindu society (BBC, 2022), which resulted in acts of violence against Muslim students in class.

In June 2023, a policeman shot his superior and three Muslims on a train after first asking about the victim's religion (Faisal, 2023). Later that year, communal violence broke out in Nuh, which is 77% Muslim, and the police arrested 150 Muslim residents. The government bulldozed around 300 Muslim homes and shops as a result of religious violence. The Indian high court considered the action ethnic cleansing (AJ+, 2023b).). In addition, the Indian government removed Mughal imperial content from historical texts and India, which seemed to want to erase traces of Islam from historical texts and educational curricula and considered pre-Islamic India to be India's golden age.

Furthermore, the government also changed the names of streets and cities related to Islam, Urdu, or Mughal with the names of pro-BJP Indian leaders (AJ+, 2023a).). Based on the various social dynamics explained above, it can be said that the exclusion of Muslim groups in the Indian Citizens Act policy and physical violence that caused the deaths of many Mus-

lims due to the impact of the above policies are forms of social discrimination that occur at all levels from individuals to institutions. These social discriminations are the impact of the wave of Islamophobia of the Hindu majority Indian society towards the Islamic religion practiced by the minority because of the differences in identity between them. Identity is a part that marks and distinguishes one individual from another in the social life of society, which is constructed based on the area of residence, rationality, or religion.

CONSTRUCTION OF REGIONAL IDENTITY OF THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC): BETWEEN ISLAM AND NATIONAL INTEREST

Regional identity is inseparable from the existence of any regional organization, including the GCC. The GCC is a regional cooperation organization established on May 25, 1981, by the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait, with cooperation in the fields of economy and security (GCC, 2024), both conventional that comes internally and unconventional from outside such as external

military threats (Arafat, 2020). The similarity of characteristics of government, society, and legal basis are the main factors that influence member countries to join the GCC.

The table illustrates that the composition of the citizens of the GCC member countries is predominantly Muslim, and the legal system uses Sharia law, which is derived from Islamic teachings. Saudi Arabia is the country with the largest population and the most Muslims, with a population of 35 million people and a Muslim percentage of 97%. Qatar is the country with the smallest population and number of Muslims among other member countries, with a number of 2.8 million and 65% Muslims.

Identity in international relations studies can be seen by using the constructivism school, which derives its premises from social theories such as interpretive sociology and social psychology that have emerged since the 1990s, which see elements other than material such as norms, identities, rules, norms, and culture as integrated elements that influence social and political phenomena as a whole or holism. In these conditions, actors and the international system influence each other (Barnett, 2022).

This school considers that reality is socially constructed between actors, including national interests, and the international structure consists of elements that are not visible in form, such as ideation or ideas such as ideas, identities, norms, and cultures, which then play a role in determining whether the relationship between actors is conflictual-hostile or cooperative-friendly. Identities are classified into two categories: personal, which include ethnicity, race, religion, or others, and social, which is formed due to social interaction between actors. Identity is important because it determines the interests, which later determine the actors' actions. There are four types of identity, namely: first, unchanging corporate identity such as geographical characteristics; second, non-physical type identity, such as: ideology or thinking; third, role identity, which refers to duties or responsibilities in the international political arena, and; fourth, collective identity, namely the identity held by two or more countries that creates a shared awareness and feeling

(we feeling) which then forms group behavior that supports each other (Rosyidin, 2022).

In the case of the GCC, there are two main similarities, namely, the similarity of corporate identity and non-physical identity. The corporate identity is the identity of the geographical position of their country, which is located in the Arabian Peninsula. The non-physical identity is similar to religious identity, namely Islam, which is the identity of the majority of the member countries, and the norms held as a source of law are factors in its member countries joining the GCC regional organization. Then, as stated in the GCC constitution, the country formed the GCC as a forum for cooperation based on the awareness of the Arab and Islamic nations.

