Secular Integration Models and Global Governance Schemes: Lessons for Ummatic Integration

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Introduction

There are multiple pathways by which the Umma might become more integrated: leadership might come from an existing or new state, a group of states, the private sector, a civic organization, or from a source as yet unexplored. This paper focuses on just one of those pathways—the multilateral organization—to consider what lessons secular iterations of this model in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries might offer for reflection on ummatic integration. It argues that building a powerful multilateral Islamic organization, and one that is truly autonomous vis-à-vis its powerful member states, appears very difficult under present circumstances in which the political master-signifier of the secular nation-state remains dominant in both political practice and imagination. Moreover, while this current "liberal international order" may be under profound stress, both from within and without,[1] neither its decline nor the rise of authoritarian alternatives such as China and Russia have yet offered the requisite space for the emergence of a powerful, autonomous multilateral Islamic organization. Once ummatic thinking, imagination, and activism has progressed further, however, there may be more space for such a multilateral organization. This paper further argues, in turn, that the most promising models for supranational integration are regionally-oriented, geographically contiguous organizations united by a clear vision. Even one powerful regional ummatic organization can serve as a key stepping stone on the road to more global ummatic integration.

Ummatic thinkers need also consider the broader question of what type of political order is required to allow the Umma to build stronger institutions. The Umma is likely best served by an order that is, to use the terms laid out by international relations scholar John Mearsheimer, "bounded," in terms of primarily encompassing Muslim-majority countries; "ideological," in terms of connecting countries through a shared normative vision, not just shared interests; and "thick," in the sense of fostering "institutions that have a substantial effect on state behavior in both the economic and military realms"[2]—and one might add in the realms of sociopolitical rights and freedoms, and intra-Muslim diversity. Such an order would naturally both include and

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[1] See, for example, John Ikenberry, "The End of Liberal International Order?" *International Affairs* 94, no. 1 (2018): 7-23.

[2] John Mearsheimer, "Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order," *International Security* 43, no. 4 (2019): 7-50, 16.

exclude—something that all political orders inevitably do as the political scientist Kyle Lascurettes has shown.[3] Arriving at any kind of "thick" order favorable to ummatic interests will likely require considerable and sustained bottom-up efforts by Muslim activists to connect across boundaries and build non-governmental organizations that achieve levels of societal, intellectual, and political integration, and which may in turn spur states to consider deeper integration among themselves.

To draw lessons from and to give a sense of the possibilities and limitations inherent in the multilateral organization as a genre of transnational integration, this paper considers some of the most powerful multilateral organizations that have appeared in the world since 1945. The initiatives and organizations discussed here all reflect different attempts to integrate two or more nation-states along political or economic lines, and/or to implement and enforce shared governance norms at a global or regional level. The paper discusses a number of examples, including the United Nations (UN), the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), among others.[4]

These examples are assessed with due cognizance of the fact that they all represent secular attempts at integration within the parameters of the post-WWII liberal order of nation-states. They are thus particularly salient if ummatic integration is imagined as proceeding along the lines of Muslim nation-states banding together in supra-national organizations—as is the case in many gradualist approaches. Within this frame of reference, the findings of this paper are relatively bleak. There is cause for pessimism about the prospects for a powerful, multilateral ummatic organization to emerge any time soon. Indeed, there is cause to question whether it is worth striving for such integration in the first instance given that the nation-state has been of the foremost causes of Muslim disunity.[5] As discussed below, there are serious challenges in transferring models from secular multilaterals and their guiding assumptions about how to define nation and citizenship over to ummatic models that rest on fundamentally different assumptions about political belonging. Ummatic thinkers and activists will need to envision ummatic integration as proceeding along lines that transcend the nation-state framework. Nevertheless, even for this understanding of ummatic integration, secular frameworks have relevance; the considerable power of some secular multilateral organizations do offer lessons to the Umma.

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[3] Kyle Lascurettes, *Orders of Exclusion: Great Powers and the Strategic Sources of Foundational Rules in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[4] These examples all constitute organizations that member states can join or leave relatively voluntarily, although sometimes a relationship with the World Bank or the IMF comes with a web of financial obligations that are effectively coercive; the paper does not deal with conquest, annexation, or other forms of coerced integration of one state into another.

[5] Joseph Kaminski, "Irredeemable Failure: The Modern Nation-State as a Nullifier of Ummatic Unity," *Ummatics Institute*, December 14, 2022, https://ummatics.org/2022/12/14/irredeemable-failure-the-modern-nation-state-as-a-nullifier-of-ummatic-unity/.

This paper extrapolates some general trends from the many multilateral organizations and other integrative efforts in the world. There are ten core findings, derived less from theoretical frameworks than from observed trends in existing multilateral organizations. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that international relations scholars have elaborated various theories for explaining and analyzing transnational integration, theories originating above all from the study of the European Union. These theoretical perspectives include functionalism, neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism, federalism, and postfunctionalism. Of these perspectives, this paper's approach is closest to the intergovernmentalist and postfunctionalist perspectives, stressing with the former the ways in which power dynamics between states affect integration, and with the latter calling attention to the ways in which domestic political contention can undermine integration.[6]

The ten core findings are as follows: (1) efforts at integration and global or regional governance often trigger assertions of national sovereignty; (2) efforts to form fully integrated units, or even cohesive federations, out of two or more nations have often collapsed within a very short time, although there are a few counterexamples; (3) a few regional or global powers often dominate organizations meant to be multilateral and inclusive; (4) the creation of a regional bloc can trigger counterreactions, such as the formation of a rival bloc, thereby undercutting wider integration prospects; (5) the easing of trade and border controls, with a corresponding increase in the freedom of movement and labor within particular regional zones, has been the most successful and stable form of integration in the post-1945 world; (6) even the most successful integration projects are vulnerable to reversals, as infamously demonstrated by Brexit; (7) overdoses of multilateralism can be counterproductive; (8) most surviving integration models since 1991 have been compatible with and deferential to capitalism, but have also been adaptable; (9) secular integration models will be hard to reimagine in explicitly Islamic terms under present circumstances, given that some integration models, especially at the regional level, depend on secular notions of citizenship; and (10) ummatic thinkers should support and advocate for certain forms of "secular" integration due to their ummatic benefits, namely those forms of integration that allow for the freer movement of people.