Besides identity, in constructivism, other elements, such as interest, intention, and language, also determine the pattern of interaction between actors in international relations. The higher the similarity of these elements, the more the political actors become allies, while the less similarity leads them to become rivals (Hadiwinata, 2017). Regional organizations are a manifestation of regionalism, namely regional cooperation driven by globalization that begins in the economic field to survive global competition by reducing trade barriers of its member countries to improve the economic position of the country (Vayrynen, 2003), which can then continue in the political process, policies and projects (Mansfield & Milner, 1999) for common goals whose processes are carried out top-down or bottom-up (Fawcett, 2005). According to Hettne and Walter S. Jones, seven conditions encourage the creation of regional integration, namely: social assimilation, shared values, mutual benefit, closeness of past relationships, the importance of integration, low costs, and external influences, all of which aim to maximize economic potential, political potential, and resolution of regional conflicts (Martin & Pramono, 2011)

The formation of the GCC began in 1980, led by Saudi Arabia, Prince Naif who visited Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain to discuss security issues in the Gulf region. Then followed up by Kuwait, which proposed

a regional organization, and the GCC was formed as a regional organization. Historically, there are various backgrounds of interest from member countries that are the reason for joining the GCC in addition to various events that occurred in the 1970s, such as the British withdrawal from the Gulf region, the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan and the Egypt-Israel war which caused an increase in the need for oil, two-thirds of which came from the region (Alhaiyaf, 2014).

Regional security and economic interests are the main reasons the Gulf countries joined the GCC. Regarding security, Bahrain is threatened by Iran, the UAE is suspicious of Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait is by Iraq. Bahrain wants to form a military alliance based on the idea that member states should rely on themselves rather than on Western powers to protect themselves. At the same time, Bahrain's economy is already good. Oman also wants to form a military alliance to protect the Strait of Hormuz for the benefit of export and import routes; Saudi Arabia is also military-oriented even though it cooperates in joint military exercises to protect each other's sovereignty; While Kuwait and Qatar proposed economic and cultural cooperation to strengthen the unity of these countries (Alhaiyaf, 2014).). Economically, the GCC countries are oil-exporting, and currently, these countries are developing other industries besides oil, such as the creative industry or tourism (Wahyudhi et al., 2020).

Therefore, Islam as an identity and security and economy as interests are two similarities that make Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, and Qatar join the GCC organization. Then, in the context of the GCC, regional organizations were formed top-down, the initiative of which came from the government with a political, security, and economic agenda simultaneously. Then, apart from the similarity of religious identity, the similarity of interest in security-oriented towards military threats and economic cooperation became the basis of interests that encouraged member countries to join regional organizations.

STATES' REACTIONS TO ISLAMOPHOBIA IN INDIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERGOVERNMENTALISM AND GCC-INDIA RELATIONS

The reactions of GCC countries to Islamophobia in India are different, this is because the GCC is an intergovernmental organization. Theoretically, liberal intergovernmentalism (LI) is a state-centrism organization, where regional policies are taken by harmonizing the national policies of each member through negotiations between countries and maintaining national sovereignty without surrendering sovereignty to regional organizations (Scheidt, 2011). In intergovernmentalism, the state is an important and rational political actor, that obtains its goals through negotiations and bargaining between governments by calculating the usefulness of various alternative actions and choosing one that maximizes its utility (Moravcsik & Schimmelfennig, 2019).

The GCC was formed based on geographical proximity, Islamic values, and the shared aspirations of its 6 member countries, for cooperation and coordination in various fields and mutual support for each other member countries (Ilu & Wallace, 2017). To support this, there is an organizational mechanism built by the GCC, where the GCC has two regional bodies besides the Secretary-General, namely the Supreme Council and the Council of Ministers. The Supreme Council is the highest authority consisting of heads of member states whose chairman rotates alphabetically, with meetings twice a year. Then the Council of Ministers, whose leadership changes every six months alphabetically with regular meetings every three months. However, often GCC member countries prioritize their national interests over regional interests (Alhaiyaf, 2014).

GCC as a regional cooperation organization has several partners including India. India is the GCC's largest economic cooperation partner in oil and gas trade, as well as skilled and unskilled human resources. India and GCC cooperation began in 1992 with a figure of around \$4,014 million and increased until 1999 to a value of \$8,377 million. India exports agricultural products such as food and clothing

(Azhar, 2004), and continues to increase to \$ 66,755 million in 2008 (Ahmed & Kohli, 2009) and \$ 161.59 million in 2024 (Standard, 2024)

Then the GCC and India expanded their cooperation more widely such as information technology services, university-level education, petrochemicals, and military training (Crockett, 2013). Some reasons that strengthen the India-GCC relationship are India sees the GCC countries as part of its natural economic region (Pradhan, 2008). The increase in India's oil consumption and heavy dependence on these countries for gas and oil encourages India to invest in the oil and gas industry to secure their long-term access, plus many Indian expatriates who contribute to commercial relations (Habibi, 2011). Thus, there is bilateral interdependence between the two regions (Rigiladez & Khan, 2014).