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[6] For an overview of these perspectives and their divergent interpretations of recent developments in the Eurozone, see Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, "Grand Theories of European Integration in the Twenty-First Century," *Journal of European Public Policy* 26, no. 8 (2019): 1113-1133.

A Brief History of Secular Multilateral Organizations and Global Governance Schemes

The word "secular" is difficult to define,[7] but the institutions discussed here are all "secular" in the sense that their core purpose is not overtly defined as religious; thus bodies such as the Muslim World League (est. 1962), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (est. 1969), and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (est. 1975) are mostly beyond the scope of the paper.[8] There has long been interaction between secular and religious organizations—some of the key non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that make up the international donor and humanitarian relief system, for example, have wholly or partly religious roots, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (est. 1863), Caritas (est. 1897), and CARE International (est. 1945). The most powerful intergovernmental organizations, however, are non-confessional in nature.

Multilateral organizations are as old as multilateral treaties, yet the purpose of the former typically goes beyond ending one war or one cycle of conflict; the multilateral organization, conceived of as a permanent or at least long-term entity supported by a permanent staff and an independent budget, is different from a simple treaty convention. The history of such institutions is often dated to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and particularly to the Conference of Vienna (1814-1815), an effort to establish a postwar peace.[9] Developments outside of Europe were also important, including the Congress of Panama (1826), which sought to generate a unified foreign policy among newly independent Latin American republics. The rest of the nineteenth century saw various political and economic organizations come into being. Recently, it should be noted, there has been a wave of scholarship challenging the idea that the "international order" has a fundamentally Western genesis;[10] these works productively and appropriately reimagine international relations along non-Eurocentric lines, but their fundamental unit of analysis is empires, rather than multilateral organizations in the sense of the UN, the EU, etc.

The twentieth century accelerated processes of attempting to regulate the global economy and geopolitics. The period 1918-1939 was particularly critical; the League of Nations ultimately failed, partly due to the United States Senate's refusal to ratify the relevant treaty. Yet the

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[7] On secularism, see Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); and Hussein Agrama, *Questioning Secularism: Islam, Sovereignty, and the Rule of Law in Modern Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

[8] On these organizations, see Reinhard Schulze, "Transnational Wahhabism: The Muslim World League and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth," in *Wahhabism and the World: Understanding Saudi Arabia's Global Influence on Islam*, ed. Peter Mandaville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 93-113.

[9] Bob Reinalda, *Routledge History of International Organizations: From 1815 to the Present Day* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[10] Shogo Suzuki, Yongjin Zhang, Joel Quirk, eds., *International Orders in the Early Modern World: Before the Rise of the West* (London: Routledge, 2016); and Ayse Zarakol, *Before the West: The Rise and Fall of Eastern World Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

interwar years saw a blossoming of would-be economic governance initiatives.[11] The period 1944-1949 then saw the creation of the most influential multilateral organizations in the world today. The sequence of new initiatives began with the Bretton Woods institutions, named after the American town that hosted a 1944 conference where forty-four nations, dominated by the United States and the United Kingdom, hashed out the agreement that led to the creation of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank;[12] the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (1947), the precursor to the World Trade Organization (WTO, est. 1995), is often considered part of the Bretton Woods institutions as well. In 1945, the Allied powers created the United Nations, and in 1949, as the Cold War accelerated, the United States and Western Europe banded together to create the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Throughout the period 1815-1949 and beyond, the two basic imperatives for creating multilateral organizations were the attempt to prevent war and the attempt to integrate economies and stabilize the global financial system.

The post-1945 period brought a wave of struggles for self-determination and, unlike the previous wave following World War I, many of these were successful. Formerly colonized territories became independent nations across Asia and Africa, as the exhausted European powers allowed—or were forced into allowing—their empires to crumble (most Central and South American territories had become independent in the nineteenth century). The wave of new entrants into the club of nations both swelled the membership of the UN, the IMF, and other key institutions, and generated new drives for regional multilateral organizations, such as the Arab League (est. 1945), the Association of Southeast Asia (est. 1961, and replaced by the Association of South East Asian Nations or ASEAN in 1967), and the Organization of African Unity (est. 1963, and transformed into the African Union in 2002). Some of these organizations aimed at far-reaching forms of unification that proved difficult to reconcile with nationalism, national interests, and inter-state conflict—problems discussed further below. There has been an abiding tension in the post-1945 era between the drive for self-determination and the desire, sometimes voiced by one and the same leader, for greater integration and cooperation.

For the Muslim-majority world, independence gave new nations a degree of domestic sovereignty as well as opportunities to influence the United Nations (particularly the General Assembly) and other key institutions. Yet independence was also often partial, given the political and economic influence that Western powers still wielded over many of their former colonies—

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[11] Jamie Martin, *The Meddlers: Sovereignty, Empire, and the Birth of Global Economic Governance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022).

[12] On the Bretton Woods conference and the wider issues at stake, see Benn Steil, *The Battle of Bretton Woods: John Maynard Keynes, Harry Dexter White, and the Making of a New World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); and Eric Rauchway, *The Money Makers: How Roosevelt and Keynes Ended the Depression, Defeated Fascism, and Secured a Prosperous Peace* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), Chapters 11 and 12.

influence tantamount to neo-colonialism in some cases.[13] Independence hardened colonial-era boundaries, which sometimes divided formerly integrated peoples, created or reinforced incentives for new ruling elites to pursue narrow interests. They also posed the challenge of navigating relations with the superpowers, or pursuing non-alignment, amid the Cold War.[14] Islamic solidarities also competed with other ethnic, cultural, and nationalist solidarities, with religious identities often playing a secondary or even marginal role in the creation of multilateral organizations, even in Muslim-majority lands.

Overall, multilateral organizations have remade the landscape of global politics. Even the most diplomatically isolated states, such as North Korea, are members of the United Nations, which also accords observer status to some nations whose global diplomatic recognition is disputed, such as Palestine. Multilateral organizations have become key fora in which issues of general and particular concern are negotiated and debated, including but not limited to peace and security, trade, and climate change. These organizations' impact is, moreover, magnified in the aggregate, when they become larger than the sum of their parts and come to constitute whole systems. An official historian of the IMF, for example, writes that the IMF's role has increasingly become to "catalyze" lending to borrower countries, rather than simply to issue loans, and that the Fund functions as "international crisis manager," playing a coordinating role vis-à-vis other institutions and even vis-à-vis the private sector.[15] The UN itself constitutes a sweeping system, with many multilateral bodies that are hugely significant in and of themselves—the World Food Program, for example—operating under the UN umbrella. The reach of these systems extends into many areas of daily life for hundreds of millions of people around the world, from how people are fed and policed to how physical landscapes, natural sites, and historical treasures are organized and conceptualized.

At the same time, the enforcement capabilities of multilateral organizations remain uneven. The most vivid example of the kind of pressure that multilateral organizations can deploy is the "structural adjustment" inflicted on many desperate and indebted nations in the developing world, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, by the IMF and the World Bank. Through conditional loans, these donors effectively compelled wide-ranging changes within developing and post-Communist economies, including rapid privatization, deep cuts to services and public sector employment, and rapid shifts to market-based economies. The most vivid example of

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[13] For two African examples of how French influence continued in the post-colonial period, see Nathaniel Powell, *France's Wars in Chad: Military Intervention and Decolonization in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); and Fanny Pigeaud and Ndongo Samba Sylla, *Africa's Last Colonial Currency: The CFA Franc Story* (London: Pluto Press, 2021).

[14] One classic treatment of the dilemmas and challenges Muslim lands faced at independence is Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Volume 3 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), Book Six, Chapter VII.

[15] James Boughton, *The IMF and the Force of History: Events That Have Shaped the Global Institution* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2014), 26-27.

multilateral organizations' inability to dictate outcomes, however, is the United Nations' peacekeeping forces' chronic weakness in the face of persistent conflict in many countries where they are deployed, and a corresponding lack of the political progress and stabilization that peacekeeping efforts are meant to support.[16] The International Criminal Court provides another example of an institution that has largely failed to enforce its mandate, except against already defeated and captured figures from marginalized countries. Even the broad-based coalitions that have been activated to intervene militarily in states deemed rogue have often withdrawn either in defeat, as in Afghanistan, or without achieving a credible transition to a more stable and open system, as in Libya. At the same time, multilateral organizations' failures can be generative; one scholar argues, regarding UN peacekeeping, that "what the UN does in one place can shift the strategies, outcomes, and options available to parties to conflict in other places"—even when a UN peacekeeping mission fails.[17]

Notably, multilateral organizations have credibly been accused of blatantly contradicting their own founding principles of internal democracy and representativeness, and of functioning as uneven playing fields dominated by the world's most powerful nations. In the case of the most powerful organizations, the power dynamics are often blatantly obvious: the United Nations Security Council's permanent members still comprise the biggest winners of World War II, the World Bank's president is always selected by the United States government, and so forth. Such power imbalances are often mirrored at the regional level; for example, Nigeria, West Africa's most populous country and largest economy, is the headquarters, chief funder, and dominant player within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The landscape of regional multilateral organizations is mixed. Whereas some regions have highly active and activist organizations that have grown in power over time, such as ECOWAS, there are also organizations that underperform in a comparative context, or that even fall relatively dormant. One political scientist writes of ASEAN, that "East Asian multilateralism is profoundly constrained by the legacy of the past, the unresolved historical tensions it embodies, and by continuing sensitivities about questions of regional leadership."[18] In other words, tensions between China and Japan have undercut ASEAN's ability to exercise power. One example of a dormant project is the Arab Maghreb Union, founded 1989, which became plagued by pre-existing rivalries between Algeria, Morocco, and Libya.

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[16] Some have argued that peacekeeping missions are more successful than they are often portrayed, and that success correlates with the devolution of decision-making from UN headquarters to the mission itself. See, for instance, Lise Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[17] Anjali Dayal, *Incredible Commitments: How UN Peacekeeping Failures Shape Peace Processes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 1.

[18] Mark Beeson, "Multilateralism in East Asia: Less than the Sum of Its Parts?" *Global Summitry* 2, no.1 (2016): 54-70, at 55.

In short, the history and the present functioning of secular multilateral organizations and the adjacent NGO industry all offer complex lessons for ummatic thinkers. A globalizing world and intermittent wars and crises have helped call massive multilateral organizations into being, but such organizations are divisive, vulnerable to capture by their most powerful members, and sometimes ineffective at their core missions.

Finding 1: *Efforts at integration and global or regional governance often trigger assertions of national sovereignty.*

The largest obstacle to global integration has been concerns about national sovereignty. In general, countries have given up their sovereignty in proportion to their relative power within the global system. Thus the United States famously helped design the International Criminal Court but did not sign the Rome Statute that established it in 1998, and the U.S. does not consider itself subject to the Court's jurisdiction. The vagaries of domestic politics can also affect how countries approach multilateral initiatives. For example, U.S. President Donald Trump, in 2018, withdraw the U.S. from the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement that had been negotiated under his immediate predecessor, Barack Obama. In contrast, at the other end of the spectrum of global power, the desperately poor countries of the Sahel region of West Africa were vulnerable to multiple encroachments on their sovereignty—not just the above-mentioned "structural adjustment" programs of the 1980s but also, during droughts in the 1970s, international NGOs "[pried] open a new political space of imported initiatives, controlled distribution, and constrained sovereignty."[19] The strong often make and break the rules, while the weak are often forced to accept them.

Even relatively weak countries, nevertheless, can find ways to leverage their power and sovereignty over powerful multilateral institutions, as seen in Chad's defiance of World Bank dictates on how to spend oil revenues in the early 2000s.[20] One scholar finds that even at the ICC, weaker states sometimes "use the ICC as leverage in their domestic conflicts and to empower themselves in the pursuit of their political and security interests."[21] In short, strong countries often structure integration efforts for their own benefit, even in blatantly hypocritical ways, weak countries often face more coercion from multilateral institutions, and creative leaders

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[19] Gregory Mann, *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 11.

[20] Celeste Hicks, *Africa's New Oil: Power, Pipelines and Future Fortunes* (London: Zed Books, 2015), especially Chapter One. See also Tom Long, *A Small State's Guide to Influence in World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

[21] Oumar Ba, *States of Justice: The Politics of the International Criminal Court* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 2.

in weak countries can sometimes undercut and subvert those coercion efforts—all dynamics that make genuine integration more difficult to achieve.