Regionally, the GCC has not responded to the Islamophobia that has occurred in India, such as the revocation of the status of the Jammu and Kashmir region in 2019 as a special autonomous region which is a Muslim-majority region to other discriminatory policies by India against its Muslim citizens (Cafiero, 2022) which have resulted in changes in land ownership rights and the detention of political leaders on Jammu and Kashmir (BBC, 2019). In this case, only two non-GCC countries responded, namely Pakistan and China. This is because the Kashmir region is a disputed area between India, Pakistan, and China (Kocis et al., 2019; securitycouncilreport.org, 2024).

However, the Islamophobic actions that occurred in 2020 by Indian expatriates in the UAE by creating hoax news that denigrated Muslims with the hashtag "Corona jihad" have caught the attention of GCC netizens, and the issue was brought by Kuwait to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation forum to get attention and pressure India (stimson.org, 2020). Furthermore, statements that denigrated the Prophet Muhammad were issued by BJP spokespersons, and only received responses from individual member countries, for example, Qatar, Kuwait, and UAE summoned the Indian UAE Ambassador in their respective countries. Then Saudi Arabia refused to demand that India be

more respectful and reject the negative prejudice against Islam carried out by India. Meanwhile, Oman threatened to boycott Indian products (Alhasan, 2022). The UAE also voiced condemnation of the BJP's statement demanding an apology from India (aljazeera.com, 2022), then the Prime Minister dismissed Sharma and Jindal from his party, and the GCC accepted the decision (Cafiero, 2022).

Overall, regionally, India's Islamophobic actions have not had a major impact on India and GCC relations. Since 2019, India has launched a multi-million dollar project to renovate a 200-year-old Hindu temple in Bahrain. Some GCC countries even view the BJP's Hindu nationalist agenda as a small price to pay to be close to India as a new power. Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of Prince Mohammed bin Salman, no longer sees itself as a defender of global Muslims but rather wants to transform its country into an economic power other than oil. Thus, India's relations with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Bahrain will remain safe (Alhasan, 2022). UAE, Arab Saudi dan Bahrain tetap memberikan penghormatan kepada Modi walaupun Modi merupakan tokoh ekstrimis Hindu yang disebabkan karena negara tersebut merupakan mitra teratas perdagangan. In The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain continue to respect Modi even though Modi is a Hindu extremist figure because the country is India's top trading partner (Quadri, 2022).

The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain continue to respect Modi even though Modi is a Hindu extremist figure because the country is India's top trading partner (Alhasan, 2022). Kuwait continues to voice India's Islamophobia under Modi's government, and the Kuwaiti Parliament boycotted the entry of BJP members into Kuwait, making Kuwait the only country India has not visited (Quadri, 2022). However, only two countries responded negatively to India's Islamophobic actions, namely Qatar and Kuwait. Qatar and Kuwait have their attitudes towards India because they are domestically influenced by the Islamist opposition groups and Qatar by Qatar's advocacy for Islamic politics and Islamic groups, as long as India, under Modi's government,

pursues a Hindu nationalist agenda.

CONCLUSION

The GCC is a regional organization of countries in the Gulf region whose members are Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Yemen, Oman, and Qatar they joined because they are bound by the similarity of geographical location, Arab nation, and Islamic identity of society and its legal system. India is a country with the largest Hindu population and Muslims as a minority, the Hindutva ideology adopted by the winning party in India has made the Muslim community socially discriminated against and experienced physical violence and even loss of life which seems to be sponsored by the Indian government. Although the GCC member countries are countries with a majority Muslim population, this does not make the response to the wave of Islamophobia that occurred in India uniform and acted on regionally, but individually. Of the six GCC member countries, only Kuwait and Qatar responded to the wave of Islamophobia in India by making their partnership with India strained. Meanwhile, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain continue to make India their closest partner because of their high level of economic interdependence with India. Moreover, the GCC is a regional organization that implements intergovernmentalism, which allows member countries to determine their foreign policy direction.

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