Another recurring dynamic is that multilateral organizations are reluctant to fully enforce their own stated norms, which can in turn damage their credibility and further weaken their enforcement powers. Since 2020, for example, the West African regional organization ECOWAS has been caught in a cycle of tepid responses to severe political and security crises among three member states, Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso. ECOWAS, one of whose goals is to promote democratic norms in West Africa, mounted no serious objections to a flawed legislative election in Mali in 2020 and an extra-constitutional third-term bid by the president of Guinea in the same year. Those events both fed into coups in Mali (2020) and Guinea (2021). ECOWAS then struggled to impose its will on juntas in Mali and Guinea, and then on the juntas that came to power through two coups in Burkina Faso (January 2022 and September 2022). When ECOWAS attempted to use sanctions to force Mali's leaders to comply with ECOWAS dictates over how long the transition back to civilian rule should be, the Malian junta defied ECOWAS for the entire run of the sanctions (January-July 2022) until ECOWAS accepted a "compromise" that was still largely favorable to the junta, giving the military authorities until 2024 to hand back power. Overall, ECOWAS, which for critics functions merely as a club for heads of states, has a very mixed record for dealing with crises in member states. Some of its weakest members have been recipients of military interventions—such as in Gambia in 2017, when a longtime president refused to leave office after losing an election—but at other times ECOWAS has appeared unwilling to challenge authoritarian West African leaders, and unable to grapple with the scale of the challenges in countries facing severe insecurity and turmoil.

For the Umma, these experiences raise the daunting prospect that any multilateral ummatic organization might be dominated by its stronger member states, who would be keen to intrude upon weaker members' sovereignty but loath to give up their own. Moreover, the populations of weaker member states might feel resentment and embrace more nationalist sentiments if they feel that an external, unaccountable organization is trampling upon them. The unpopularity of the IMF and the World Bank in many countries is a demonstration of this process, as is the "rally 'round the flag" effect that appeared to take hold when ECOWAS sanctioned Mali. Such nationalism can, in turn, be harnessed by leaders to push back on multilateralism itself.

Finding 2: *Efforts to form fully integrated units or federations out of two or more nations have often collapsed within a very short time.*

In the post-independence era it has typically proven harder to keep existing nations unified than to create new ones. The breakups of Pakistan and Bangladesh (1971), Yugoslavia (1992), and Sudan and South Sudan (2011) all furnish examples of centrifugal forces. Ethnic tensions, the difficulty of governing across large distances of non-contiguous territories, internal discrimination, the long shadow of colonial policymaking, and other factors have all fed into the breakdown of several nations. Secessionist impulses have appeared in many other nations, ranging from Spain to Somalia. Although *de jure* independence is quite difficult to secure—as frustrated pro-independence leaders in Somaliland and elsewhere have learned—*de facto* fragmentation is quite common.

It has generally proven unwieldy to unite two or more territories into one. Although there are many federal systems in the world, most of those federations exist in units whose borders were at least roughly drawn by a colonial power, as in the United States, India, and Nigeria. Efforts to create new unifications or federations in the post-colonial period have largely faltered. Two examples of this difficulty are the United Arab Republic (UAR), which attempted to integrate Egypt and Syria, lasting only three years before Syria seceded (1958-1961); and the Mali Federation, a union of present-day Senegal and Mali that lasted just two months as an independent unit (June-August 1960). In the case of the UAR and other voluntary unification proposals in the Arab world, Malik Mufti has argued that it was "the inability of ruling elites to consolidate their hold on power that…pushed them in a pan-Arab direction in search of legitimacy and support." Once domestic politics stabilized, "the desire of their leaders to pursue unity projects…subsided."[22] In the Mali Federation, the effort proved abortive because "the nature of the power distribution was such that a strong center did not exist, and there was little hope that it could emerge as a viable governing unit without upsetting the entire balance."[23] These observations apply more widely to the difficulties of integrating or federating territories: it is difficult to move from vision to reality, leaders' interests may conflict, and multi-national units are subject to collapse before a sense of supra-national identity can be forged among citizens.

At the level of vision, moreover, some dreams of integration have been strongly associated with particular charismatic individuals. Often those individuals, buoyed by popularity within and beyond their borders and especially when backed by considerable resources and largesse, can make some headway towards achieving their visions. The personal charisma of

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[22] Malik Mufti, *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 2.

[23] Donn Kurtz, "Political Integration in Africa: The Mali Federation," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 8, no.3 (1970): 405-424, at 417.

Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser (r. 1954-1970) was instrumental to the creation of the UAR. Libya's Muammar al-Qadhafi (r. 1969-2011), a champion of a "United States of Africa," was an influential backer of what became the African Union, and it is no accident that the AU's founding document is called the Sirte Declaration, after Qadhafi's hometown.[24] Yet the advantages of having a charismatic booster for integration are paralleled by the disadvantages of the project becoming linked, in the popular mind, to that individual's own political fortunes.

There are counterexamples to this trend of failed integration attempts, however. The major counterexample is the reunification of Germany in 1990. It could be argued that this is a special case wherein West and East Germany only existed as distinct units for forty-five years, and that their reunification enjoyed considerable domestic and international support as well as levels of domestic wealth that other countries, such as Senegal/Mali and Egypt/Syria, did not enjoy. On the other hand, it could also be argued that the German example furnishes hope for reintegration of other units that share a profound historical, cultural, and religious unity. Still, even where such historical ties are strong, states tend to guard their sovereignty—witness the discomfort that surfaces in Mauritania, for example, whenever a prominent Moroccan makes reference to the idea of "greater Morocco."[25]

For the Umma, these examples and the structural challenges they indicate all suggest that the path to ummatic integration likely does not run through a project of absorbing nations, one by one, into a larger formal unit, at least not in the foreseeable future. The tendency of nations and leaders to approach such projects half-heartedly or for narrow political gain, the difficulties of sustaining even those supra-national units that do briefly come into being, and the vicissitudes of charismatic leaders' own rise and fall all indicate that supra-national units remain unwieldy at present. On the other hand, the counterexample of Germany shows that successful integration is possible where there is a shared history and culture and the political will to make it work. And the example of the African Union shows that even when an integrationist drive falls short of its loftiest ambitions for full-fledged unity or federation, the call for unity can result in more integration than there might have been otherwise.

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[24] "Sirte Declaration," 9 September 1999, https://archives.au.int/bitstream/handle/ 123456789/10157/1999_Sirte%20_Decl_%20E.pdf.

[25] Jeanne Le Bihan, "Maroc-Mauritanie : quand un prédicateur réveille le contentieux territorial," *Jeune Afrique*, 18 August 2022, https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1369844/politique/maroc-mauritanie-quand-un-predicateur-reveille-le-contentieux-territorial/.

Finding 3: *A few regional or global powers often dominate organizations meant to be multilateral and inclusive.*

Multilateral organizations and integration projects often embrace a rhetoric of democracy and equality while functioning internally as deeply uneven playing fields. Factors affecting power dynamics within organizations include decisions about where to locate the headquarters, how to set up funding structures, and how to allocate power and decision-making within the institution. At the global level, the United Nations Security Council's structure exemplifies the trend, with the five permanent members (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China) each able to exercise veto power, sometimes in clear opposition to the preferences of the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly. At the regional level, this trend also operates. The Organization of American States (OAS), for example, is a U.S.-dominated institution, although the U.S. sometimes compromises with other member states and occasionally loses in disputes, especially when other member states have been united against it.[26] Some major powers both dominate multilateral institutions and, when dissatisfied, take unilateral action outside of, and thus undermining, those same institutions.

Any multilateral ummatic organizations will be susceptible to these same problems. This does not mean that these problems are insurmountable, but they must be seriously considered. Ummatic integration projects will face dilemmas about how far to go in securing the buy-in of powerful actors, whose political and financial support could be critical to the success of integration, but whose dominance could antagonize weaker member states or other key constituencies. If ummatic thinkers had confidence in a particular state to act as the anchor of a multilateral project, however, then the support of even one strong state could accelerate that avenue for ummatic integration.

Finding 4: *The creation of a regional bloc can trigger counterreactions, such as the formation of a rival bloc, thereby undercutting wider integration prospects.*

Integration within the world-system is not linear, in part because of the dynamic whereby one bloc may arise in reaction or rivalry to another, thereby setting up tensions that damage prospects for larger forms of integration. The most famous example of this dynamic is the formation of NATO and its rival Warsaw Pact. It might be argued that NATO and the Warsaw Pact merely crystallized pre-existing geopolitical rivalries in the early Cold War, but the creation of a formal

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[26] Carolyn M. Shaw, "Limits to Hegemonic Influence in the Organization of American States," *Latin American Politics and Society* 45:3 (2003): 59-92.

organization can be read as a hostile or threatening act in and of itself. NATO's post-Cold War trajectory has also been fraught, with serious debate inside the organization over whether it still has an existential justification, and with considerable pushback from Russia against NATO's drive to expand. The causes of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine have been hotly debated, especially when it comes to the causal role of NATO expansion, but it appears reasonable to say that fears of NATO expansion were one key factor among several in prompting the war.

For the Umma, the lesson is that any serious ummatic integration efforts might trigger counterreactions within the Umma. Counterreactions would not necessarily be as dramatic as war, but might generate rivalries, redundancies, and awkwardness. An early sign of this issue is the parallel and competing structures created by Morocco and Algeria to reach out to African ʿulamāʾ. The competition is not zero-sum: multiple African nations have enthusiastically joined both organizations. Some competition within the Umma could also arguably be generative and productive. Yet in this example, competition has inscribed what are meant to be leagues of ʿulamāʾ within regional power politics, creating tensions around these organizations and positioning Saharan and sub-Saharan African nations as clients of the regional powers. More ambitious efforts to unify the Umma could easily generate even more powerful counterreactions.

Finding 5: *The easing of trade and border controls, with a corresponding increase in the freedom of movement, labor, and capital within particular regional zones, has been the most successful and stable form of integration in the post-1945 world.*

This finding comes closer to the "neofunctionalist" perspective on integration in its emphasis on integration at the societal level. One can recall the argument, associated with the French politician Jean Monnet (d. 1979), that integration can produce a "chain reaction" driving further reaction.[27] If successful integration is defined as those efforts that make the biggest impact on ordinary people's lives and that last the longest (the question of whether the resulting impact is positive or negative would involve a different definition of success, it should be noted), then the list of the most successful integration projects since 1945 would probably begin with the European Union (EU) and its predecessor organizations. The EU was born out of longstanding aspirations for European integration, which gained momentum during World War II. The post-war period saw a succession of initiatives such as the Council of Europe (1949), the European Coal and Steel Community (1951), the European Economic Community (1957), the European Communities (1967), the Schengen Rules (1985), and the European Union (1993). As even this

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[27] See Enrico Spolaore, "Monnet's Chain Reaction and the Future of Europe," *VoxEU*, 25 July 2015, https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/monnets-chain-reaction-and-future-europe.

brief list of key names and dates indicates, the European Union's emergence was heavily built on a series of trade and economic agreements, which remain fundamental the EU's workings today. The appeal of this system and its obvious economic benefits to many states and individuals help explain its durability, despite some serious—although far from fatal—reversals that are discussed in the next section.

The EU functions as a political as well as economic bloc; it was born out of political, military, and human rights concerns as well as economic ones. Yet the EU has not fundamentally dented the sovereignty of its core members, *pace* Brexiteers' arguments that "bureaucrats in Brussels" were micromanaging life in the United Kingdom. Indeed, the relative prioritization of values within the EU becomes clear when contrasting the reaction to the Greek debt crisis with the reaction to violations of democracy and human rights in Hungary; to simplify greatly, the EU acted far more coercively against Greece on economic issues than it has against Hungary on political issues.[28] Continental Europe, at least, has been reluctant to give up the economic benefits that have accrued through the Union.

One might object that the EU reflects the specificities of the European experience and particularly the desire to prevent a return to the horrors of World Wars I and II. Certainly, those traumas greatly shaped what became the EU. But elsewhere in the world as well, for example in the ECOWAS zone, a significant amount of cross-border movement has grown since member states signed the *Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence, and Establishment* in 1979. The Protocol's implementation has fallen well behind schedule, partly due to economic slumps and wars in some member states, and only Phase 3 (visa-free entry for up to ninety days) has been reached, rather than total freedom of movement. Yet "freedom of movement in the ECOWAS region is undoubtedly more advanced than in any other regional grouping in Africa," and the overall trend has been towards greater freedom.[29]

From an *ummatic* perspective, as discussed further below, there are clear benefits to the freer movement of people. Here another point might be made, though: once some relaxation of borders and movement controls is introduced, it is relatively hard to undo. If interests can be aligned and a process can be set in motion, integration along economic and movement lines can generate its own momentum. Economic integration can also set the stage for political and military integration, as can be seen with the trajectory of organizations such as ECOWAS (and one might add the Gulf Cooperation Council as well) that began as economic blocs and evolved into multi-faceted organizations with major diplomatic portfolios.

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[28] On the European Union's relatively toothless response to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's abuses of power, see Philippe Dam, "European Parliament Ups Pressure for Action on Hungary," *Human Rights Watch*, 15 September 2022, https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/09/15/european-parliament-ups-pressure-action-hungary.

[29] Aderanti Adepoju, Alistair Boulton and Mariah Levin, "Promoting Integration through Mobility: Free Movement under ECOWAS," *UNHCR*, 2007, https://www.unhcr.org/in/media/28647.

Finding 6: *Even the most successful integration projects are vulnerable to reversals.*

Despite the beneficial possibilities expressed in the last section, Brexit stands as the most prominent recent example of the reversals that can affect integration projects. The United Kingdom's 2016 referendum on leaving the European Union passed by a vote of 52% to 48%, triggering extended negotiations that led to the UK's formal withdrawal in 2020. The Brexit vote reflected divides within UK domestic politics—for example, tensions over immigration, long-term impacts of globalization on the economy, and generational splits. The result appeared to surprise even then-Prime Minister David Cameron, who had called for the vote but expected it to fail—and later expressed regret over the episode and its tremendous aftermath.

Within continental Europe, Brexit has not so far appeared to threaten the integrity of the EU, although Brexit both reflected and propelled a rise in "Euroskepticism" in various European countries, prompting speculation over which—if any—countries might follow the UK out of the EU. One convincing answer from a 2019 paper is that the UK had a uniquely high propensity for exiting, in terms of citizen dissatisfaction with the EU, incomplete integration into the EU project (namely, not adopting the Euro as a currency), and a government structure where relatively few institutional players could veto an exit. The same paper concluded that of the other EU members, the next most likely to leave was Italy.[30] Three years later, Italy's election of a right-wing coalition likely to be headed by Giorgia Meloni reignited concerns that Italy might pursue an exit.[31] Yet a leaked draft program for how the right-wing parties would govern suggested that Euroskepticism was a mere bargaining chip on their part.[32] Meanwhile, there has also been speculation that Brexit could end up bringing at least one new member into the EU, namely an independent Scotland should the referendum ever pass there. In short, Brexit exemplifies the vulnerability of integration projects to setbacks but also shows that one member state's withdrawal does not necessarily have a domino effect. Over the long term, in fact, disaffected member states sometimes return to organizations they left, as Morocco did with the African Union in 2017 after leaving its predecessor organization, the OAU, in 1984. Nonetheless, recent events in the EU have deepened debates about future models for the Union, including various proposals such as "Europe à la Carte," "Multi-Speed Europe," and "Core Europe."

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[30] Markus Gastinger, "Brexit! Grexit? Frexit? Considerations on How to Explain and Measure the Propensities of Member States to Leave the European Union," EUI Working Papers, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Number 85, 2019, https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/64565/RSCAS_2019_85.pdf.

[31] "A 'Seismic' Shift: Will Meloni's Italy Turn Its Back on Europe?" *France 24*, 28 September 2022, https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20220928-will-the-new-far-right-government-of-italy-s-meloni-turn-its-back-on-europe.

[32] Hannah Roberts, "Leaked Manifesto: Italian Right-Wingers Will Dump Euroskepticism in Bid for Power," *Politico Europe*, 11 August 2022, https://www.politico.eu/article/italian-right-wingers-dump-euroskepticism-in-bid-to-win-power/.

Applying these lessons to the Umma, no multilateral ummatic organization can expect to have a smooth and linear path. The previous section noted the potential for ummatic integration projects to generate reactions, competition, and rivalry; this section has highlighted the problem of withdrawal, non-participation, and abiding internal tensions. More hopefully, however, the withdrawal of even a major member does not necessarily spell doom for an organization or an endeavor, as demonstrated by the Morocco-AU example or by the example of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which partially survived as the *Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership* even after the U.S. withdrew from the trade deal in 2017.

Finding 7: *Overdoses of multilateralism can be counterproductive.*

More efforts at integration do not necessarily produce more integration. The failure of one effort can create a tendency towards addition instead of reassessment, especially when external parties attempt to pile on one intervention after another. The Sahel region has been one epicenter of this dynamic in recent years, with one French-led effort (military and civilian) succeeding another in a sloppy, additive, and ultimately unsuccessful process; one observer has written wryly about the "dozen shades of khaki" deployed to the region.[33] Relatedly, the sense that multilateral efforts in a region are driven by the interests of outside powers can drive resentment and resistance—the French-backed G5 Sahel Joint Force evoked major protests when it relocated its headquarters to Mali's capital Bamako.[34] Even when regional efforts are more indigenous, multiplication can be problematic. One expert on East Asia writes, "There are an unmanageable number of criss-crossing and overlapping multilateral institutions in the region—an excess of institutions."[35] The principle of quality over quantity appears to hold true in regional and global integration as much it does elsewhere.

For ummatic efforts, the implication is that thoughtful design, careful planning, and targeted action will be necessary to overcome the many barriers to successful integration, barriers that include interstate rivalries and the vulnerability of multilateral organizations to cooptation by a handful of regional or global powers. Success can be measured more by the

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[33] Fabien Offner, "A Dozen Shades of Khaki: Counter-Insurgency Operations in the Sahel," *The New Humanitarian*, 11 January 2018, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2018/01/11/dozen-shades-khaki-counter-insurgency-operations-sahel.

[34] "Bamako: Des échauffourées à Badalabougou suite à la reprise des manifestations contre l'installation du QG du G5 Sahel," *Malijet*, 5 July 2019, https://malijet.com/actualite-politique-au-mali/flash-info/229814-bamako-des-%C3%A9chauffour%C3%A9es-%C3%A0-badalabougou-suite-%C3%A0-la-reprise-des-m.html.

[35] Jaehyon Lee, "Reviving Multilateralism in East Asia: Small and Medium Powers, Connectivity and Covid-19" in *Responding to the Geopolitics of Connectivity: Asian and European Perspectives*, eds. Christian Echle. Bart Gaens, Megha Sarmah, and Patrick Rueppel (Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2020), 59-72, at 59, https://www.kas.de/documents/288143/10822438/Panorama_2019_02_4c_v5d_JaehyonLee.pdf/c32b6d83-6d65-5d1a-ad09-932b35de7ab9?t=1606102326182.

ability of any given organization to achieve its goals, rather than the number of efforts at play. When failure occurs, moreover, it may be better to attempt to reform a current effort from within rather than to simply add a new and possibly redundant effort over the first.

Finding 8: *The most powerful integration models, especially since 1991, have been compatible with and deferential to capitalism, but have also been adaptable.*

Virtually all the integration models discussed throughout this paper were established prior to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, and most have survived that juncture with the obvious exception of the Warsaw Pact and other organizations specifically predicated on the USSR's power. One key element in many integration projects' survival has been their alignment with a capitalism-dominated world system. To take the most prominent example, the Bretton Woods institutions created in 1944 have become essential to the functioning of global, Western-dominated capitalism.[36] An official IMF historian writes bluntly that with the Soviet bloc's non-participation in the Fund, "The IMF became largely a capitalist club that helped stabilize market-oriented economies."[37] The Fund and the World Bank have exercised such sweeping global powers because their conditional bailouts and loans align with, rather than challenge, the interests of major Western governments and banks. From an early point, the Bank "argued that its attempts to improve the policy environment through such conditionality, and through its technical assistance efforts on behalf of borrowing governments, served to improve the climate for private international investment."[38] The Bank and the IMF became critical components of the "Washington Consensus" that shaped thinking and policy on market liberalization and state restructuring in the 1990s. The integration driven through the Bank and the Fund is thus a capitalist form of integration, and their power has derived from their considerable economic muscle. At the same time, however, both the Bank and the IMF have adapted to changing circumstances and values, taking on new priorities such as climate change, and becoming more multifaceted over time.

China's growing integration into the world system has also involved considerable negotiation, within China and between China and the rest of the world, over China's relationship

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[36] The Bretton woods institutions survived even the collapse of the "Bretton Woods system" of monetary exchange rates, which was initially based on a U.S. dollar pegged to the gold standard, and an "adjustable peg" for other major currencies convertible to dollars; the United States' abandoned the gold standard in 1971, but by then the Fund and the Bank were well established.

[37] Boughton, *The IMF and the Force of History*, 18.

[38] Michael Gavin and Dani Rodrik, "The World Bank in Historical Perspective," *The American Economic Review* 85, no.2 (1995): 329-334, at 331.

with capitalism and "free trade." Although still officially Communist, China has been persuasively described as practicing a kind of "state capitalism" wherein state-owned enterprises compete within domestic and global markets. China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001 involved considerable compromise on China's part in economic policy, but has also generated long-running debates over allegations that China manipulates currencies and "impose[s] forced technology transfer deals on foreign business as a condition for accessing the Chinese market."[39] The point for the Umma's purposes is that even a rising global heavyweight such as China was compelled to make fundamental changes in order to join a major multilateral organization, and that deviating from global capitalist blueprints and expectations can cause major tensions.

Even the United Nations system can be seen as complementing global capitalism, with a few caveats. The UN's most dramatic military, political, and human rights interventions have occurred at the peripheries of the capitalist world-system, making a significant portion of the UN's role roughly equivalent in the political sphere to that of the Bank and the IMF in the economic sphere—that is, attempting to stabilize "peripheral" countries. Moreover, the UN consciously positioned itself as a vehicle for "inclusive capitalism" in the critical period after the fall of the Soviet Union. As one author writes about the tenure of Secretary-General Kofi Annan (1997-2006), "As an expression of what only a decade earlier would have been an unlikely marriage, the UN and proponents of a more 'social-minded business' now joined forces, symbolized through how the key concepts of inclusive capitalism and of inclusive globalization figured in both management texts as well as in important UN publications."[40] There are increasingly open tensions, though, between the UN's work, particularly its role as a coordinating body vis-à-vis climate action, and the imperatives of global capitalism. Current UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has been relatively outspoken on issues of global inequality, which he has connected to the power structures within the UN Security Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, among others, and to "the lie that free markets can deliver healthcare for all; the fiction that unpaid care work is not work; the delusion that we live in a post-racist world; the myth that we are all in the same boat."[41]

For the Umma, the intertwined nature of contemporary globalization and capitalism raises profound questions. The Umma has been part of this trajectory, willingly for some and unwillingly for others. The global Islamic finance sector represents one type of response to global capitalism, compatible with it (and arguably too deferential to it) but also distinctive. Yet

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[39] Petros Mavroidis and Andre Sapir, *China and the WTO: Why Multilateralism Still Matters* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 3.

[40] Christian Olaf Christiansen, "Partnerships Against Global Poverty: When 'Inclusive Capitalism' Entered the United Nations" in *Histories of Global Inequality: New Perspectives*, ed. Christian Olaf Christiansen and Steven L.B. Jensen (Cham, Switzerland: Springer/Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 277-300, at 278.

[41] "UN Chief: World 'At the Breaking Point' with Vast Inequality," *Al Jazeera*, 18 July 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/7/18/un-chief-world-at-the-breaking-point-with-vast-inequality.

integration into the world market has also brought profound disruptions to many parts of the Umma, and many Muslim-majority countries have been on the receiving end of "structural adjustment" and "shock therapy." Diverse perspectives on the relationship between Islam and capitalism exist within the Umma today, ranging from a full-throated embrace of capitalism to a qualified acceptance of capitalism with some social welfare provisions, to the assertion that Islam represents its own distinctive economic system and ideology, to the argument that Islam is most fundamentally compatible with socialism, minus the historical and ontological materialism associated with Marxist thought. Addressing the relationship between Islam and capitalism will be fundamental, over the long-term, to determining what ummatic organizations are meant to accomplish, how they will be funded and sustained, and how they will relate to secular organizations. Global economic integration has run far ahead of global political integration in the post-1945 period, yet ummatic thinking has largely been concerned with the political.

Finding 9: *Secular integration models will be hard to reimagine in explicitly Islamic terms under present circumstances, given that some integration models, especially at the regional level, depend on secular notions of citizenship.*

A basic observation about the contemporary period is that reigning secular ideologies of various stripes all consider it legitimate for states to discriminate based on national citizenship but reprehensible for states to discriminate based on religious identification. The UN, the EU, the AU, and other organizations discussed in this paper all tend to have nation-state status, defined through geography and formal statehood, as the basic criteria for membership. Even organizations covering zones with overwhelming Muslim majorities, such as the Arab League, the Arab Maghreb Union, and the G5 Sahel organization, still conceive of membership in terms based on the nation-state—as does the OIC itself (which helps to explain why joining the OIC has sometimes proven controversial within domestic politics, as in Nigeria).[42] Whether globalization is making the nation-state less relevant is a question that goes beyond the scope of this paper, but in the short term, even massive migration flows and the rise of far-flung diasporas have seemed to sharpen, rather than dull, the salience of territorial citizenship.

The question of membership and its basis makes it difficult to transfer secular integration models wholesale into an ummatic context. Any multilateral organization based on the nation-state model risks being either secularized or becoming too controversial, while a multilateral organization that operates or discriminates on religious grounds (Muslim/non-Muslim) could

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[42] See Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1998), Chapter 3.

also face controversy and backlash. The Islamic charitable sector shows that it is possible to act upon religiously-based solidarities in a transnational fashion, even in a world dominated by non-Muslim powers, yet the tremendous scrutiny and sometimes hostility faced by Islamic charities offers a glimpse of the hostility that an ummatic political organization with any real weight would face.

Finding 10: *Ummatic thinkers should support and advocate for certain forms of "secular" integration due to their ummatic benefits, namely those forms of integration that allow for the freer movement of people.*

Without a core territory to anchor an ummatic project, the immediate hope for more ummatic integration rests, in this author's view, on the exchange of ideas. Such exchange has been tremendously facilitated by the internet, and the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated forms of global virtual interconnectivity. Nevertheless, physical meetings remain vital to collaboration, meaning that the free movement of people is on the whole good for the Umma and good for ummatic thinkers and activists in particular. Viewed in this light, the EU is not an ummatic project by any stretch, but it has certain ummatic benefits; in the same vein, Brexit is a blow to the Umma. Ummatic activists therefore can and should promote initiatives related to freedom of movement—for example, the "African Passport" launched at a 2016 African Union summit,[43] but then allowed to fall dormant. At a more intangible level, the softening of national identities into regional or global ones is also a net ummatic positive. Regional identities can obviously engender all kinds of chauvinism but have proven less politically explosive thus far than have nationalisms.

Ummatic thinkers can also support, for the most part, efforts to promote peace and stability. Multilateral organizations have, at the very least, been some of the foremost actors attempting to resolve violent conflicts around the world, including conflicts that affect the Umma, such as in Palestine, Western Sahara, Darfur, Kashmir, and elsewhere. On the other hand, multilateral organizations have also played roles in blocking progress, including on those very same conflicts—for example, the United States' use of its veto power within the UN Security Council to block resolutions condemning illegal settlement activity in Palestine. There have also been extremely troubling reports of, at times seemingly systemic, abuse and predation against civilians by UN peacekeepers. Whether ummatic thinkers should support the use of force by multilateral organizations needs to be weighed case by case and with keen attention to questions of accountability and unintended consequences. The activation of an ECOWAS standby force to remove President Yahya Jammeh of the Gambia from power in 2017 after he reversed his decision to concede an election is an example of an intervention that made life better for many

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[43] Emmanuel Igunza, "Should Africa Have a Single Passport?" *BBC News*, 19 July 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36823644.

citizens of that country; the decision of the Arab League to endorse a NATO intervention in Libya in 2011 is an example of a case where a multilateral organization in Muslim-majority lands took the wrong side of history and helped set up a member state for chaos.

Finally, ummatic thinkers should, in the view of this author, be highly skeptical about the supposed benefits of "free trade" and "structural adjustment" for the Umma. Not all integration is good integration, and not all forms of "freedom" are compatible with ummatic thought and practice, to say the least. If ummatic thinking seeks to transcend the limitations of the nation-state model, this does not mean that outsourcing states' economic policymaking to Western-dominated institutions is a path for ummatic integration. Whatever economic model the Umma lands on— a question that extends well beyond the scope of this paper—it should be generated and dictated from within.

Conclusion

This paper has surveyed recent historical and contemporary secular integration attempts and global governance models, especially multilateral organizations, with an eye to their implications for any project of ummatic integration. These integration models have, on the whole, tended to be Western-dominated, capitalism-oriented, and to suffer from tremendous internal inequalities, contradictions, and shortcomings. Nevertheless, their successes and failures offer lessons for any would-be ummatic integration projects, ranging from how such projects might be structured to the looming challenges of rivalries between member states and the difficulties of basing notions of citizenship and political identities, under present circumstances, on any framework beyond the nation-state construct.

Building on this paper and the wider Ummatics endeavor, key research questions moving forward include: (a) the successes and limitations of existing Islamic multilateral organizations, particularly the OIC and the Muslim World League; (b) the ability or inability of existing multilateral organizations to serve not merely as models, but as vehicles for ummatic integration; and (c) the potential funding and organizational structures of future ummatic organizations. Answering such questions will be crucial for moving from ummatic theory to practice.

Looking to the future, it is clear that ummatic thinkers have much more work to do to build the foundation for any robust and empowered ummatic multilateral organization to emerge, if this pathway to integration is deemed advisable. To reiterate some thoughts offered at the beginning of this paper, integration from below appears more promising in the medium term than integration from above—and integration from below can help create the conditions for integration from above. When that top-down integration comes, it will likely be more feasible to begin at the regional rather than the global level. The best model at that stage would be regional,

geographically contiguous, and comprising a cluster of powerful states, such that the organization does not become the tool of a single state.

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Suggested citation: