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The American University in Cairo  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

**The Sacred Cow And The New Comer**  
**A comparative Study of Nation-State and Umma**

A Thesis Submitted to

*Department of Political Science*

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Arts

by

*Ayat Mohamed*

December/2014

The American University in Cairo

**The Sacred Cow And The New Comer**

**A comparative Study Of The Nation State and Umma**

A Thesis Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

The degree of Master of Arts

Has been approved by

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## Abstract

International relations discipline witnessed debates among its mainstream theories. Today the debate worthy of attention is the Western-centrism of the discipline. There is an immense critique of the Westphalian state order, the nation-state, and the absence of religion in IR theory. This research aspires to partially account for the voids of the IR theory. It engages with the debate over the Western-centrism and the loopholes of IRT. This thesis introduces a non-Western contribution to international relations, an Islamic perspective of IR. This thesis argues that for IR discipline to be truly pluralistic and to claim universality it should be opened to other non-Western contributions.

The thesis introduces the ‘Islamic Civilizational Paradigm’ (ICP), a project developed over a decade from mid 1980s to mid 1990s to lay the foundation of an Islamic theory of IR. The paradigm reflects a different episteme, unlike the mainstream IR theories it introduces a new conceptualization of the relationship between religion and politics; it is a religious-inspired paradigm. Moreover, It escapes the state-centric lens that dictates the analysis in IR by introducing the *Umma* as a new level of analysis. To explore the advantage of integrating non-Western contributions -in this case the ICP- to IR discipline I focus on the *Umma*-level compared to state-level and investigate the advantages and limitations of that new level and evaluate its potential feasibility.

The thesis concludes that the *Umma*-level complements the state-level as it has the ability to account for the complexities of the international phenomenon. Even more, through *Umma* lens we can identify and analyze state and non-state actors, groups, transnational social movements, individuals. The thesis shed light on what the Islamic Civilizational Paradigm presents and how it should be further improved.

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## **Acronyms**

IR – International Relations

IRT- International Relations Theory

ICP- Islamic Civilizational Paradigm

OIC- Organization of Islamic Cooperation

## Introduction

International Relations (IR) scholars such as, Amitav Acharya, Pinar Bilgin, Barry Buzan, Gayatri Spivak argue that the debate most worthy of attention currently in IR is Euro-centrism or Western-centrism. The sociology of this discipline shows how biased it has been since its establishment. Waeber, Buzan, and Mandaville criticize the statist lens that dictates theorizing about IR. The discipline has been beholden to the nation-state, and thus scholars are unable to think of other possible units or levels of analysis different from the “Westphalian box”<sup>1</sup> as Buzan calls it.

This thesis contributes to the debate over Western centrism of the discipline. It builds on and adds to available, yet limited literature on non-Western or non-core states’ contributions to the IR theory. Therefore, the main objective of the thesis is to potentially enrich the discipline with other possible conceptions of world politics, which reflect different episteme. The thesis focuses on one example of non-Western possible contributions to international relations theory (IRT): Islamic contribution. To be more specific, it tackles a new level of analysis that the Islamic paradigm presents, which is *Umma*, compared to the nation-state that is increasingly receiving criticism from IR scholars.

Yet it is important to mention that the thesis does not consider *Umma* an alternative to the concept of nation-state. Rather, the thesis presents the *Umma* concept as a complementary level of analysis that could enrich our understanding of world politics. The *Umma* is a new level of analysis that an Islamic Civilizational Paradigm (ICP) presents; a project that was developed by a group of Egyptian political scientists, most of whom are committed scholars at Cairo University.

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<sup>1</sup> Buzan, Barry, “on International Society, Securitization, and an English School Map of the World”, *an interview* December 19, 2009, <http://www.theory-talks.org/2009/12/theory-talk-35.html>



This twelve-volume project was developed over a decade from mid-1980s through the mid-1990s to lay the foundation of an Islamic theory of international relations.

Some international scholars, such as Acharya, allege that culture and language constitute barriers that hinder the integration of non-Western studies and/or geo-cultural studies into the main body of IR theory. In this context, the thesis makes the contribution of these studies possible by introducing and analyzing an aspect of the so-called Islamic Civilizational Paradigm in the English language.

### **Research Puzzle**

Some scholars have described the discipline of international relations as “a not so international discipline”<sup>2</sup>. Although IR should be reflect the world and relations among its different actors, it focuses only on Western perception of that world using only Western lenses and approaches of how to view it.

A main problem that many scholars, e.g. Mandaville, refer to is the inaccuracy of the nation-state as an analytical framework to account for the new challenges that face the discipline. In addition, it hinders our ability to understand historical experiences prior to Westphalia, not to mention the non-European history. Accordingly, the need for a new analytical framework and new levels of analysis become urgent.

In this context, the main questions that this thesis seeks to answer are the following: What does the *Umma*, as a level of analysis offer to IR theory? How different is it compared to the nation-state concept, and what analytical value could it add more than what the nation-state has already offered? Could it replace the nation-

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<sup>2</sup> Waever, Ole, “The sociology of a not so international discipline: American and European developments in international relations”, *International Organization* 52, no.4, (1998): 687-727

state level? And to what extent can this new level of analysis account for the new sociocultural transformations that challenge the nation-state?

### **Hypothesis**

**The Islamic Civilizational Paradigm, reflecting a different episteme that shapes its unique characteristics, leads to a different level of analysis.**

The ICP is a normative paradigm that has its constant sources i.e. “The *Qur’an and Sunna*” ; and changing ones i.e. Islamic jurisprudence and interpretation or “*Ijtihad*”<sup>3</sup>. Having constant and changing sources makes it, though in some cases abided by religious rules or *Hudood*, flexible and relevant to reality. In other words, it is not a utopian paradigm that promotes values while disregarding the real world.

The ICP purports to be a comprehensive and holistic paradigm not a reductionist and partial one. When tackling a phenomenon, it considers all of its aspects. Unlike Western paradigms, the ICP transcends dichotomies such as norms vs. interests and domestic vs. international spheres of analysis.

The ICP presents the *Umma* as a unique level of analysis that transcends space and time. *Umma* is defined as “a group of individuals who share – and are bonded by – belonging and loyalty to a particular system that could include a belief system, a lifestyle, a pattern of behavior, or all of them. This group seeks – through an unspecified space of internal and external actions and behavior – to fulfill the functions of advocating this system or belief, as well as promoting its expansion within a given time span”<sup>4</sup>.

The *Umma* is a socio-cultural civilizational entity that has ethical roles. Thus, it presents another level of analysis that is not only limited to geographical borders as is the case of the nation-state. While the bond of the nation-state is nationalism,

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<sup>3</sup> Mustafa, Nadia, “Eshkaliat El Bahth wal-Tadrees fi Elm El-Elakat El-Dawleya men Manzour Hadary Moqaran”, unpublished research paper, 31-35.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid,49

whose viability is being increasingly questioned, the main bond of the *Umma* is belief or *A'quida*.

# **Chapter I**

## **Situating the Islamic Civilizational Paradigm in the discipline**

### **A. Conceptual Framework**

International relations discipline witnessed for so long a debate among its different paradigms. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the dominance of the third debate among proponents and opponents of the positivist approach. Scholars of the critical theory were challenging the dominance of the positivist analysis<sup>5</sup>. Constructivism also criticized the dominance of Realism and drew scholars' attention to the vital constitutive role that ideas, norms, and social forces play in world politics, mainly in shaping interests and behaviors.

Nowadays, the compelling challenge that faces the discipline is how to overcome its Western centrism. By Western centrism I mainly mean the embedded secular bias of the discipline and the state-centric lens that dictates analysis in the field and prevents the re-structuring of the international relations as some scholars claim<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore the IR theory is Western in the sense that it presents and tends to impose the Western worldview and thought on the peripheries. For instance, what is known and claimed to be the international history is, by and large, the Western version of the international history where peripheries are mainly objects of that history.

The history of the international relations theory shows that secularism is a central principle of modern politics as Hurd, Shah and Philpott argue<sup>7</sup>. For most

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<sup>5</sup> Bahi, Riham, "Networking For Power And Change: Muslem Women Activism And the Transformation of Muslim Publilc Sphere." PhD. diss., Northeastern University, 2008. Proquest 3304123, p.3

<sup>6</sup> Ibid,

<sup>7</sup> Shah, Timothy S., and Philpott, Daniel, *The Rise And Fall Of International Relations: History and Theory, Religion and International Relations Theory*, Jack Snyder ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011, 34

scholars the discipline's starting point is the Westphalia treaty and the end of the thirty-year war. That treaty marked the triumph of the sovereign state as the main form of political order and the separation among the state and religion/church.

Since the seventeenth century, as Shah and Philpott argued, "global politics itself became progressively more secular"<sup>8</sup> and it continued to be till the end of the 1960s. The secular trend of international politics was generally adopted almost by different states (developed and developing) along with the flourish of nationalism and anti-colonial movements and initiatives. Leaders such as Nasser, Sukarno, and Nehru played a role in that respect, as they tended to control religion and put faith mainly in their respective nations<sup>9</sup>.

In late 1960s and 1970s religion gradually resurged into the global politics challenging what was believed for so long to be the core principle of IR, secularism. Many scholars hence criticized the discipline and a debate on whether or not the IR theories can help explaining the prospect religion's role in IR. Events as September 11 and the rise of Islamic movements and religious actors as Al-Qaeda further challenged the current theories and questioned their viability.

State-centrism is another void in the international relations theory that is also widely criticized, for that it places the political only within the state. Hence, it can only account for one form of political community, which is the Western nation state. As Bahi puts it "this limited imagination of the political"<sup>10</sup> undermines the scholars' ability to recognize "new forms of international politics that exist outside the realm of the state"<sup>11</sup>. Accordingly, as Mandaville argues, "political identities no longer inhabit

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 24

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Bahi, Op.Cit., 65

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

the exclusive container of the nation-state and must be seen as configured in and between multiple political spaces”<sup>12</sup>.

Many other scholars, e.g. Philpott, Shah, Snyder, and Petito have questioned the secular bias of the discipline and more recently some scholars e.g. Weaver (2009), Tickner (2009), Buzan are questioning the claim of the field to be truly international. How could the discipline make a universal claim without integrating periphery and non-core contributions to the IRT? How could a universal claim be made given the Western-centrism or Western bias as mentioned above? Could the discipline be truly international without accounting for the historical and sociological experiences of non-core states?

The thesis takes the previous criticism as a starting point and introduces a new level of analysis, the Umma-level, which transcends the state-level and the statist lens that dictated the field for so long. This Umma-level is what scholars of the Islamic Civilizational Paradigm present as a complementary level to the predominant ones. Thus, the thesis also sheds light on the ICP, which is a religiously-inspired paradigm that reflects a different epistemology. This paradigm concurs with the critical theory on the dominance of the state-centric approach, ethnocentrism (Western centrism) of the discipline, and the limited ability of the mainstream theories to tackle the constitutive role of religion in international politics. It also coincides with Constructivism in placing the emphasis on ideas, norms, and identities rather than material forces as will be explained later.

In pursuit of a less ethnocentric discipline and more universal-oriented one, a new strand of studies e.g. geo-cultural and area studies responded to this challenge. These studies criticize the Western conceptions and present alternatives that account

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<sup>12</sup> Mandaville, Peter, *Transnational Muslim Politics Reimagining the Umma*. London: Routledge, 2001, 188

for non-core states' realities. That includes, for example, Acharya's concept of "norm subsidiarity"<sup>13</sup> which explains how the non-core states could have a role in building international norms and also clarifies the agent role of those non-core states in world politics. Also, conceptions of security could vary: the referent of security is not necessarily the state but rather the individual or the people in the case of non-core states. Some paradigms criticize the mainstream IRT and overlap in ideas with the new strand of geo-cultural and area studies, Constructivism and critical theory, specially post-colonial theory. However, some scholars contend that insufficient effort has been done in order to connect the former to the latter<sup>14</sup>.

Tickner and Waever claim that subaltern studies and post-colonial theory could offer "inspiration for reflecting conditions and options for IR in most of the world"<sup>15</sup>. Post-colonial theory could show how IR as part of Western thinking has avoided the influence of the non-West through role distribution as subject and object and could also suggest a way out of such intellectual bias. The colonized are passive and they are the acted-upon objects of history while the Western colonizers are the subjects of that history. To properly understand world politics, there should be a perspective that acknowledges the role of European and non-European worlds in making world history and how this affected European ideas<sup>16</sup>, a goal that the ICP tends to achieve by presenting different view of the Islamic history and tracing the Islamic state as a unique actor in world order that defends its own specific goals. However, subaltern studies like area studies are criticized by many as culturally

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<sup>13</sup> Acharya, Amitav, "Norm Subsidiarity and Regional Orders: Sovereignty, Regionalism, and Rule-Making in the Third World", *International Studies Quarterly* 55 (2011): 95-96

<sup>14</sup> Tickner, Arlene and Waever, Ole (eds.), *International scholarship around the world*. New York: Routledge, 2009, 1-5

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 6

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 7

specific and unable to generate theory, thus in many cases it reinforces the marginalization of the subaltern or the non-Western states in IR theory building.

ICP and Constructivism believe in the constructive importance of ideas and norms in IR. Constructivism focuses on normative dimensions in international relations e.g. identities, norms, and ideas. According to Alexander Wendt, Constructivism has two main assumptions: first, “shared ideas rather than material forces primarily determine the structure of human association”<sup>17</sup>, and second: “identities and interests of actors are constructed by shared ideas rather than given by nature”<sup>18</sup>. In other words, Constructivism problematizes identities and interests of international actors and do not consider them a given. Constructivists consider the international structure a social one that fuses with “ideational factors”<sup>19</sup> e.g. norms and laws, which have an impact on “identities and interests of agents”<sup>20</sup>.

ICP concur with Constructivism in emphasizing the social dimension rather than the materialist aspect of structure. Constructivists do not necessarily refuse positivist approaches but usually use interpretive approaches or a blend of both; they also criticize the prevalent materialist ontology in mainstream IR theories. Wendt defends social ontology by claiming that core factors like power and interest are constituted by culture and ideas<sup>21</sup>. Although Constructivism rejects the materialistic ontology that other theories, i.e. Realism and Liberalism, embrace; it does not present guidance on how to address and understand the potential impact of factors such as religion on international relations. Jack Snyder contended that religion is a basic social force that has distinctive features that can hardly “fit in concepts deployed in

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<sup>17</sup> Wendt, Alexander, *Social theory of International politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.1

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Viotti, Paul and Kauppi, Mark, *International Relations Theory*. Boston: Longman, 2012, p.278

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Wendt, Op.Cit., 371



the study of international politics”<sup>22</sup>. He criticizes the way religion was treated in the analysis of international relations. Embracing different paradigms, most scholars focus on religion as an “additional outcome”<sup>23</sup> to be explained, or as an “explanatory variable”<sup>24</sup>. Snyder argues that the manner in which religion could “constitute the core assumptions of major paradigms”<sup>25</sup> has been understudied by scholars. Even Constructivism could not present a guidance in that respect. This is a point that the ICP aims to address and account for.

Peter Mandaville draws our attention to the different shapes that other epistemes might suggest for the relationship between religion and politics. He criticizes the dichotomatic characterization of the relationship between politics and religion either as separated or united<sup>26</sup>. He points out that Islamic history and traditions reflect a different conception of the relationship between both. According to Mandaville, “Religion is by its nature a form of politics”<sup>27</sup>. Thus, it is important to understand the relationship between religion and politics from the ICP perspective.

In exploring the *Umma* as a level of analysis, this thesis depends on the ICP. This paradigm intersects with other Western paradigms especially critical ones e.g. Constructivism. It remains, however, unique as it reflects a different episteme. In this context it is important to define some core concepts.

Pioneers of the Islamic Civilizational paradigms define ‘paradigm’ as “the structure of a prevailing discourse in terms of value and conceptual systems that organize the thought in a given field; thus establishing the domain and boundaries of that field, as well as defining its world views, theories, beliefs, values and

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<sup>22</sup> Snyder, Op.Cit., 3

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 2

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Mandaville, Op.Cit., 80

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

concepts”<sup>28</sup>. A paradigm further reflects a prevailing perspective on the nature of the international phenomenon at a point of time as perceived by the bulk of theorists, indicating a degree of agreement over the basic features of international relations.

By episteme, pioneers of the Islamic Civilizational Paradigm refer to the “basic values and beliefs about knowledge and its sources that altogether impact any research realm without necessarily realizing such impact”<sup>29</sup>. The Islamic Civilizational paradigm originates from and reflects Islam not as a faith or religion but as a civilization. Thus the sources of that paradigm are not only holistic sources as *Qur’an and Sunnah* but also Islamic history and Islamic thought. This paradigm builds on the ‘civilization revival’ as a concept and a process<sup>30</sup>. This paradigm offers a new form of relationship between religion and politics. It presents a new level of analysis that could help in understanding world history and world politics generally because it is not tied to certain territorial or geographic borders such as the nation-state so it can account for new forms of the political.

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<sup>28</sup> Mustafa Nadia, “Eshkaliat El Bahth wal-Tadrees”, 5

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 31-35

## **B. Literature Review**

Some IR scholars including Amitav Acharya, Pinar Bilgin, Barry Buzan and Gayatri Spivak argue that the debate most worthy of attention in International Relations currently is the Euro-centrism or Western centrism of IR. The sociology of the discipline shows how biased it has been since its establishment. For Buzan, the “Westphalian box” that views the world as composed of sovereign nation-states dictates the discipline; a fact that is not necessarily supported by entire world’s history<sup>31</sup>. Acharya contends that the ethnocentrism of the discipline is quite evident and does not need further elaboration<sup>32</sup>. International Relations Theories marginalize non-Western experiences, history, and voices. A discipline that set studying world politics and international relations as its main goal barely focuses on “non-dominant” and “non-core parts of the world”<sup>33</sup>. In other words, as Waever put it: “IR is a not so international discipline”<sup>34</sup>.

Scholarly literature that contributes to the debate over the Western dominance in IRT and the possibility of having non-Western theory of IR usually focuses on three different dimensions. The first dimension investigates and explains the possible reasons behind the absence of non-Western theories. The second refers to and addresses the problems and critiques of non-Western attempts to theorize about the conduct of world politics e.g. critiques of area and geo-cultural studies. The third dimension focuses on prospects of how to advance the discipline by making it more pluralistic and how to integrate non-Western theories and experiences. Examples on scholarly work that integrates non-Western contributions are numerous in that respect.

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<sup>31</sup> Buzan, Barry, “on International Society, Securitization, and an English School Map of the World”,

<sup>32</sup> Acharya, Amitav, “Dialogue and Discovery in Search of International relations beyond the West”, *Journal of International Studies* 39, no.3, 2011, P.620

<sup>33</sup> Tickner and Waever(eds.), Op.Cit., 1.

<sup>34</sup> Waever,Ole, Op.Cit., 687-727

The following review reflects those three main dimensions. Acharya and Buzan, along with Tickner and Waeber, investigate in two different books the state of IR around the world. Acharya and Buzan try to explain the reasons for not having a non-Western theory in general, then they go further by exploring possibilities of having non-Western theory in Asia. Tickner and Waeber pose a broader question regarding the state of IR all over the world. This collaborative piece that comprises scholars from all over the world attempts to answer three questions: 1) What is the state of IR in other parts of the world 2) why is it that way, 3) how could it be further developed<sup>35</sup>.

Acharya and Buzan propose four possible explanations for the absence of the non-Western IRT<sup>36</sup>. First, language and culture act as barriers that hinder accessibility. The two authors assumed that non-Western theory is there yet inaccessible. Second, Western IRT walked the right path and has all answers to all IR issues for all the states – an explanation that the authors themselves find parochial and untrue. Third, the Western IRT became hegemonic in the Gramscian sense. In other words, it is hegemonic because the West imposed it and it reflects and serves its interests. The fourth explanation is the existence of local barriers; be it lack of financial resources for research as well as historical and cultural obstacles. Tickner and Waeber presented some explanations for the lack of non-Western theories, which overlap with what Acharya referred to. The lack of local resources allocated to such research projects, the dependence on foreign financial donations to develop research projects, such as the role of the Ford Foundation in financing and thus dictating the research domains in South Africa and Latin America. Added to this is the inaccessibility to international academic journals. Unless the presented papers reflect

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<sup>35</sup> Tickner and Waeber, Op.Cit., 18

<sup>36</sup> Acharya, Amitav and Buzan, Barry, “Why is there no non-Western IR theory?”, *International relations of Asia Pacific* 7, no. 3, (2007): 293-297.

and coincide with the Western criteria, they can hardly be published. Local conditions also could matter in advocating or discouraging non-Western driven research projects; a given state's foreign policy is one example. Acharya and Buzan, in their pursuit to discover the Asian contributions to IRT, concluded that what Asia has to offer is "rich historical resources albeit pre-theoretical"<sup>37</sup>, yet it has the potential to be developed.

Challenges and critiques of the current attempts to discover and develop IRT from a non-Western perspective are more compelling than justifications proposed to explain an absence of one. Acharya 2011, Chen 2011, Bilgin 2007 and others criticized the parochial status of IRT and explained how this is being reflected in security studies. In many cases, IRT cannot reflect the insecurities of other non-core states. For instance, imposing the notions of the state and national interest disregard other non-external sources of insecurities to many non-core states that became very clear after the end of the cold war. Bahgat Korany refers, already before the end of the cold war, to the irrelevance of some of the prevailing concepts in security studies. Non-core states' own insecurities were not truly investigated. Rather, Western perception of security was imposed on non-Western states. Even when non-Western states were at the heart of the IR analysis, they were considered either a part of the Western paradigm or seen as dependent partners or troublemakers in the world power game<sup>38</sup>.

These examples make the search for non-Western conceptions of how to think and theorize about the conduct of international politics even more compelling. However, the traps that some scholars refer to and were aware of are the parochialism

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<sup>37</sup> Acharya quoted in Chen, Ching-Chung, "The absence of IR theory in Asia reconsidered", *International relations of Asia pacific* 11, (2011): 5.

<sup>38</sup> Korany, Bahgat, "Strategic studies and the Third World: a critical evaluation", *International Social Science Journal* 38, no. 4, (1986): 547 – 562

or excessive nationalism of some area studies or geo-cultural (regional) studies<sup>39</sup>. Another problem is that some of the area or regional studies become mimicry of the Western theories. Some scholars think that this reflects the internalization of the Western theories rather than presenting a genuine theory or idea that reflect the South or the non-Western world<sup>40</sup>. Bilgin points out the failure of area studies to make the IR discipline “less parochial and more diversified”<sup>41</sup>. Although Acharya warns against some traps that face the regional studies, he strongly advocates the need for developing those regional, national, and geo-cultural studies as only these studies will be able to articulate the interests of the non-core regions.

Acharya’s claim of the importance of regional studies and possibilities of integrating non-Western theories to the discipline of IR does not truly help in democratizing the field. Chen points out that building other national schools that reflect and speak for the South or non-core states is just adding to the hegemonic nature of the discipline because the building of national schools seeks to produce Asian theories, which articulates and speaks for the interest of the Asian states. Thus, building national schools “reproduces the very hegemonic logic dominance against which Robert Cox has warned”<sup>42</sup>.

Chen contends that the motives that Acharya and Buzan raise to advocate the call of devising non-Western theories reinforce the problems of the current world order and the respective Western dominance in IRT. Acharya and Buzan call for developing an alternative that speaks for values and interests of other regions, for instance, the Asian theories could be understood as “derivative discourse of the

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<sup>39</sup> Acharya, Op.Cit., “Dialogue and Discovering”, 624

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Bilgin, Pinar, “Thinking past Western IR?” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no.1, (2008): 12.

<sup>42</sup> Chen, Op.Cit., 4

modern West”<sup>43</sup>. Chen calls for investigating how the structure of dominance was established in IR discipline and how counter-balanced structures could be formed and promoted. In doing so, he is relying on Robert Cox’s ideas on hegemony. He believes that IR needs an “epistemology of democracy that does not assume fixed ontology nor teleology”<sup>44</sup>.

The third dimension that this literature review addresses is the prospects of integrating non-Western studies as proposed by some scholars. It also mentions some examples of literature that focuses on possible Islamic contributions to IRT specifically the Umma as a different level of analysis.

Acharya proposes five ways of studying the different ways of theorizing IR<sup>45</sup>. First, the genealogy of IR, that is to say to overcome the dominance of the Westphalic view of international system to be able to answer questions about pre-modern international systems and to be able to answer other central questions regarding the future of the current international system. Second, the question of the agency of the South or how the Third World or non-core states at least partly played a role in establishing norms and rules of the current international system<sup>46</sup>. Third, bringing the human dimension to the IRT: how can the ‘individual’ – rather than the state – be brought to the center of IRT? Fourth, the role of area studies. Finally, the study of regions, regionalism, and comparing different regions’ contributions to IRT. An example of these studies is Acharya’s study on the regional architecture of world politics<sup>47</sup>. Pinar Bilgin, despite warning against problems of area and regional

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Shih quoted in Chen, Op.Cit.,e, 17.

<sup>45</sup> Acharya, Op.Cit., “Dialogue and Discovery”, 626.

<sup>46</sup> An example of these studies is Acharya, Amitav, “Norm subsidiarity and Regional order: Sovereignty, regionalism, and rule making in the Third World, *International Studies Quarterly* 55, (2011): 95-123.

<sup>47</sup> Acharya Amitav, “The emerging regional architecture of world politics”, *World Politics* 59, no.4, (2007): 629-652

studies, also urges IR students and scholars not to give up discovering non-Western ways of thinking about and theorizing IR even if it seems not very different as many scholars claim<sup>48</sup>.

The Westphalic conception of the world and the dominance of the nation-state concept as a unit/level of analysis in IRT are among the main critiques of the discipline. Acharya contends that IR scholars fail to think of any other possible unit of analysis because they have been “strongly beholden to the nation-state”<sup>49</sup> and he questions the viability of other forms of political order such as Caliphate. Buzan also contends that the main challenge that faces IRT is how to integrate and connect IR with world history and sociology to flee the Westphalian conception that assumes that whole world is divided into sovereign states<sup>50</sup>. A fact that is not supported by world history, for instance, is that the emergence of states in the Middle East and in the Arab world followed and was imposed by the Western occupation. Thus, questions about history of those regions are important to be studied from a different perspective.

Security studies as a subfield of IR is also concerned with the statist lens, the state became the referent and agent of security according to Bilgin<sup>51</sup>. Thus, there is no room left for discovering other referents and agents of security e.g. the individual or the people. Peter Mandaville criticizes the state-centrism in IR theory and the subsequent limited conception of the ‘political’ and its special limits. He advocates a new approach to IR that focuses less on examining the “fixed and bordered entities”<sup>52</sup>. Rather, a new approach to IR should “concentrate on the ways in which international socio-political life manages increasingly to escape the constraints of the territorial

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<sup>48</sup> Bilgin, Op.Cit, “Thinking past Western IR”, 20

<sup>49</sup> Acharya, Amitav, “On the relevance of regions, ASEAN, and the false universalism of IR”, *Interview*, August 10, 2011, <http://www.theory-talks.org/2011/08/theory-talk-42.html>

<sup>50</sup> Buzan, “on International society”

<sup>51</sup> Bilgin, Pinar, “Beyond statism in security studies: Human agency and security in the Middle East”, *The review of international affairs* 2, no. 11, (2002): 100-118

<sup>52</sup> Mandaville, Peter, Op.Cit., 49



nation-state”<sup>53</sup>. Global socio-cultural transformations led to the emergence of new forms of transnational politics that cannot be analyzed or accounted for through the traditional reading of the political or the statist lens. Mandaville introduces the concept of “translocality”<sup>54</sup>, by which he means the “abstract space occupied by sum of linkages and connections between places”<sup>55</sup>. He introduces this concept to disrupt the traditional view of the ‘political’ and the ‘political identity’. He focuses on Islam as a non-territorial force to discover what happens to it, as a theory, when it travels. He also focused on *Umma* as an example of an Islamic political community, political project, and an example of translocality.

Bahi concurs with Mandaville that mainstream theories are unable of “accounting for forms of politics enabled by current climate of rapid, global sociocultural change”<sup>56</sup>, forces as transnational social movements and diasporic communities challenge the state-centrism of the field. Placing the political within the confines of the state make the IRT unable to recognize other forms of the ‘political’ as they both contend. Bahi also criticizes the mainstream theories for overlooking religion and its vital role as a social factor and how it affects on world politics.

Furthermore, Bahi argues that integrating religion in international analysis would result in “creative political and theoretical endeavors”<sup>57</sup> in IR. For Muslims, religion is the main source of “normative guidance”<sup>58</sup>. Bahi wisely shows that contrary to what many scholars may think, that the integration of religion as a reference to politics is the ultimate threat to order and security, integrating religion could lead to new political and theoretical endeavors through exploration of Muslim

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 50

<sup>55</sup> Ibid

<sup>56</sup> Bahi, Op.Cit, 64

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 68

women scholarship-activism. In exploring new forms and spaces where the political can be recognized, Bahi refers to Umma as the medium where Muslim networks are constructed<sup>59</sup>.

As previously mentioned the resurgence of religion in global politics was compelling especially after September 11, hence a debate on integration of religion in IR theory started. While scholars generally agreed that the IR has a secular bias and that religion was absent from the canonical work of IR theory, they disagreed on how it should be integrated in the IRT. Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos criticize the IR literature for exiling the religion since the establishment of the IR as a discipline and they trace that exile to the secular “genetic code”<sup>60</sup> of the disciplines that is embedded in the Westphalia treaty whose purpose was to stop the religious war. Since then politics with reference to religion was believed to be a threat to “order, security, and civility”<sup>61</sup>.

However world politics nowadays strikingly indicate that religion returned from that exile. Petito and Hatzopoulos criticize how scholars of IR addressed religion, either by deploying a policy marking oriented approach or by introducing slight changes to IR theoretical framework. As mentioned above Jack Snyder also criticizes the mainstream IRT and how they address religion either as an explanatory variable or an outcome that need to explained. While Petito and Hatzopoulos call for exploring new theoretical ways for integrating and explaining the “interplay between religion and world politics”<sup>62</sup>, Jack Snyder believes that mainstream theories namely, Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism can integrate religion and can greatly benefit from such integration. Snyder believes that religion could be integrated without

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<sup>59</sup> Bahi, Op.Cit., 92

<sup>60</sup> Hatzopoulos, Pavlos , and Petito, Fabio, *Religion in International Relations Theory: the Return from Exile*. New York: Palgrave Macmilan, 2003, 2

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 2

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 3

changing the core assumptions of IR theories. However, Philpot and Shah, in the same exact book, lean more toward radical revision in IR theory and they argue, “if international relations theory is to take into account religion’s distinctive role ... it must undertake a revision more radical than merely incorporating religion into existing assumptions”<sup>63</sup>. By its emphasis on Islam, the ICP could be considered a paradigm shift and would help and profoundly add to the debate of how to integrate religion in international relations. Introducing new paradigm provide fresh perspectives on how integration of religion in IR and how to make a universal claim of the discipline.

Some scholars were keen to discover what Islam can offer to international relations. Reza and Bsoul presented defensive studies about Islam and international relations. Their work come as a reaction to the alleged war on terror and many of the misleading sentiments introduced by Orientalists about Islam<sup>64</sup>. Thus they mainly aim at refuting these accusations, defending Islam, and proving that peace is the original basis of interaction and communication among states and nations in the Islamic perspective. In addition, they explain the true meaning of Jihad and the context within which this concept was introduced in Islamic thought and in Qura’an. Accordingly, they focus more on the fundamental concepts in Islamic thought and practices throughout the Middle Ages; for instance, realm of war and realm of peace or *Dar Al-Harb and Dar Al-Salam*. They also present different definitions provided by different Islamic jurisprudence schools and elaborate with examples from Islamic history<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> Shah and Philpot, Op.Cit., 51

<sup>64</sup> Simbar Reza, “The changing Role of Islam in IR”, *Journal of International and Area Studies* 15, no.2, (2008): 55-68

<sup>65</sup> Bsoul Labeeb, “Theory of International Relations in Islam”, *Digest of Middle East Studies* 16, no.2, (2007): 71-96

Giorgio Shani sheds light on two different concepts: an Islamic one “The *Umma*” and an Asian concept “*Khalsa Path*”<sup>66</sup>. He introduces the concept of “*Umma*” as a “Post-Westphalian community”<sup>67</sup> and defines it “as an association of Islamic societies which share the same values and seek to integrate them into the social and political life”<sup>68</sup>. He also introduces the concept of “*Khalsa Path*”<sup>69</sup> as another example of a “transnational religious community”<sup>70</sup>. Shani attempted to examine different non-Western contributions and linked them to critical IR theory, asserting that, for the discipline of international relations to be more inclusive, theorizing from a non-Western perspective should be advanced. Although some scholarly literature focused on the concept of *Umma* e.g. Mandaville and Shani, they did not offer comprehensive theorizing of *Umma* as a possible level of analysis, a task that this thesis is willing to pursue.

Regarding the literature that tackles the ICP generally, only few are available in Arabic. After surveying two Arabic Academic periodicals ‘*Al-seyassa Al-dawleya*’ and ‘*Al-Mosta’bal Al-Araby*’, it was noticed that there are very few articles introducing the Islamic approach to Political Science and International Relations; the most interesting is Reham Bahi’s paper on Islamic critical theory and where it fits in the field of IR. The article discusses the Civilizational Islamic perspective of International Relations; its dialectical concept of civilization and differentiates among the “dispositional” and “discursive” approaches of studying civilizations. Although the author does not address the main assumptions of an Islamic theory of IR she refers to its position compared to the dominant theories of the discipline and discuss the

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<sup>66</sup> Shani, Giorgio, “Toward a post-Western IR: The *Umma*, *Khalsa Path*, and the critical International Relations Theory”, *International Studies Review* 10, no.4, (2008): 727.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 727-729

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 729

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

potential of the Islamic civilization to present an alternative to the Western theories. In doing so, Bahi refers to Robert Cox and his observation on “Islamic civilization that succeeded to prove its ability to shape the future of any international system”<sup>71</sup>. The Islamic theory according to Bahi is not developed separately from Western theories, rather it interacts with it and aims at providing an added value; a more diversified conceptual framework to the field and to answer main questions that face the discipline by promoting a different perspective.

Other studies published in the same Journals, also refute Huntington’s premises about clash of civilizations and try to present an Islamic perspective of relations among civilizations and among nations e.g. articles by Nadia Mustafa on relations among civilizations and the dialogue with the West<sup>72</sup>. These articles refer to the Islamic civilizational paradigm of IR, which is a collective work developed by professors and researchers from Cairo University to introduce an Islamic perspective of IR. This academic project, developed over a decade, presents a series of twelve volumes that explain what an Islamic perspective of IR is. It presents Umma as a new level of analysis. Chapter two gives an over view of that project and what new it adds to mainstream theory. Chapter three tackles the Umma as a concept and points out its advantages and limitations.

Some other Arabic books also tackle the Islamic rules of IR e.g. Abdul Latif Hameem’ book on “International Relations in Shari’a and Law in war and peace”<sup>73</sup> published in 2006 in Jordan. This book aims at explaining and describing some of the general rules that govern relations among Islamic polity in Islamic shari’a and history.

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<sup>71</sup> Bahi Reham, Critical Islamic theory and discipline of IR, *El Seyasa El Dawleya* 189, July 2012, p.53-54

<sup>72</sup> for example check Mustafa Nadia, Islamic Era Obstacles of founding an Islamic model in Arab politics, *EL Seyasa El Dawleya* 188, April 2012

<sup>73</sup> El Hameem ,Abedel Latif, *IR in Sharia and law in war and peace*, Dar Ammar press, 2006.

It focuses on conceptions as Dar Al-Harb/realm of war and Dar Al-Harb/ realm of peace and Dar Al-A'hd, which refers to states that are engaged in treaties with Islamic states. The book also sheds light on the Islamic rules and regulation concerning war and peace.

This literature review sheds light on the main challenge that IR discipline faces, especially Euro-centrism of the discipline. It discussed the reasons and results of such centrism, possibilities of integrating non-Western contributions to the discipline, and referred to some specific literature that presented a non-Western and geo-cultural contributions. The secular bias and the statist lens that dominate the discipline are main challenges that many scholars have contested. Thus, this thesis aims to fill a gap in the literature by introducing the ICP, a new paradigm and by introducing *Umma* as a new level of analysis in order to investigate its analytical and explanatory ability in world politics.

## **Methodology**

This thesis adopts a comparative approach. The added value and limitations of *Umma* as a new level of analysis cannot be assessed without comparing it to the nation-state that is considered the main lens through which theorizing on IR takes place. The comparison eventually aims at identifying the differences between the two levels of analysis, which reflect the respective episteme that each level emanates from.

This research depends on qualitative research where primary and secondary sources will be examined and analyzed. This includes books, academic journals, published and unpublished studies, as well as theses. Most of the academic books and resources related to the *Umma* are written in Arabic. Consequently, the present author will be responsible for understanding, absorbing, and analyzing these academic materials and presenting it in English. In so doing, the author has to be sensitive to the different connotations of Arabic and Islamic concepts compared to their synonyms in English.

The first chapter of this thesis addressed the main loopholes of dominant IR theory and criticism that critical theorists of IR have recognized. Mainly the Western-centrism (ethnocentrism) of the field or what I referred to as the secular bias, the absence of religion in IR analysis, and the dominance of the state-centric lens. It situated the thesis within the discipline and linked the ICP to the geo-cultural and subaltern studies.

The second chapter addresses the ICP, the main pillars of the paradigm; the methodological problems that faced scholars of the ICP and how they tend to overcome them. In this respect more emphasis will be given to what new the ICP can offer to IRT especially the value approach and the ICP unique perspective of history.

Chapter three addresses the Umma first by deconstructing the concept as part of the Qur'anic discourse and then examine it as a new level of analysis and form of transnational Muslim politics. The chapter also sheds light on the advantages and limitations of this new level.

Chapter four represents the conclusion that bring the different threads of this discussion together, assessing what the ICP really add to the debate about the parochialism of IRT and where further research could go from there.



## **Chapter II**

### **A brief review of the Islamic Civilizational Paradigm**

A review of the classical canon of international relations discipline shows how dominant the Western schools are. However, the last few decades witnessed new trends in theorizing about international relations from a peripheral or non-Western perspective. In 1986, a group of Egyptian political scientists at Cairo University initiated a research project that aims at establishing the intellectual and theoretical foundation of a potential Islamic paradigm of international relations.

Through a decade, the collaborative work of a group of robust Egyptian scholars, led by Nadia Mustafa, were embodied in the production of twelve volumes that lay the base for an Islamic paradigm. Nadia Mustafa and others later developed their work; however, the twelve-volume project 'International Relations in Islam' tackled the methodological challenges and aimed at establishing a theoretical and methodological foundation of an Islamic Civilizational Paradigm. Their work could not be described as an established theory, but rather a paradigm in the making.

Paradigm building is a complicated process that might take decades to be completely formulated. It is an ongoing process that consecutive generations of scholars are engaged in. The Islamic Civilizational Paradigm is in an ongoing process of formulation; it is not concrete or operational but rather in progression. It is also an open paradigm that engages and interacts with other schools of thought i.e. Western schools. However, scholars have their own motives, as will be clarified later, for building such a paradigm and contend that it would help further develop the discipline, make the IRT more international by introducing a different perspective and worldview.

## **A. Reasons and Motives of Building an Islamic Paradigm**

The first chapter of this thesis pointed out in detail the new research line that calls for integrating non-Western contributions into IR and the reasons for calling for such new geo-cultural contributions of IR. The sociology of the discipline shows how biased it has been since its establishment. Waever, Buzan, and Mandaville criticize the statist lens that dictates theorizing about IR. A discipline that is supposed to analyze relations among nations is indeed not so international. It tells the story of world history from only the Western perspective. Non-Western voices, histories, and experiences are marginalized.

Scholars who initiated the Islamic Civilizational paradigm have their own motives and reasons for initiating a research project as such. In addition to the ethno-centrism of the discipline, the state of the art also shows the deficiency of the dominant theories in dealing with the resurgence of religion in the conduct of international relations. The traditional consideration of religion's effect on international relations issues is no longer sufficient. Given the resurgence of religious sub-state actors, international terrorism, and the threat of religious fundamentalist groups, new paradigms that could explain relationship between politics and religion and could potentially integrate religion as a frame of reference are needed<sup>74</sup>. Add to this, Muslims represent one fifth of the world population and they should present their paradigm especially after the resurgence of norms and cultural dimensions in international relations.

Many Muslim scholars wrote about international relations in Islam, however, they presented a jurisprudential study of relations among Muslims and non-Muslims and rules of peace and war in Islam. There had not been a comprehensive and

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<sup>74</sup> Mustafa, *op.cit.*, 16-17

academic attempt to theorize about international relations in Islam from a political science perspective. Thus, the Islamic Civilizational Paradigm is different from what has been previously presented. ICP pioneer scholars studied the Islamic fundamental sources, jurisprudence, and history to absorb and understand the Islamic tradition of international relations then they re-presented and re-formulated it in political terms and in a disciplined manner.

The Islamic Paradigm is described as civilizational; an adjective that is meant to differentiate the paradigm from other profound Islamic Jurisprudential studies of IR. Tackling the *Hudood* or Islamic rules is what Jurisprudential studies are concerned with. Rules of peace and war from the perspective of the Islamic Sharia represent the core of such studies. However, the Islamic Civilizational Paradigm depends on integrated set of sources; some of which are sacred like the Qur'an and Sunna, which establish the foundations and essence of international relations in a transcendental manner (transcends place and time), others are constructivist as the Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic thought, and the historical experience<sup>75</sup>.

Among the main contributions that the ICP present, is the value approach, which refers to Islamic perspective of values and how values relate to politics. Although this thesis focuses on the *Umma* as a new level of analysis presented by the ICP I find it necessary to shed light on the value approach. Yet, the brief hint that this chapter presents on the value approach is not enough to understand the genuineness of that approach and how profound it is.

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<sup>75</sup> Mustafa, Nādyā, *Al-mukadima al- 'mma li al-mashrū'*, Vol.1, *Al- 'lākāt al-dawliya fī al-Islām*. Al-Kāhira: Al-ma'had al- 'ālamī li al-fikr al-Islāmī, 1996, p.61

## **B. Values Approach in Islamic Perspective**

The Islamic view of morals and values in relation to politics differs from the Western one. While the latter insists on separating values from politics, the Islamic view considers them inseparable. Values in political science generally and in international relations specifically have been marginal. There has been a trade-off between theory and reality. While theory advances and promotes values, in practice they lose their impact. In reality, power becomes the ruling value and values lose their genuine power<sup>76</sup>.

The ICP presents a different view of integrating values. Values in the Islamic perspective constitute a frame of reference, a benchmark that guides actions, and a guiding model. Values play a central role in the Islamic episteme. They shape the Islamic views of the world; they shape the foundations and the pattern of interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims<sup>77</sup>; in this context: *Da'waa*, *Jihad*, and Man's mission on Earth become values. Values in the Islamic paradigm present middle ground between two forces that are regarded contradictory in Western thought: idealism and historical materialism<sup>78</sup>.

The Islamic paradigm considers values an approach and a lens that is used to interpret, review, and, evaluate social phenomenon. Islamic paradigm is neither presenting a utopian approach to IR nor a moral model in a narrow scale but it pertains to behavior and dimensions of Man's mission on Earth according to Islamic teachings. As Nadia Mustafa puts it "the Islamic value system provides a macro-frame that surrounds behavior to moderate excessive materialism and stiff positivism

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<sup>76</sup> Mustafa, Nādyā, and Abdul Fattah, Seif Al-Din, , *Al- 'lākāt al-dawliya* bayn Al-usul Al-Islameya w bayn khebret Al-Tarekh, Vol. 1, Center for political research and studies, 2000, p. 162-163

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Mustafa, op.cit, p.35.

with which all sorts of analyses lose any non-materialistic sense or objective”<sup>79</sup>. Values in the Islamic paradigm are transcendental, they transcend time and place, unlike the Western views that deny the existence of abstract global views of values and promote the idea of relativity of values.

### **C. Generic Rules and Concepts Of The Islamic Paradigm**

The generic rules that the ICP promotes reflect the Islamic values and the central status that values occupy in the Islamic perspective. The Islamic value upon which relationship among Muslims and non-Muslims is founded is *Daw'aa*. The Islamic state embraces a universal creed *A'quida*. Thus, the main role of the Islamic state is to proselytize people to Islam. Initially, *Daw'aa* takes peaceful forms such as advice, upholding treaties, trade, economic cooperation etc. *Daw'aa* is among the Islamic state's main jurisdiction. No matter what the status of the Islamic state is – mighty or weak – in the world, it should be pursuing its role to promote Islamic values and Islam as a religion<sup>80</sup>.

The Islamic paradigm enroots some generic rules pertaining to relations with non-Muslims. Those rules reflect the unique nature of the Islamic paradigm and show the position of values in the paradigm and how integrated those values are in its structure. For instance, among those generic rules are the unity of humanity and equality among human beings. Human beings are all equal and Islam is a universal message that all human beings are diverse and they are required to mutually recognize each other<sup>81</sup>.

Yet, the central concept and the basic value that constitutes the core of Islam as a religion, creed, and thus pertains to the Islamic paradigm is ‘justice’. Justice is

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, P.35.

<sup>80</sup> Abdel Wanis Sheta, in Mustafa, Nādyā, and Abdul Fattah, Seif Al-Din (eds.), *Al- 'lākāt al-dawliya bayn Al-usul Al-Islameya w bayn khebret Al-Tarekh*, Vol. 1, Center for political research and studies, 2000, p. 117-127

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p.129

the guiding value and the benchmark that Muslims should abide by whenever they deal with non-Muslims regardless of the context<sup>82</sup>. In peace or in war, justice is not up for compromise; it is the basic value that is always maintained. Prisoners of war should not be tortured; they should be guaranteed the right to humanitarian treatment and not be humiliated in any manner. Religious freedoms are guaranteed according to this value too. If Muslims conquer other non-Muslim states, they should not impose Islam on the people but allow them to continue practicing their religious rituals. In return, non-Muslims should not challenge or question the Islamic rule and they should abide by the general Islamic rules in organizing the public affairs of the society<sup>83</sup>.

Islamic *Shari'a* states also some basic rules regarding peace and war. *Daw'aa* might take many forms that include but are not limited to: negotiations, upholding agreements and treaties with non-Islamic states, trade and economic relations, exchange of diplomatic missions and embassies. In short, almost all of the forms of international interaction that are accepted by the international law and traditions are accepted in the Islamic view as long as they serve the interests of Muslims.

However, Islamic states are most worthy of support and cooperation. Mutual cooperation and support among Islamic states is what works best for their interest. This means that cooperation and support among Islamic and non-Islamic states comes as a second option. Cooperation should be among the Islamic states, and if Islamic states cannot provide one another with what they need, they can cooperate with non-Islamic ones in a way that best serve Muslims' interest and *Da'waa*. For instance, trade and commercial trips played a significant role in *Da'waa* especially in spreading Islam in India.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. 131-132

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

Yet, Islamic states should not be supporting the non-Islamic ones as long as they reject the Islamic *Daw'aa*, this is known as the concept of *Bara'*<sup>84</sup>. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Islamic states should boycott non-Islamic ones. Rather, they could establish mutual commercial and economic relations in order to fulfill Muslims' own needs. Islamic states might seek a non-Islamic state's support in wars in case they are not powerful enough to defend themselves or defeat their enemies but this should not be the normal condition. The concept of *Bara'* does not contradict with the Islamic states signing and upholding international covenants concerning international peace and security<sup>85</sup>.

The ICP does not provide an abstract conceptual framework to analyze international relations. Rather, it offers a different conception of power and relates it to two other main concepts: *Da'waa* and *Jihad*. To deepen the understanding of the Islamic perspective, it is necessary to touch upon the meaning of these concepts and how they integrate with each other. The founding principle and the main aim of international relations in Islam is *Da'waa*. It is a lengthy process that involves both the state and the individual.

Neither war nor peace is the origin or driver of international relations: both are tools. Even history shows that war wasn't the only model of relations in times of Islamic might. Thus, it challenges the biased stereotype that views Islam as either complete peace or war. Building on this founding principle, power comes as a means to achieve the duty, which is God's order to build and develop civilizations. In Nadia Mustafa's own words, power is "a reality of Godly succession of Man on earth with

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 143

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, pp. 143- 156

the purpose of moving forward the act of building civilization. It is not a force of despotism but of building”.<sup>86</sup>

Jihad has two classical interpretations; offensive (launching war) and defensive (defending Muslims after being attacked); but there is a moderate third interpretation that can be summarized as follows: Jihad is the best effort that a Muslim can undertake to serve his religion. Thus, the concept does not merely mean the act of war. Whether offensive or defensive, Jihad as a value in Islam indicates neither perpetual war nor perpetual peace; Jihad could take different forms that vary according to the context. Thus, Jihad is a process that comprises different forms in order to achieve *Da'waa*<sup>87</sup>.

#### **D. ICP Methodology and Main Assumptions:**

Methodology here refers to how scholars laid the foundation of the Islamic Civilizational paradigm. This section answers a set of questions. What are the sources scholars rely on to extract some abstract and general rules and views of IR from an Islamic perspective? How do they iron the possible differences among those sources? What are the main methodological difficulties that challenge building a paradigm that emanates from a religious framework?

Unlike secular paradigms, a religious one is based on and inspired by sacred fundamental sources of theorization. However, such sources might not be sufficient. Therefore other constructivist sources are also used as historical experience, and Islamic thought. In other words, formulating an Islamic view of international relations is a “multilevel constructivist process”<sup>88</sup>, which requires the possession of unique

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<sup>86</sup> Mustafa, op.cit., p.44

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, pp44-45

<sup>88</sup> Mustafa, Nādyā, “Al-‘lākāt al-dawliya fi al-Islām”, *Al-Muslim* Al-Muassir, Muslim El Muasser, Vol. 34, No 133/134, p. 134.



methodological skills that could facilitate the interpretation of the fundamental and constructivist sources. This methodology aims eventually at presenting a contemporary and up-to-date Islamic view of international relations that goes beyond the mere religious rules. However, the fourth chapter will assess the relevance and applicability of such methodology and perspective.

a. Fundamental and interpretational sources: problem of reconciliation

The Qur'an and Sunna are fundamental sources that have been interpreted differently by various jurisprudential schools of thoughts over centuries. Thus, in most cases schools disagree on how to interpret the rules concerning a given issue. Thus, theorizing based on the fundamental sources only is insufficient yet, reconciliation between the text (Qur'an and Sunna) on one side and the different schools of thought or real historical experience is challenging.

Relationship among Muslims and non-Muslims is a good example that could explain how such reconciliation was fulfilled. Jurisprudential schools disagreed on whether the nature of the relationship among Muslims and non-Muslims is peace or war and every school picked the verses that best support its argument. However, theorists of the Islamic Civilizational Paradigm adopted a wider principle that transcends war and peace, which is "*Da'waa*"<sup>89</sup> or proselytizing. *Daw'aa* is a "prolonged process that comprises both the individual Muslim and the Islamic *Umma*"<sup>90</sup>. In that context, war and peace became only exceptional cases that occur in specific circumstances and vary according to the historical context and the balance of power.

Unlike the Western paradigm, the Islamic paradigm presents a different view of the world. Neither war nor peace is inevitable; both are forms of relations among

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 138

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

nations or polities. Both are considered extreme and exceptional forms of relationships that cannot permanently prevail. According to the Islamic paradigm, people are created to know and recognize each other; thus the core principle is mutual recognition. In addition, the Islamic *Umma* is required to proselytize other people to know and believe in Islam. Consequently war and peace are exceptions: the chaotic status of war is incompatible with a worldview that is based on recognition and co-existence.

Mutual recognition is a peaceful process that could take various forms, however, peace that would make Muslims give up on their mission -*Daw'aa* and *Istekhlaf* (Man's mission on Earth)- is also incompatible with the that Islamic view. *Daw'aa* is the main purpose and core principle of relations among Muslims and non-Muslims, because the goal of such a relation is neither to exclude other people/*Ummam* (plural of *Umma*) nor to conquer them. Rather, the goal is to introduce Islam to other people and to proselytize them to Islam. In this view, factors such as historical context and elements of power determine the possibility of war and peace.

### **1. Revisiting Islamic Intellectual Heritage**

Before referring to the second challenge it is important to point out that theorization from an Islamic perspective deteriorated in the last few centuries. Thus, scholars of ICP in most cases begin their theorization by a literature review that shows the loopholes and shortcomings in the mainstream Arabic and English literature on heritage and Islamic history. Based on that literature review they build their approach as how to address heritage and history for the purpose of theorization.

Hence, the second challenge is how to approach the Islamic intellectual heritage and how to use it as a source for political theorization. While many scholars

consider the Islamic intellectual heritage irrelevant to reality, many others overstate it and consider it an inspiring source that comprises the solution for today's challenges. The approach that scholars of ICP advance is to revisit the Islamic heritage using different lens and to understand the Islamic heritage through the lens of an Islamic episteme. According to scholars of ICP, a major deficit in the literature that addresses Islamic heritage is the Orientalist approach that many scholars deploy. Thus, such approaches can hardly develop a genuine explanation and interpretation of that heritage. On the other hand, other scholars take the heritage as face value without criticizing it or explaining how relevant it could be to our world. Their work in many cases is limited to explaining canonical work of the Islamic heritage<sup>91</sup>.

Nadia Mustafa examined the literature produced during the last five decades, that addresses the Islamic heritage and she was able to reach a conclusion. First, most of the studies shed light on intellectuals rather than tracing general trends or ideas. Scholars tend to classify and categorize Islamic intellectuals albeit many intellectuals could not be easily limited and classified in one category. For instance, scholarly works classify Muhammad Abdo as a religious reformist; however, he could also be seen as a social/political reformist. Scholars who focused on those intellectuals exerted extensive efforts to explain their ideas, however, they did not answer the main question, which is what hindered the application of their reformist ideas and why those ideas fail to account for the deterioration of the Islamic *Umma*<sup>92</sup>.

Second, the central issues that were discussed extensively in the Islamic heritage are the reformation and the renaissance of the Islamic *Umma*. This was the direct effect of the confrontation with the West or the occupation by Western forces, i.e. a historical turning point is the French invasion of Egypt 1798. The exposure that

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid 151-155

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

accompanied that historical event caused a civilizational shock to the Islamic Middle East and since then the questions of renaissance of Muslims and the unity of the Islamic *Umma* became the main theme of the Islamic thought. Many other issues were also raised as whether or not to imitate the west, how to manage the society and state-society relations, and how to deal with other civilizations<sup>93</sup>.

Third, the literature focused mainly on the cultural and social aspects of reform instead of focusing on the political reformation. And finally fourth, the focus was more on domestic reformation, the intellectual' ideas on the relationship with the non-Muslims were overlooked as well as the relationship within Islamic polities or states.

These remarks show that the Islamic heritage should be revisited and re-interpreted so that scholars could extract generic Islamic views and rules of international relations. Nadia Mustafa takes the lead to fulfill this mission. The twelve volumes do not focus deeply on the Islamic intellectual heritage; however, more recently Mustafa and others published books on Islamic intellectual heritage to complement what they have previously started. Yet, for the purpose of this thesis I shall limit my focus to the twelve volumes and the main contribution that the ICP presents, which is the *Umma* and the Islamic view of history.

## **2. An Alternative Level Of Analysis:**

The ICP intends to present a new level of analysis (The *Umma*-level) as to address one of the loopholes that challenge that discipline. The discipline of IR has been tied to the state-level and the state-approach. It is self evident that the statist lens dominates the IRT. The state is the most established actor and unit/level of analysis in the field. It by and large is considered a benchmark that other actors and levels are

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p.156

compared to. The debate in the IR has been always revolving around the state. Although there have been calls within the discipline by e.g. Feminism, Post-modernism, Constructivism, and Marxism, to focus on a research agenda that goes beyond state-centrism that distinguish the field the state remains central in the IR theory and analyses.

The main debates that concerned IR scholars were about the state. The first debate revolved around it being the main actor that is rational, coherent, and autonomous from the social forces, processes, and non-state actors as contended by realists. On the other hand, liberals contended that the state's autonomy and importance compared to the non-state actors is declining. Then the debate continued to revolve around the supremacy of the state or the globalization<sup>94</sup>.

The state-level, along with the system-level, is the dominant level in the IR analyses and theories. Scholars look either at the international system as a whole or they tend to look on its main constitutive unit, the state. By International system scholars mean the sum of its constitutive parts and the embedded structure that distinctively defines the system. In 1959 Kenneth Waltz showed in his classic *Man, the State, and War* how the international phenomenon could be analyzed from three different locations or that there are three sources of explanation, the individual, the state, and the system.

Kenneth Waltz<sup>95</sup> presented a systemic study of international relations and clearly introduced the idea of levels of analysis. He introduced three different images that explain the causes of war; each image reflects a certain level. The first image/level is the human nature, of leaders and heads of state, and how it shapes the policies of international actors and hence when analyzing any international

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<sup>94</sup> Hobson, John, *The state and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 1-5

<sup>95</sup> Waltz, Kenneth, *Man, the state, and War*, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001.

phenomenon, especially war, causes and explanations could be found in human nature. According to the second image, the state-level, an international phenomenon could be explained in terms of the internal structure of the state, which generally determines the states' external behavior. For instance, it is historically evident that instable states frequently used to go to wars to keep the coherence and unity of the state<sup>96</sup>. The third and last image/level is the inter-state (international) system-level, which refers to the embedded structure and the relative power and status of every state/ unit.

Every level has its own advantages and limitations and hence some scholars tend to prefer one level to another. While Kenneth Waltz was generally in favor of the system-level, David Singer advocates the state level, as it enables scholars to understand the internal structure of the state, which is the main actor/unit in IR and more importantly to differentiate among the actors, different states<sup>97</sup>. The deep examination of each state/unit helps scholars to avoid the "inaccurate homogenization"<sup>98</sup> that systemic analysis could result in; however, it also exaggerates the differences among the states and their specificities thus making it harder to compare the sub-systemic actors.

A valid comparison should start from the ability to observe the "uniformities"<sup>99</sup>. Thus, over emphasizing the specificities of every state would result in parochial analysis; scholars might tend to consider what they analyze a result of the studied state/s' uniqueness or what Singer calls "ethnocentrism"<sup>100</sup>. Although Singer refers to ethnocentrism in that context he overlooks the fact that the unit (state) level

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<sup>96</sup> For detailed examples check Ibid, pp. 80-123

<sup>97</sup> Singer, David, "The level-of-analysis problem in international relations", *World Politics* 14, no.1 (1961): 77- 92

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p.83

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

of analysis that he advocates is also ethnocentric (Eurocentric). In many cases the state-level would give only limited explanation e.g. when applied on different regions such as the Middle East<sup>101</sup> and it is not always the best approach to analyze different international phenomena.

The unit/state level reflects another problem concerning the state per se. In many cases the state is dealt with as a black box or a unitary actor. Thus, analysis will be blind to other sub-state actors and factors that shape the state's behavior. Hence, the state level raises questions about the definition of the state. How should the state be defined? Could it possibly be considered a "distinct social entity"<sup>102</sup> or would it seem more appropriate to define the state as "agglomeration"<sup>103</sup> of individuals, institutions, and procedures? And how will this definition reflect on analysis?

David Singer and Kenneth Waltz are the pioneers and great advocates of the state/level and of system-level. These two levels continue to be the main levels in the IR analysis even though they have been criticized for being over simplifying. Waltz defined the system-level as simply comprising units, interactions, and structures. The "epistemological opposition of reductionism versus holism" impressed him<sup>104</sup>; he considers the interactions part of the unit level although many other scholars opt to see it as part of the system level. Scholars as Buzan called for separating the unit of analysis from the different sources of explanation<sup>105</sup>. This separation will allow scholars to overcome the shortcomings that the unit/state level and system/structure level raise. Furthermore, this would allow for realizing other possible levels that could exist in addition to the state and system levels as David Singer asserts that there

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<sup>101</sup> Chapter four will expand on this point.

<sup>102</sup> Singer, op.cit., 88

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Buzan, *The International Relations Theory Today*, 210

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

are other levels that might be “even more fruitful potentially than either of those two levels”.<sup>106</sup>

State-level and system-level gained that support for that they easily and clearly fit in the discipline. However, scholarly work did not widely or deeply discuss the ‘level of analysis’ per se. It is not clear whether it is an “epistemological or ontological”<sup>107</sup> construct and how the level of analysis is defined or what are the distinctive features of a level of analysis. Thus scholars do not agree on the number of levels of analysis that exist and what those levels are. Hence, most of the scholarly work focused on either the system (units and structure) or on the units (mainly state). Other levels were introduced recently as world society but tackling those new levels goes beyond the scope of the thesis that focus on the most widely used levels, state and also system.<sup>108</sup>

The next chapter proposes a new level that allows scholars to analyze states, sub-state actors, as well as all other non-state actors including “groups”. Umma is a level of analysis that transcends the narrow scope of the nation state and yet it is located below the global/international level. The discipline’s state-centrism cannot account for the emergence of transnational actors and supranational actors as the EU, and also it cannot account for the role of religion in IR. As Mendelson put it “religion circumvents the territorial divide for seeking to unite people around a set of rules applied on non-territorial basis”<sup>109</sup>. Even the EU also challenges the traditional nation state territorial division.<sup>110</sup> Hence, this thesis seeks to introduce the *Umma* as a new

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<sup>106</sup> Singer, “The level-of-analysis”, 90

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, p.202

<sup>108</sup> For further readings on world society and international society please check Brown, Chris, “The World Society and the English School: An ‘International Society Perspective on World Society’”, *European Journal of international Relations* 7, no. 4 (2001): 423-441.

<sup>109</sup> Mandeslohn, Barak, “God vb. Westphalia: Radical Islamist Movements and the Battle for Organising the World”, *Review of international studies* 38, no. 2 (2012): 596

<sup>110</sup> Sheikh, Faiz, “Two sides of the same coin? The Muslim Umma and the European Union”, *Politics, Religion and ideology* 15, no.3 (2014): 443



analytical category and new level of analysis that could respond to the challenges that the traditional statist lens cannot respond to.

### **3. History as a Source of Theorization**

A main source of theorization that the ICP depends on is history. Scholars of the ICP addressed the Islamic history to understand and extract the patterns of interaction among Muslims and non-Muslims and to track the patterns of change in the international system back then. In so doing, they adopted the system approach to deduce the explanatory factors behind the transformation of the system as a whole and of the Islamic Umma within that system.

Most of the literatures that tackle the Islamic history focus and limit their analysis to Islamic wars and battles where Muslims either conquered or were defeated. Wars, battles or *Ghazawat*, and its tactics used to form the main focus of history literature while issues as the economic and cultural relationships among Muslims and non-Muslims were marginalized. Ibn Khaldun was the first to focus on the socio-economic dimensions in the history of the Islamic state and used it to deeply understand and explain the pace of the historical events as it unfolded. Only some news and sporadic stories about economic and commercial relationship were mentioned in books that were not concerned with Islamic history<sup>111</sup>.

Thus, scholars of the ICP returned to Arabic and foreign primary and secondary resources and rephrased the Islamic history to understand the change in the structure of power and the changes in patterns of interaction within the Islamic state and among Muslims and non-Muslims. Volume 7 explains the approach they use to address the Islamic historical experience and to rephrase the Islamic experience.

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<sup>111</sup> Mustafa, Nādyā, *Madākhhal Menhāji li-Draset Al-Tatawor fi Wad' w dawr Al-'lam Al-Islamy fi Al-Nizam Al-Dawly*, Vol. 7, *Al-'lākāt al-dawliya fi al-Islām*. Al-Kāhira: Al-ma'had al-'ālamī li al-fikr al-Islāmī, 1996, p. 64-66

Volumes 8 to 11 explain how the consecutive Islamic states (*Al-Dawla Al-Umaweya, Al-Dawla Al-Abaseya, Al-Asr Al-Mamluki*) expanded and how they tend to apply the Islamic sharia in their conduct of international relations and finally to see how the power structure changed and how the international system transformed.

Scholars of the Islamic Civilizational Paradigm presented a critique of the dominant view of world history especially how the history of Islamic state was described within this view. A point worth mentioning is the critique of the dominant analytical trends of modern history and the way international history is periodized. World history is largely limited to the European history. It is divided according to the deterioration or renaissance of Europe. For instance, the medieval centuries are described as the darkness ages, even though the same exact centuries witnessed the peak of the Islamic civilization.

That biased classification of history hindered the scholars' ability to view and analyze the Islamic history as a whole and in a comprehensive, holistic manner. For instance, it was hard to observe and trace the expansion of Islam as a religion and a civilization after the Islamic geographical and military expansion had stopped. In addition, the Eurocentric periodization of history did not help in understanding and tracing the role of the Islamic state in the international system neither in the contemporary system, twentieth century, nor during the medieval centuries. Aspects as the balance of power and patterns of interaction among the Islamic state and the rest of the world were also marginalized and overlooked as a result of adopting the Eurocentric approach to history<sup>112</sup>. Furthermore, most of the scholarly literature focused on the political and military dimensions of international relations among the

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 66-72

Islamic state and the rest of the world, while socio-economic and civilizational dimensions were overlooked.

Accordingly, scholars of the ICP aim at studying the Islamic history from a different perspective. They present a different periodization pattern and point out how Muslims framed their history and viewed the Islamic Umma's role as subject rather than object of that history. Unlike the Western approaches that overlook the nature of non-Western regions and civilizations, the ICP aims at revealing an alternative view of history of the Islamic state.

The twelfth and last volume tackled the status of the Islamic state after the fall of the Ottoman Empire or Caliphate (*Khelafah*). The Ottoman Caliphate/Empire was viewed in world history as one of the international actors and not as an Islamic state that has different motives and goals. Thus, the development of the Islamic state within the international system was not present in mainstream analysis<sup>113</sup>.

Most of the literatures that analyze the development of the international system through the twentieth century adopt a Western point of view<sup>114</sup>. Literatures view the European events especially events that shape the relationship between the U.S. and the USSR after the end of world war II as the only turning points that should be tackled when examining the international system. Non-European actors are seen as object of history rather than actors<sup>115</sup>. Finally, literatures focus on the role of the international organizations in international system<sup>116</sup> e.g. in many cases the change in

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, pp. 72-73

<sup>115</sup> Mustafa, Nādyā, and Badran, Waduda, *Wad' al-dawla al-Islamiya fi a'qab soqoot al-khelafah al-osmaneya*, Vol. 12, *Al-'lākāt al-dawliya fi al-Islām*. Al-Kāhira: Al-ma'had al-'ālamī li al-fikr al-Islāmī, 1996, 7

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

the status of the Arab territories is mentioned partially in literature that focus on the role of the League of Nations<sup>117</sup>.

Volume 12 presents what the mainstream literature overlooks: an analysis of the status of the Islamic states following the fall of the Islamic Caliphate or Ottoman Empire in the international system from their own perspective. However, the Islamic state was not as clear and defined as it used to be before the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate. Hence, the ICP defines the Islamic state as "the state whose elite recognizes it as Islamic"<sup>118</sup>. These states are mainly the members of the Organization Islamic Cooperation (OIC); forty-six states most of which were either physically occupied or newly independent states and unable yet to completely resist the hegemony of the imperialist powers<sup>119</sup>. Using the structural theory of imperialism, this volume explained not only the relationship among the imperialists on one side and the Islamic states on the other side, but also the relationship among Islamic states, and between Islamic and non-Islamic third-world states. The structural theory of imperialism divides the world to periphery and core states, the latter control the former as the interest of the elites or central authority within the periphery and core states coincide.

Having presented a brief review of the ICP, and the methodological problems that challenge theorization from an Islamic perspective, the next chapter addresses the Umma as a new level of analysis and examine whether or not that level was substantiated in the ICP study of history.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid, p.8.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid p.12

<sup>119</sup> Ibid

## **Chapter III**

### **The *Umma*: A New Level Of Analysis**

This chapter presents the *Umma* as a new level of analysis. First, it deconstructs the concept to understand its different connotations, then it presents the advantages and limitations of the *Umma*-level. The chapter will also examine whether the ICP deployed the *Umma*-level in their analysis of Islamic history. Hence, it sheds the light on the analysis of Islamic history, especially that of the Ottoman Empire. In this chapter, I argue that the ICP successfully utilizes the *Umma*-level and manages to address the Islamic history as a whole, in order to understand the patterns of interaction among different Islamic actors, and to reflect on the role of Islamic powers on the international arena. However, questions should be raised about the feasibility of employing this level to address the contemporary realities.

#### **A. The *Umma*: Deconstructing the concept**

Before introducing the *Umma* as a level of analysis it is necessary to deconstruct the concept and to understand it in the context of the Islamic Civilizational Paradigm of international relations. This concept is rooted in the *Qur'anic* discourse: *Qur'an* determines its main dimensions and connotations. As a concept, the concept of *Umma* refers generally to human association and the development of human social organizations throughout history<sup>120</sup>. It is an Islamic concept, however it pertains to any other human groups or social organizations, and not necessarily only the Islamic community. As presented in the *Qur'anic* discourse, *Umma* refers to human association as a phenomenon. Thus, there is an Islamic *Umma*

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<sup>120</sup> Saleh, Amany, "Tawzeef Al-Mafaheem Al-Hadareya- F'il Tahlil Al-Seyasy: Al-Umma kamostawa L'il Tahlil", *Al Muslim Al Mu'asser* 2, no. 137/138, 109-114.

and other *Ummam* (plural of *Umma*) that might not even be dependent on religious bonds<sup>121</sup>.

Linguistically, according to the standard Arabic language dictionary *Lisan Al-Arab*, *Umma* comes from the stem *Amm*<sup>122</sup>; a verb that means guide to, lead to, or intend. *Umma*, as a noun, means destination, purpose, aim or goal. In *Shar'ia* and *Sunna*, *Umma* means “a way or *Tareeqa* or ideal way of doing things”<sup>123</sup>. The *Umma* follows an *Imam*, that in most cases the Holy *Qur'an* or the Prophet. Simply, the Islamic *Umma* is a group of people who follow the holy *Qur'an* or also the Prophet/*Sunna*<sup>124</sup>. A more comprehensive and detailed definition will be provided later.

It should be noted that the *Qur'anic* discourse constructs *Umma* as a general concept describing human association as a phenomenon. It also presents human history in terms of history of different *Ummam*. Special emphasis is given to the Islamic *Umma*, how special or unique she is compared to other *Ummam* and what her role as a civilizational entity is, and how her relations with other *Ummam* should look like. In short, the Islamic *Umma* is unique for the normative rules she abides and is and shaped by<sup>125</sup>. Not only does the *Qur'anic* discourse present the concept of *Umma* and determine the features and role of the Islamic *Umma*, it also presents a general normative theory about the origin and evolution of *Ummam*. This theory depends on Islam as a religion and is abiding to the community of believers<sup>126</sup>.

In general, *Umma* refers to any group of people that has some specific characteristics. Amany Saleh deconstructs the concept of *Umma* building on the

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>122</sup> Barghouthi, Tamim, *The Umma and the Dawla The Nation State and The Arab Middle East*, London: Pluto Press, 2008, 37

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 37

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>125</sup> Saleh, Op.Cit. , 112

<sup>126</sup> Ibid

*Qur'anic* discourse<sup>127</sup>. She identifies four main elements or pillars of the concept. First, *Umma*, as a concept, revolves around *Al-Jama'a* or the group of people who collectively constitute an *Umma*. State, institutions, or the individual are not the central or key entity/agent in the *Umma*. However, the *Umma* has a moral personality that does not deny the role and responsibility of the individual or other institutions<sup>128</sup>. Making the group *Al-jama'a* so central and the main element of the *Umma* instead of institutions means that the *Umma* exists albeit there might be no institutions to represent it. The mere existence of *Umma* precedes and does not necessitate the existence of representing institutions. The *Umma* is there whether or not there are institutions to represent. In Tamim Barghouthi's words: "the Islamic *Umma* predates any political arrangements"<sup>129</sup>.

Nevertheless, the presence of a political arrangement, elite or decision makers, or institutions that articulate, represent, and defend the collective needs and interests of the whole group is also important. Apart from the abstract definition of *Umma*, the *Qur'anic* theory of history and evolution of *Ummam* refers to the vital role that elites and decision makers play in shaping the trajectory of *Umma*<sup>130</sup>.

The second element of *Umma* is the *Manhaj/A'qida* or (Creed)<sup>131</sup> and pattern of behavior. It refers to the bond that holds the group together and makes it one whole. By *Manhaj*, Saleh means a belief, which members of the group embrace, a lifestyle, and pattern of behavior that reflect that creed<sup>132</sup>. This belief could be a religion, be it a monotheistic/Abrahamic or non-theistic religion, a set of traditions, or a reformist doctrine. All of which represents a set of inspiring teachings that lead man

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, p. 113-117

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Barghouthi, Op. Cit., p. 39

<sup>130</sup> Saleh, Op. Cit., 114

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

in his life and is clearly reflected in his way of life. *A'quida/Manhaj* is central in defining *Umma*, for it represents the bond that holds the group<sup>133</sup>.

Third, the *Umma* has a responsibility, role, and a function. *Ummam* should be following their respective *Manhaj* or creed and reflecting it in their pattern of behavior and lifestyle. In doing so, *Umma* should defend and protect her *Manhaj* when dealing with other *Ummam* or when facing any critical events that could possibly threaten her *Manhaj*. The *Umma* function or role takes three possible forms from a *Qur'anic* view<sup>134</sup> these forms differ according to the context within which the *Umma* exists. First, establishing the *Umma* as an entity and reserve her *Manhaj*, creed, and pattern of behavior. Second, defending and protecting the *Umma's* *Manhaj* or creed. Third, being proactive in promoting the *Umma's* *Manhaj*. Stories told in the *Qur'an* show that different *Ummam* (especially those embracing non-theistic creeds) in defending their *Manhaj* do not depend on peaceful means but rather they resorted to violent ones unlike *Ummam* embracing monotheistic creed with peaceful means in most cases<sup>135</sup>.

The *Umma* has a fourth defining element concerning what might be called metaphorically her age or the extended period within which a certain *Umma* exists<sup>136</sup>. Embracing the same *Manhaj/A'quida* or creed over history does not make an *Umma* an extended entity over centuries. Every *Umma* has an age and a role that should be fulfilled; this role is determined according to the historical context within which this specific *Umma* is alive<sup>137</sup>. The idea of *Umma's* age and the subsequent role based on the context resembles the role or function of a generation. For instance, if a generation had that role of defending the state's borders because it happened that they lived in a

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<sup>133</sup> *Umma* was used once in *Qur'an* as a synonym of *Manhaj* in *Suret Al-Zukhruf* (*Qur'an* 43: 22-23)

<sup>134</sup> Saleh, Op.Cit, 115.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 116

<sup>137</sup> This idea is elaborated in *Surat Al-A'raf* (*Qur'an* 7: 34) and *Surat Al-Nahl* (*Qur'an* 16: 93)



historical context where their state was threatened. When this role is fulfilled and when the historical context changes, a new role become necessary and this would signal a new era and hence a new *Umma*/generation. Every *Umma* is responsible for facing a certain challenge and her success or failure is based on how wise she was in facing that challenge.

This sort of division of a certain *Umma* into *Ummam* based on historical context should be understood in the context of the idea of accountability in Islam that every one and every *Umma* is accountable to *Allah* Almighty God<sup>138</sup>. Hence, every *Umma* is responsible for her own actions; whether or not she fulfilled her function given the historical context, and that is how Man and *Umma* will be judged in the afterlife.

Based on the four constructive elements mentioned above, Amany Saleh defines the *Umma* as “a group of people whose belief in and loyalty to a certain *Manhaj/A’quida*, be it a creed, a pattern of behavior, or both bonds them together. This group sincerely works to maintain the functions of establishing, defending, and promoting the *Manhaj* they embrace”<sup>139</sup>.

The chapter thus far has clarified the layout and foundations of a general and abstract conception of Umma. Mona Abou Al-Fadl presented a more specific conception of Islamic Umma. She coined the term “*Al-Umma Al-qotb*”<sup>140</sup> or the Charismatic Community<sup>141</sup>. Abo Al-Fadl considers the Islamic *Umma* (*Al-Umma Al-qotb*) “a leading community who has a unique dual ability. This community attracts

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<sup>138</sup> This idea is evident in Surat Al-Baqara (Qur’an 1: 134)

<sup>139</sup> Saleh, Op. Cit. 117

<sup>140</sup> Abo Al-Fadl, Mona, *Al-Umma Al-Qotb*, Cairo: Al-shourok Press, 2005.

<sup>141</sup> Although the literal translation of Qotb is pole it was translated by Amira Abo-Samra as Charismatic Umma for that it means a unique Umma that attracts other groups to her and hold her own unity. Here I am using Amira Abo Samra translation check: Abo Samra, Amira, “Mafom Al-A’lameya Fil- A’lakat Al-Dawleya: Drasa Moqarna fi Eshamat Nazareya Naqdeya” (PhD diss.,Cairo University, 2014), 285.

other groups while strongly holding her own internal unity”<sup>142</sup> This is a simple brief translation of a profound concept coined by Abo Al-Fadl that needs to be further elaborated.

*Al-Umma Al-qotb* has distinct defining characteristics. On one hand, she is unique in how diversified yet unified her components are. The very components of the Islamic *Umma* are diverse. Islamic *Umma* is a community that entails other groups who are diverse in culture, color, language, and in ethnicity. On the other hand, she is a center of gravity who attracts and influences other *Ummam* or groups. At the first glance, she might seem as a melting pot. However, being bonded and unified by the *Manhaj*, the sub-groups that compose the *Umma* – no matter how diverse – do not lose their very peculiar features. Thus, her ability to unify diverse groups who collectively compose the *Umma* without eradicating their own defining features along with her ability to attract other external groups are what makes *Al-Umma Al-qotb* so charismatic and unique<sup>143</sup>.

One might wonder how such an *Umma* exists while there is no entity or a state representing it. On this, Abo Al-Fadl asserts what Barghouthi and Saleh had contended: that the Islamic *Umma* predates the existence of any representative entity or political organization. The existence of the *Umma* should be linked to the existence of *Qur'an*. The Islamic *Umma* will continue to exist as long as the *Qur'an* exists. Whether or not there is an *Imam* or a leading figure that guides the *Umma* or a representative entity to defend and embody her institutional or physical existence not her abstract existence. Moreover, Islam does not determine a certain political arrangement or system to embody, represents, and defends the *Umma*. Rather, the *Umma* can create any form of political arrangements and orders that could best

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<sup>142</sup> Abo Al-Fadl, Op.Cit., 51

<sup>143</sup> Mona Abo Al-Fadl expands on this point and links it to the dialectic of unity in her book *Al-Umma Al-Qotb*, 63-72.

represent her and defend her ideals. These arrangements are expected to vary according to the historical context within which the *Umma* exists<sup>144</sup>. Whatever the entity that embodies the *Umma* is, the Imam or the ruler who presides over the *Umma* has to follow the *Qur'an* and *Sunna* and defends the interest of the *Umma*. Following the *Qur'an* and *Sunna*, thus, becomes the source of legitimacy of the Imam, and the *Imam* is accountable to Allah and to the Muslims (members of the Islamic *Umma*)<sup>145</sup>.

Unlike the nation-state, the *Umma* as a concept has no “territorial connotation”<sup>146</sup>. The *Umma* transcends the limits of time; as it is not restricted to a certain age or a certain territory. The *Umma* in this context becomes a civilizational entity distinct and different from other *Ummam* or groups.

### **B. The *Umma* As A Level Of Analysis:**

*Umma*, as previously mentioned, is not a territorial political entity but rather a cultural and civilizational one. Accordingly, and as a level of analysis, the *Umma* could be approached from an epistemological point of view<sup>147</sup>. If the notion of nationalism revolves around a common culture, language, or history that make a certain group a distinct race, then the *Umma* revolves around *A'quida* or *Manhaj* defined as a set of beliefs, norms, that shapes one's view of the world and his role according to that view.

*A'quida* in this context is what beholds members of the *Umma* together and provides them with a shared interpretation and view of the world, unlike the nation-state that considers territory and languages the main bond that hold state members or

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>145</sup> Although the *Umma* is defined as a group of people, the concept was used once in *Qur'an* to describe an individual as *Umma*. It was mentioned in *Qur'an* that Abraham is by himself an *Umma* because he had both a *A'quida* (creed) to follow and promote<sup>145</sup>. This also shows that the *Umma* exists before and even without the existence of an entity or political order to represent her. See Surat Al-Nahl (*Qur'an* 16:120)

<sup>146</sup> Barghothi, Op. Cit., p. 37

<sup>147</sup> Saleh, Op. Cit., 118

citizens together. That is to say, to be a member of the *Umma*, one need to embrace its *A'quida*, while being a member of a nation state would need more tangible requisites and the subsequent process of changing the individual own loyalties, beliefs, and worldview which would take years if not decades to be changed. Thus, joining a certain *Umma* is easier compared to joining a nation state.

Saleh contends that *A'quida* does not necessarily refer to religion or faith. Rather, it could be an ideology such as Zionism or Nazism, or a civilization such as the European or Islamic civilizations. All of which could represent also *A'quida* or a system of belief as long as their believers adhere to it and reflect it in their behavior<sup>148</sup>. The sources that shape the *A'quida* – and consequently the *Umma* – could be sacred sources such as *Qur'an* and *Sunna*, or non-sacred sources such as common history, e.g. Islamic history or the common history of the European nations and how they came together as a group to form the European Union.

### **1. Advantages Of Umma-Level:**

To study or analyze any social phenomenon, scholars should select the aspect they will focus on and the criterion according to which this phenomenon will be studied. Those aspects or criteria will differ depending on the phenomenon being discussed, the purpose of the research, and on the ability of the level to explain the phenomenon under investigation<sup>149</sup>. That is to say that the level of analysis should help scholars provide a valid explanation of the phenomenon. It is hard to expect that any level of analysis – by itself and in itself – is sufficient in providing a holistic description and a comprehensive explanation of the social phenomenon.

In political science generally and in the discipline of IR specifically, scholars usually face the dilemma of which aspects and elements of the phenomenon are most

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid

<sup>149</sup> Singer, Op.Cit., 77-8

worthy of attention and which level of analysis would offer a better and valid explanation. As previously mentioned, state-level of analysis is one of the most widely used levels; by and large the statist lens dictates the discipline of IR. State level per se is a micro-level that mainly considers states as the main key players on the international arena. Thus, missing other possible actors and levels.

This thesis introduces a new level of analysis that does not substitute the state-level but rather complement it. The *Umma* is a new level that transcends the state-level and comprises other types of actors as well. Decision-makers, states, non-state actors, and all other possible units of analysis are all present in the analysis when the *Umma*-level is utilized. Indeed, they could all be considered mechanisms that embody and depict the *Umma*<sup>150</sup>.

In this context, the crucial question that needs to be answered is what does the *Umma* as a level of analysis present? What is the edge of *Umma*-level compared to the state-level? What does scholars miss when they overlook the *Umma*-level of analysis? In what follows; the chapter answer those questions.

The *Umma* as a level of analysis has an edge compared to state-level. International Relations as a discipline was concerned with institutional and organizational actors e.g. states, multi-national corporations, international system or international and regional organizations. It is self-evident that the dominant approaches and levels of analysis could definitely help explain the role of the international institutions and the superpowers. However, it has limited ability to explain the non-institutionalized actors i.e. groups and individuals other than decision-makers. It has also limited explanatory ability when it comes to issues such as the explanation of ethnically or culturally-motivated conflicts. It can tell little about

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<sup>150</sup> Saleh, Op.Cit., 125

the Jihadist groups<sup>151</sup>, how they are intellectually and organizationally formed, why they seek to restore the Islamic Caliphate and how this shapes their actions and decisions.

The *Umma*-level of analysis enables the scholars to trace groups and how they tend to form well-established organizations. The *Umma*-level is unique, for it recognizes and allows scholars to observe institutionalized and organizational units as well as non-organized ones such as groups. The *Umma*-level is able to “shed the light on actors and dynamics”<sup>152</sup> that are greatly overlooked i.e. *Al-Jama’a* (group/community) and *A’quida* respectively. The previous decades witnessed active role played by religion and A’quida and Jama’at/ groups in the international affairs that the dominant levels and approaches could not provide appropriate and deep analysis for<sup>153</sup>.

Religions are increasingly impacting international relations; hence, concepts of national interest are no longer sufficient in analyzing the conduct of international relations. This could be noticed in the political discourses adopted post-9/11, where the impact of religion can be noticed on such discourses. Transnational movements and non-governmental organizations have also been playing obvious role on the international arena. To mention a few, movements such as green, anti-globalization, fundamentalist, human rights groups and movements: all these actors and normative factors are affecting international relations and traditional levels and analytical categories cannot account for or help to explain it.

The *Umma*-level, unlike the state-level, does not focus on certain elements or aspects of the international phenomenon, i.e. military and economic power and

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p.130

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, p.131

<sup>153</sup> For further information on the inability of the dominant approaches and theories to explain the role of religion in international relations check Snyder, Jack, *Religion and International Relations Theory*, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011.

consider it the most worthy of attention. Rather, it has that ability to link elements and aspects of a certain phenomenon. In other words, it can link different levels of analysis to one another and can shed the light on various factors that might shape the international phenomenon. For instance, it allows focusing and accounting for all different units e.g. individual, state, groups, regional and international systems, and all possible factors of explanation e.g. on military, economic, and cultural factors.

Thus, it transcends the common dichotomies that face the study of IR, whether to focus on the state *or* non-state actor, to consider the military and economic aspect *or* the cultural aspects. In short, *Umma* level can account for the “complexities of the social phenomenon”<sup>154</sup>. Accordingly, it is a credible and reliable level unlike other levels that account for a specific variable, element, or aspect. It escapes the common biases that other levels cannot escape<sup>155</sup>. It transcends the narrow scope of national interest, it enables scholars to understand how *A’quida* – instead of official political discourse- might affect and shape political agenda. *Umma* as a level of analysis links the micro and macro levels of analysis. It thus represents a response to the challenges that face IR as a discipline<sup>156</sup>.

As any other level of analysis, the *Umma*-level have the ability to describe, explain, and predict. As for the description, *Umma* level can both describe and observe the behavior of a certain actor or limited number of actors over a lengthy period of time and can observe and describe the behavior of many actors *or* can take into consideration different variables e.g. culture, economic, military- over a relatively limited period of time<sup>157</sup>.

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid, p.133

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, p.134

<sup>156</sup> Abo Samra, Amira, Op.Cit., 280-290

<sup>157</sup> Saleh, Op.Cit., 140

As for the explanatory power of the *Umma* level, it should be mentioned that explanatory ability of the *Umma* level is best observed first in its ability to explain the building process of *Umma* and how this shapes and affects the behavior of certain international actors, and in its ability to explain the pattern of relationship among *Ummam* e.g. how they mutually support each other, how they coexist, and also possibly how and why they might engage in a conflict. For instance, the traditional analysis of the role both the United Kingdom and the United States played in establishing Israel and their stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict could be explained in terms of national interest and how states as rational actors would behave in a conflict as such.

However, when this issue is analyzed and explained using *Umma* level will shed the light on deeper factors and variables that explain states behavior toward that issue and would form a clearer picture. According to the *Umma* level, it is not only the national interest of the U.S. and UK but also the cultural dimension that made not only the official institutions but also civil society organizations, religious figures and even the public opinion sympathize with Israel and support its existence and welfare<sup>158</sup>. The public opinion in those states understands – if not supports – the Israeli discourse and Zionist discourse. Thus, it is neither the national interest of the state nor the role of the media only that explain the public and official support to Israel.

As for the prediction, the *Umma* level helps in that respect as it can allow the observation of the “behavior tendencies”<sup>159</sup> that are shaped according to the goals of every *Umma* and according to the stage at which the *Umma* is. For example, since its occupation and subsequent independence, the Islamic world has been seeking to

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 142

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 142



formulate his own identity, given the challenges he faces, and to identify the path for development.

## **2. Limitations of Umma-Level:**

Like any other concept in the social sciences, the *Umma* has limitations that could be linked to how this concept is defined. First, the *Umma* is not embodied in specific institutions unlike other concepts/levels e.g. nation-state and international system; which have clear and well-defined institutions that represent them. It is one of the defining features of the *Umma* that her mere existence predates the existence of any representing institutions. That lack of defining institutions raises some questions and methodological problems. For instance, which institution could be defined as representing the *Umma*? How can we recognize certain behavior as representing the *Umma*? and what are the institutions or the actors that should be recognized as representing the *Umma*? How can we interpret behavior of different actors as representative of the *Umma*? What if those behavioral tendencies are contradictory?

Amany Saleh suggests some criteria<sup>160</sup>, albeit ambiguous, to identify certain behavior or actor as representing its respective *Umma*. A) If the behavior of an institution or an actor reflects a certain frame of reference or *A'quida* and B) If the behavior of a certain institution or actor serves the strategic goals of specific *Umma* that reflect its *A'quida*, consequently those institutions or actors could be identified as representing that *Umma*. Yet, describing a behavioral tendency as serving or representing a certain *A'quida* and accordingly certain *Umma* is controversial and, in most of the cases, there would be disagreement on whether or not a certain action reflects *A'quida/Manhaj* or serve the *Umma's* strategic goals.

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 135

Second, the concept of *Umma* per se is an Islamic one. Thus, it has its biases. It is a by-product of the Islamic civilization and culture. So, it might seem a culture-specific concept that suits only the Islamic world<sup>161</sup>. However, it should be noted that almost all concepts have their own biases, for in social sciences concepts reflect paradigms and paradigms in turn reflect different episteme. Accordingly, the same concept might have different connotations in different languages and cultures. As a result, biases in social sciences could be tolerated to a certain extent. The nation state, for instance, is a central concept in social sciences, yet it is one of the most biased concepts that face ontological challenges when applied in non-Western contexts. However, scholars continue to recognize and use it. Moreover, the *Umma* as a concept has a generic meaning and criteria that could be used to describe and analyze any group or community, and there are some specific features that define the Islamic *Umma*. Thus, it is actually less biased than it might seem to be.

Third, in some cases, the concept of *Umma* might overlap with other conceptions such as nationalism<sup>162</sup>. For instance, the *Umma* simply means a ‘group’ who are bonded together by ‘*A’quida*’ and in some cases nationalism or ideology e.g. Nazism in Germany becoming an *A’quida* on its own. However, cases where an ideology turns to be *A’quida* that has its own *Jama’a* or group remain limited in number. Accordingly, scholars who tackle the *Umma* as a concept and analytical category should be aware to distinguish among them.

Fourth, some scholars might think that, the *Umma* – as a concept that is based on *A’quida* – seems to be inseparable from conflict. However, this is inaccurate. The *Umma* is rather a complex concept that describes a certain group/community that has distinct features; whether the relationship among *Ummam* is peaceful or conflicting

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 136

<sup>162</sup> Ibid

depends on set of dimensions<sup>163</sup>: the *A'quida* that shapes every *Umma*, how this *A'quida* views and defines the relationship among *Ummam*, the group or *Jama'a* whether or not it is opened to other groups and cultures. Openness in this context means accessibility to the group or joining the group/*Jama'a* and her history whether or not the group is diversified – different races and difference cultures – and, finally, the stage through which a certain *Umma* goes, be it the formation phase, the defense phase, or expansion<sup>164</sup>.

Having tackled the *Umma* as a concept and as a level of analysis pointing out its advantages and limitations, in what follows I examine whether the ICP deploys the *Umma* level in its analysis of history and to what extent the *Umma* level enriched its analyses. Islamic history is a constructive source of theorization. However, scholars of the ICP criticized the way in which Islamic history was tackled and they intended to present the Islamic history in a manner that serves their purpose of theorization. The ICP presents a different view of history: one that complements the Western view and presents the Islamic version of world history as Muslims see it.

The ICP aims to trace the role that the Islamic *Umma* played in human history. It also aims to understand and explain the reasons of rise and fall of states and civilizations. The ICP depends on system analysis and it intends to transcend details and to link the main historical events together in order to draw a holistic picture of the Islamic history and to trace continuities and changes in the behavior of the Islamic Umma and Islamic states that used to represent the *Umma*. By focusing on the international system and regional system, ICP traces the behavior and role of the main

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid, p.138

<sup>164</sup> There is an Islamic theory of Umma that explains the origion and evolution of the Islamic Umma and shapes how the Islamic Umma's relation with other Ummam should be like check Saleh, Op.Cit., 143-148.

Islamic actors and their status in the international system over the centuries and the pattern of interaction that prevailed among the different Islamic actors<sup>165</sup>.

### **C. The ICP and how it addresses history:**

The ICP studies the history of Islam as a civilization; hence they propose a new pattern of periodization, which is the ‘place or center of the Islamic Caliphate’ because such a criterion reflects the hierarchy of the Islamic power and shows how power is divided among the Islamic centers and peripheries<sup>166</sup>. One of the main purposes of their study of history is to trace the development of the Islamic *Umma*’s status over centuries. Although scholars of ICP do not explicitly state that they deploy the *Umma* level in their analysis it could be clearly noticed that they do so in order to achieve their goal in addressing and re-presenting the Islamic history in a holistic manner and to address the status of Islamic *Umma*. It is only by using the *Umma* level that scholars can study the different actors that represent the Islamic *Umma* and analyze their behavior. They would not have been able to trace the reasons of rise or progress and the fall of certain civilization if they focus only on certain states without taking into consideration the rest of the actors that represent that *Umma* or civilization. It is by utilizing the *Umma* that scholars were able to figure out and examine the pattern of interaction among the Islamic actors and the status of every actor in the international structure of power.

ICP scholars were able to trace continuities and changes in the behavior of the Islamic actors over centuries by examining the behavior of the actors that represent the *Umma*. The ICP explains many historical events and how it could be interpreted in accordance with the *Umma* interests contrary to what other scholars claim as will be

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<sup>165</sup> Mustafa Nadia, Madkhal Mehagi li Draset Al-Tatawor fi Wad’ Al-A’lam Al-Islamy F’il Nizam Al-Dawly, in Mustafa, Nadia, and Abdel Fattah Seif (eds), *Al-A’laqat Al-Dawleya Bayna Al Usul Al-Islameya w bayna Khebrat Al-Tarekh Al-Islamy*, Markaz Al Bohos w Al-Darasat Al-Seyaseya, Cairo, 2000, 504-518

<sup>166</sup> Ibid

explained. *Umma* level allows ICP scholars to trace the interaction of domestic and external factors and how they shape the external behavior of the Islamic polities or states. *Umma* level also provides the scholars the opportunity to observe the implications of the interactions among Islamic states or polities and how this affects the status of the Islamic *Umma* as a whole.

By utilizing the *Umma* level, scholars explain the complex relationship among the European and Islamic states and polities and how they manage to keep the balance of power and how this plays role in changing world order. The ICP divides the Islamic history into four main eras according to the main leading entities: *Umayyad era*, *Abassid era*, *Al-Mamluki era*, and the *Ottoman Caliphate*. Through every era, the ICP addresses the main Islamic actor(s) that represent(s) the *Umma* and the main international actors and figure out the pattern of interaction among them, and how this shapes the international arena and how it reflects on the status of the Islamic *Umma*.

The Islamic *Umma* was once unified and represented by only one actor *Umayyad Caliphate* or *Al-Dawla Al Umaweya*<sup>167</sup>. During the *Umayyad* era, the Islamic *Umma* witnessed its widest military expansion. The international system was to a great extent bi-polar, and the unified Islamic *Umma* adopted proactive offense as the best strategy to defend herself. The international system had two main players at the time: the Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire. The Islamic state successfully conquered the Persian Empire and alternated it as one of the main powers and players on the international arena.

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<sup>167</sup> *Dawla* is usually translated into English as state and vice versa, however, *dawla* in Arabic has a different connotation and should not by any means be mixed with the nation state or the state as known in the Western literature. *Dawla* in Arabic has different meanings, however, all those diverse meanings refer to changes in conditions and turning from one condition to another. *Dawla* has the essential connotation of temporality and succession. *Dawla* could refer to the idea of circulation of any thing including circulation of power. *Dawla* as a political term refers to a form of authoritative political order that is not tied to a certain definite territory. For more on *Dawla* and state check Barghouthi, Op.Cit. 56-58

During *Umayyad* era the center of the Caliphate was moved to Damascus, in order to avoid the internal disputes that gained traction in Madina since the great Fitna. Damascus was thus the closest city, back then, in proximity to the Byzantine Empire that the Islamic state was in conflict with<sup>168</sup>. Among the reasons that caused the deterioration and defeat of the Islamic *Umma* is the internal disputes and instability. The internal disputes were mainly over who should be the ruler or Caliph in addition to the disputes among military members because of the ethnic differences<sup>169</sup>, especially in *Abbasid* era. That factor continued to play a central role in the history of the Islamic *Umma*, in many cases as will be explained the internal disputes were the main reason that led to the deterioration of the Islamic state and constrained its ability to expand and progress. Furthermore, it played a role in shaping the power structure within the Islamic *Umma*. Internal disputes did indeed lead the *Umayyad* Caliphate to fall. The *Umayyad* were defeated in the *Zab* battle in the year 750<sup>170</sup> by the *Abbasid* who established their new state and the center of the Islamic Caliphate moved from Damascus to Baghdad.

During the *Abbasid* era, the Islamic *Umma* witnessed divisions for the first time, and there was been more than an Islamic state. The international system turned into a multi-polar system where there had been more than one Islamic powerful state and more than one powerful European state<sup>171</sup>. The *Abbasid* Caliphate changed its foreign affairs' strategy. While the *Umayyad* Caliphate adopted an expansion strategy and Muslims controlled new territories, the *Abbasid* Caliphate adopted a strategy of co-existence. Hence, she focused on securing the borders of the Islamic state, which were considered the borderline of the Islamic Caliphate that need to be secured.

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<sup>168</sup> Abou Zeid, Ola, *Khebrat Al A'sr Al Umayyad*, in Nadia Mustafa and Seif Abdul Fattah (eds.), *Op.Cit.*, 519- 527.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 532-535

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, 569

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, 570-573

For the *Umayyad* Caliphate, the borders of the Islamic state represented a military base that support and facilitate the expansion of the Islamic military and Caliphate<sup>172</sup>. *Al-Dawla Al-Abbaseya* or *the Abbasid* Caliphate replaced the expansion strategy, a main source of income, with agriculture and commerce to make up for the resources that the Islamic state used to control when it expands and controls new territories. Although the *Abbasid* Caliphate did not adopt a strategy for expansion, the *Abbasid* era also witnessed many wars. However, those wars were mainly defensive, or were reactionary to the strikes that the Byzantine Empire launched over the Islamic territories<sup>173</sup>.

The *Abbasid* Caliphate could not maintain the unity of the expanded Islamic *Umma*. Some states succeeded in gaining their independence and hence formulated their own foreign policies. It is hard to figure out a unified Islamic external strategy during the *Abbasid* Caliphate's era, but it is possible to trace different Islamic trends of external strategies. While the *Abbasid* Caliphate adopted a strategy of co-existence, the independent Islamic states in the western side of the Islamic territories adopted an expansion strategy. For instance, *Dawlat Al-Aghaleba* and *Dawlat Al-Adaressa* both gained their independence from the Islamic Caliphate in the western Islamic territories. While the first remained among the nominal authority of the *Abbasid* Caliphate, the latter became independent and became in conflict with the Caliphate. Here, we can find two different patterns of interaction among Islamic states: *Dawlat Al-Aghaleba* adopted an external strategy of expansion and succeeded to control and to add more territories to the Islamic state and secured the borders of the *Abbasid* Caliphate in the Islamic west, while *Dawlat Al-Adaressa* and *Al-Dawla Al-Umaweya*

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 576

in Andalusia adopted a hostile policy toward the *Abbasid* Caliphate and expanded to harness their own power<sup>174</sup>.

Fragmentation in the *Umma* and emergence of different Islamic states, some of which stressed on autonomy versus the *Abbasid* Caliphate, had a negative impact on the Islamic *Umma*; one that used to be unified and represented by one *Dawla*/Caliphate. The fact that the rising independent Islamic states in many cases were against the Islamic Caliphate raises questions on how can scholars interpret the behavior of such Islamic actors or how could such actors be described as representatives of the Islamic *Umma* or even as part of the whole *Umma*. However, the ICP does not emphasize this point but rather focuses on the negative impact of the Islamic fragmentation on Islamic *Umma* as a whole, and goes on to track how it affected the status of the *Umma* and of the *Abbasid* Caliphate; the most powerful Islamic actor at the time.

The end of the *Abbasid* Caliphate witnessed increasing fragmentation as the military generals, many of whom were Turks, controlled the Caliphate. The fact that the Islamic military was composed of different ethnicities affected the unity of such an extended military. As Abou Zeid contends, the main goals of the Turk soldiers were to control and exploit the resources of the Islamic state. In other words, the main motive for those soldiers was to earn benefits and not to defend *A'quida* or Islamic *Umma*<sup>175</sup>. Although the fragmentation of the Islamic *Umma* and the rise of other Islamic states had mainly negative effects on the Islamic *Umma*, those independent states as *Al-Dawla Al-Fatemya* was able in many cases to defend the whole Islamic *Umma* during critical conditions, especially when the main Islamic Caliphate was weak.

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 592-606

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 608



Using the *Umma* level to analyze and examine Islamic history was possible and feasible during that era where Islamic *Umma* was either unified into one state or at least in few Islamic states, one of which is main player and the center of the Islamic Caliphate. It was also easy to use it to analyze other international actor because other international actors were mainly empires, and they usually represent an *Umma* as the Roman and Byzantine empires; both represent the Christian *Umma*. However, had it been that useful in analyzing the Ottoman era?

The ICP addresses the Ottoman historical experience to examine the “pattern of interaction among the internal and external factors and how such interactions affect the balance of power”<sup>176</sup> among the main international actors. In addition, it emphasizes the status of the Islamic world as compared to the West. The ICP’s analyses utilize the *Umma* level, for that it addresses the status of the Islamic *Umma* compared to the West and examines the factors that cause the rise and fall of world powers.

Nevertheless, I contend that the ICP analysis of history and the manner in which it utilized the *Umma* level did not substantiate the *Umma* level. Rather, it showed that the *Umma* level could be best utilized in understanding Islamic history as the Islamic *Umma* was well-defined and represented by distinct institutions, and was also helpful in understanding the development of the international system when the main actors were empires.

The West, represented by European states/empires, witnessed the wake of a scientific revolution and the end of the religious war. Those central changes had a great positive effect on the development of Europe and, ever since, the European West became no longer the traditional West that the Islamic states were used to face

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<sup>176</sup> Mustafa, Nadia, Khebret Al A’sr Al Othmany, Mustafa and Seif Al-Din (eds.), Op. Cit., 725

or challenge. The European states then attacked the Islamic territories gradually until they almost occupied most of it by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, the rise of force of the European states affected the relationship among Islamic states.

The pace of events in Europe also had an impact on the history of the Ottoman Empire. The rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire was determined by socio-economic factors that shape the historical pace of Europe. Nadia Mustafa studied the history of the Ottoman Empire, as it constituted an important phase of the Islamic-Christian relationship. She raised many questions about that historical period, including whether the Ottoman control over Arab, Islamic territories helped protect them or was rather a reason of deterioration of the Islamic world, how much was the Ottoman Empire capable of controlling the balance of power among world powers through formation of coalitions with the European power<sup>177</sup>. The questions that Mustafa addresses, albeit interesting, do not address the problems of the *Umma* level as how to define an actor or an institution to be representing the *Umma*.

The Ottoman history is divided into three main phases. The first phase lasted for almost half a century between 1520 and 1571; when the Ottoman Empire became the most powerful Islamic player and a main world power. During that era, the Empire succeeded to control all Arab territories and form coalitions with some of European powers and disburse such relationship for its own interests. For instance, the Ottoman Empire was in support of France against Spain. The main purpose of that tactic was to keep Europe divided and prevents possibilities of unity that would most probably lead to attacking the Islamic Ottoman Empire<sup>178</sup>.

Mustafa contends that the Ottoman Empire was fulfilling her duty as the main Islamic power to protect the Arab Islamic territories by taking over those territories

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 726-731

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 735

despite through military intervention to protect it against the European expansion that started in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Spain<sup>179</sup>. However, the Ottoman Empire failed to protect the Islamic Andalusia. The pattern of interaction between Islamic Ottoman Caliphate and other Islamic actors, however, took other forms. In some cases, the Islamic states cooperated with a non-Islamic state against an Islamic power. For instance, Islamic states in North Africa asked for the support of Spain against the Ottoman Empire<sup>180</sup>.

The second phase of the Ottoman Empire lasted till the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and during which the Ottoman Empire power deteriorated compared to the European powers. The former became increasingly unable to make good use of her coalitions with the latter to enhance her position on the international arena especially after the 1774 treaty that was concluded after the defeat by the Russians<sup>181</sup>. The socio-economic and political development of Europe hindered Ottoman expansion and gradually caused the Ottoman Empire to lose its advantage against Europe. However, during that second phase, the Ottoman Empire was able to keep and protect its territories. Gradually and because of corruption and the lack of co-existence among different conflicting ethnicities in Ottoman territories, the Ottoman Empire lost her control over some territories, which succeeded to gain their independence eventually.

There has been a debate about the impact of the Ottoman Empire on her subordinate states especially the Arab ones<sup>182</sup>. Had she been able to protect the Arab subordinate states from European occupation? or had she been the reason why those states deteriorated and isolated from the rest of the world and hence became retarded? The ICP contended that the Ottoman Empire was the main Islamic power back then that was able to protect the Islamic *Umma* against the European attacks.

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid, 739-741

<sup>180</sup> Ibid

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 755-757

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 758-768

The ICP does not deny the fact that the Ottoman Caliphate also had negative impact on subordinate Arab states, and that they deteriorated as the Caliphate deteriorated because of group of domestic and external factors. However, the ICP focuses more on the external factors that led to the fall of the Caliphate; namely European interference and attacks on Ottoman subordinate states, especially in a time of regressing military might of the Ottomans<sup>183</sup>.

The third phase of the Ottoman Empire (between end of 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century) witnessed the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Although the Ottoman Empire managed to keep her role on the international arena through a set of reformations adopted by Caliphs, the Caliphate fell by the 1923, and the Ottoman Empire turned to be the Turkish Republic and almost the entire Islamic world was occupied by European powers.

In her analysis, Nadia Mustafa uses the *Umma* level to examine and analyze the Islamic *Umma* and she also reflects on the Christian Umma represented by European states. The *Umma* level enabled her to examine Islamic history, to investigate the patterns of interaction among Islamic actors, and to understand the factors that cause the rise and fall of world powers, especially Islamic powers. The *Umma* level, as has been elaborated allowed to track the interaction among different Islamic actors and how such interactions affected the status of the Islamic world on the international arena. It also allowed examining and explaining the interaction among the domestic and international actors and how those actors affect the status and behavior of a certain actor.

Furthermore, the *Umma* level helped tackle the Islamic history as one integrative whole. Instead of examining certain state or certain actor, the *Umma* level

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid

provided the opportunity to see the Islamic world through a wider scope that facilitated explaining the relationship among Islamic and non-Islamic actors and the critical balance that world powers aimed at fulfilling, in order to keep their stature and relative power. The *Umma* level as deployed in the context of the of the ICP study of Islamic history shows that it deeply helps to understand and analyze Islamic history but it does not appear to be similarly helpful when it comes to analyzing the conduct of contemporary international relations. The *Umma* level, as presented by the ICP, is helpful and has advantages that the state-level or the statist lens cannot provide. However, it needs to be substantiated, improved, and applied on Islamic and non-Islamic actors and realities to test its feasibility as a new level of analysis.

Accordingly, the question that the ICP should be answering is the feasibility of utilizing the *Umma* level nowadays given the fact that the world is now divided into nation states not in empires and extended states, as was the case historically. The ICP tackles the status of the Islamic states after the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate/Empire. Although it explains the reason why they became so fragmented and deteriorated, it provides little on how could those states could unite or achieve the *Umma* goals.

## **Chapter IV**

### **The Sacred Cow And The New Commer: Concluding Remarks**

#### **A. Thesis Main objectives and research problem**

This thesis responds to one of the most compelling challenges that face the IR discipline: the secular bias and the ethnocentrism of IRT. Scholars have identified two main loopholes in IRT. First, IRT ignores and marginalizes religion as a social force that could possibly shape and affect the conduct of international relations. IRT assumes that religion could not inspire theories or paradigms. Second, IRT has always been a Western-centric and state-centric discipline. As previously elaborated, theories of international relations place the political into the realm of the nation-state. Hence, they can hardly recognize other forms of the political.

It has been the thesis's aim to partially make up for the voids of the IRT by introducing a non-Western paradigm and tackling one of its main aspects, the *Umma*, as a new level of analysis. The ICP presents the *Umma* level as possessing a wider scope compared to the prevalent state-level. The ICP is a religion-inspired paradigm that aims at laying the foundation of an Islamic theory of International Relations. Given that language and culture are among the main barriers that hinder the integration of non-Western contributions of IR, this thesis introduces the ICP in English to link this potential Islamic perspective of IR to this field's wider academic literature and offer the opportunity to investigate and evaluate such a non-Western attempt.

The thesis adopts the criticism that critical theory offers as its starting point and builds on it. The critical theory calls for exploring other forms of politics that go beyond the Westphalian nation-state. It criticizes the dominance of the nation-state since it hinders the possibility of restructuring international relations. Although the

contemporary era is witnessing the emergence of different forms of politics and new international actors that cannot be addressed through the statist lens, the attempts to integrate these new forms of political arrangements have been marginalized in the discipline<sup>184</sup>.

The ICP sees the *Umma* level as an appropriate analytical framework that can recognize different forms of the political. Scholars of ICP criticize the ethno-centrism and state-centrism that dominate theorization in the field. The ICP is an open and interactive paradigm that coincides with other Western schools and attempts to bridge the gap. Theoretically, the ICP coincides with constructivism as they both emphasize the constructive role of norms and ideas in the conduct of international relations. The ICP could also be situated as part of a new broader trend of geo-cultural studies that call for integrating non-Western experiences in the core of the IR theory.

### **B. Recapitulation of how the thesis addressed the ICP and *Umma*:**

The thesis addressed the research problem and questions through four chapters. Each of which represented a step toward the goal of the thesis. The First chapter attempted to situate the ICP in the international relations discipline. The second chapter addressed the main aspects of the ICP and introduced a brief account of the challenges that hinder theorization from an Islamic perspective. The third chapter introduced the *Umma* by deconstructing it as mentioned in the *Qur'anic* discourse and then investigating the *Umma* level and identifying its advantages and limitations. Moreover, it also examined the substantiation of *Umma* level in the ICP analysis of history. The fourth chapter pulls the threads of the discussion together and

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<sup>184</sup> Bahi, Op.Cit., 3

states the main findings of the thesis. Finally it suggests where the research should be going.

The first chapter of this thesis referred to the efforts that some scholars have exerted to explore potential non-Western and critical scholars' contributions to the IR theory. Tickner and Weaver (2009) explored the status of international relations around the world, while Acharya and Buzan (2007) questioned the reasons behind the dominance of Western theories and the absence of non-Western contributions. With other scholars, they explored potential Asian contributions to the discipline. Bilgin , Chen , and Shani explored other Islamic, Turkish, Asian, and other possible contributions to IRT.

Needless to say, the Western theories of IR are, albeit ethnocentric, well-established and influential. Any comparison between Western and non-Western contributions should take into consideration that the latter are still nascent attempts, still in the making. Hence, any non-Western contributions should be analyzed as rather an unfinished and incomplete work. In other words, they should not be seen through Western lens. For the IR discipline to claim universality, scholars need to investigate other potential non-Western contributions. Some scholars might argue that geo-cultural and subaltern studies emphasize specificities and are ethno-centric as well, and are thus not of a great help. However, without opening up to other potential non-Western contributions, the discipline could hardly claim being international.

The second chapter pointed out the reasons and motives that forced scholars to introduce and develop an Islamic Civilizational Paradigm of international relations. It also shed light on the methodological challenges that faced scholars when they theorize from an Islamic perspective. The normative approach and the Islamic



perception of world history are among the main pillars and contributions of the ICP, and both were briefly discussed in chapter two.

The third chapter focused on *Umma*. The first part of the chapter focused on *Umma* as a concept and as a level of analysis, as well as its advantages and shortcomings. The second part of the chapter investigated whether or not the *Umma* as a level of analysis was substantiated in the ICP's application of history. Chapter four brings together the ideas that were discussed and examined in the three chapters to emphasize the thesis's main findings .

### **C. Thesis Major challenges and principal findings:**

This research had a main goal: to partially account for the parochialism of IRT. It introduces a religiously-inspired paradigm and emphasizes the new level of analysis that it proposes : the *umma*. The present author faced a set of challenges in tackling such theoretical and abstract topic. Introducing a paradigm that reflects a different episteme and that is written in a different language is a challenging task. Many of the concepts used have different connotations. So, those concepts may become a bit ambiguous or confusing when translated.

The Arabic language and writing style that scholars of ICP use are complex and, in some cases, vague and relatively unclear. Many of the ideas that were introduced by the ICP were abstract and not supported by concrete examples to help clarify the concept or idea being proposed. The theme that my research is tackling is both epistemological and abstract. The ICP is a paradigm in the formation process, tackling an incomplete abstract structure of ideas is challenging. Hence, I decided to focus on the *Umma*, which is one of the most concrete contributions of the ICP, and try to test its feasibility as a new level of analysis.

As the main purpose of the thesis is to address the state-centrism of the discipline, I tried to present the *Umma* level in comparison to the state-level. This comparative approach helped clarifying the new level and identifies its main pros and cons. There has been a debate on the levels of analysis and how they could be defined and whether they are an epistemological or an ontological construct. The state-level and the system-level are the most widely-used levels of analysis although scholars such as Singer realize and admit that there are other levels of analysis that could be more useful. Nevertheless, the state-level and system-level remain the most popular.

The state-level has many advantages. However, it imposes other problems specially that it is the prevalent level. As Mandaville points out, the state cannot account for different forms of political activity. Consequently, IRT cannot recognize other forms of politics and of societal and political arrangements.<sup>185</sup> The state-centric tradition of the discipline hinders scholars' ability to recognize and examine other actors that could exist within and across the boundaries of the nation-state. As Bahi contends, such a "limited imagination of the political" limits the scholars' ability to recognize "other forms of international politics that exist outside the realm of the nation state".<sup>186</sup>

Arguably, there have been global transformations that are encouraging and forcing scholars to rethink and redefine the political. Riham Bahi, and Peter Mandaville drew the attention to the need to redefine the 'political'. Global transformations, such as the unprecedented flow of people and ideas, and the emergence of transnational social movements are just examples of such transformations, which challenge the nation-state as the sole context within which

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<sup>185</sup> Mandaville, Op.Cit., 24-5

<sup>186</sup> Bahi, Op.Cit, 65

political identities are expressed<sup>187</sup>. Some scholars such as Linklater and Mandaville raise questions about the potential post-Westphalian politics and other possible forms of politics. Peter Mandaville proposes the *Umma* (the global Muslims community) as a form of translocality. It is an imagined community where Muslims can “revise their ideas about how, what, and where political community can be”<sup>188</sup>. It is a new form of politics that goes beyond the limitations of the nation-state.

This thesis, however, introduces the *Umma* not only as a possible form of post-Westphalian politics, but also as an analytical category that can complement the prevalent categories. The thesis does not present the *Umma* as a global Muslim community as Mandaville does; but rather it presents it as an abstract category that is not designed to describe Muslim community only. As Amany Saleh contends, this concept can be used to describe and analyze any group of people who share *A'quida* or a set of traditions that is reflected in their behavior. Unlike the nation-state that is defined as necessarily having a defined territory, the *Umma* is not linked to a certain territory but rather a creed or *A'quida*. This explains why the *Umma* can account for forms of transnational politics.

The *Umma* revolves around the group/*Jama'a*, *Manhaj* or creed, which holds an *Umma* together. *Umma* predates any political arrangements. The *Umma's* existence could be articulated through: individuals (decision makers), international organizations, regional organizations, transnational networks etc. The *Umma* reaches her peak of maturity when she is represented as one whole by a state; however, this state is not necessarily a nation-state.

*Umma*, as previously mentioned, is a cultural and civilizational entity unlike the nation state that is a territorial political entity. Accordingly, the *Umma* as a level

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 66

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, 67

of analysis could be approached epistemologically. If the notion of nationalism revolves around a common culture, language, and history that makes a certain group a distinct entity, then the *Umma* revolves around *A'quida* or *Manhaj*, which is defined as a set of beliefs and norms that shape one's view of the world and his role according to that view.

The discipline of international relations has been always concerned with institutional and organizational actors such as states, multi-national corporations, and the international system or international and regional organizations. Actors as transnational movements and *Jihadi* groups could not be addressed properly through traditional IR theories. The *Umma* as a level allows scholars to examine such actors and to consider different aspects of a given international phenomenon. The *Umma* level could help answer questions about the role of groups and how they form and organize. It accounts for the role that norms, ideas, and religion as a social force can play in constructing international relations.

The *Umma* level avoids the reductionist dichotomies that shape the analysis of the international relations, to focus on the state or non-state actor and to take note of the military, economic, and cultural aspects. The *Umma* level transcends such dichotomies and hence helps account for the complexities of the international phenomenon. It also transcends the limited notion of national interest and provides the opportunity to explore other possible motives for the international behavior that goes beyond the traditional scope of national interest.

The *Umma* level as shown in chapter three could be used to analyze behavioral tendencies of actors over a long period of time and it allows for understanding the interaction of the domestic and external factors. The *Umma* level

also helps explain how could domestic/ and external factors interaction affects the behavior of different actors.

However, the *Umma* as a concept also has some limitations. Being a reflection and embodiment of an Islamic discourse, the concept of *Umma* has its biases. Moreover, how can we identify an institution as representing the *Umma* especially when there are more than an actor or entity claiming to represent it? *Umma* might seem to have a negative connotation for that it considers *A'quida* the main bond. It could thus be argued that as a concept, *Umma* could foster conflict. However, this depends on the *A'quida* itself and the openness of the *Umma*.

In short, the *Umma* as other levels of analysis has its own advantages and limitations and there should be more attempts to utilize the level and test its feasibility. However, the questions that should be raised and answered are: does the ICP present a viable response to the challenges that face the IR discipline? What exactly does it present and what does it miss or is unable to present?

The IR theory has always been secular. The relatively infant discipline, whose roots could be traced back to the Westphalia treaty, have marginalized religion and denied it any genuine constructive role in international relations. The first chapter explained the secular genetic code of the discipline and how scholars as Petito (2003) and Snyder (2011) criticize the absence of religion as a social force from IR theory. Given the ongoing socio-cultural transformation and the resurgence of many actors who are motivated by religion and/or adopting a religious discourse, religion, as Hotzopoulos and Petito suggest, returns from the exile.

How to integrate religion in international relations theory is a scholarly question. While Snyder suggests that it could possibly be integrated in the mainstream IR theories, Shah and Philpot suggest that IR should undergo a radical revision<sup>189</sup>.

The ICP presents a paradigm shift. It does not only integrate religion in its assumption. Rather, the whole paradigm is Islam-inspired. What makes the paradigm different is that it suggests a different view of the relationship between religion and politics. It shows how both religion and politics could overlap without losing the scientific and rational nature of the discipline. This overlap is best expressed in the values approach that the paradigm suggests. Values, as inspired by the religion, are not separable from politics. Values constitute a guiding model, a frame of reference, a benchmark, and a lens through which social phenomena could be addressed.

The ICP presents the Islamic version of world history that complements the Western view of history that prevails in IR. World history as presented in IR is not truly the history of the world but the Western version of it. It presents the peripheries as objects of history and shows how the West influenced the rest of the world without showing how the rest of the world had a counter-influence on the West. History as presented by the ICP shows the interaction between the Western world and Islamic world and tells the peripheries' version of world history.

ICP addresses the Islamic history as a whole. By deploying the *Umma* level, it examines the behavioral tendencies of different Islamic actors. It also addresses the relationship between Islam as a civilization and *Umma* on one hand and the Christian civilization and *Umma* on the other hand. It also traces the role of the Islamic *Umma* in world history and how this role changed over history by addressing the international system and the interactions that shaped it.

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<sup>189</sup> Shah and Philpot, Op.Cit., 32-34

The ICP originates from Islam not as a religion but as a civilization. Hence, it is not based on the narrow conception of religious *Hudood* or rules but on a wider conception of Islam. The ICP is a paradigm in the making, and paradigm-building is a prolonged process that involves generations of scholars to fulfill. The ICP reflects a different episteme and frame of reference. This thesis presents the ICP as a potential non-Western contribution to the IR theory.

However, the ICP is far from presenting a whole reliable comprehensive theory of IR. Rather, it lays the underlying foundations of a potential Islamic theory of IR. It is not a well-established paradigm, but pioneers of the project of international relations in Islam call it a paradigm as they aspire to develop it into one. The ICP has some features of a paradigm while it fell short of others. It possesses the epistemological aspect of the paradigm. As previously mentioned, it lays the required foundation to build an Islamic theory of IR. Among its contributions are its perception of Islamic history and its reflection on world history. It presents the values approach and introduces a different conceptualization of the relationship between religion and politics examining how they could overlap. In this context, values become inseparable from politics. The ICP introduces *Umma* as a new level of analysis that goes beyond the narrow scope of nation- state. It reflects a different episteme and proposes a research agenda that is being advanced by scholars who believe in the ‘Islamization of knowledge’.

Yet, the ICP lacks the empirical referent and its implications. The main ideas and principles that the ICP promotes derive from the sacred sources and Islamic history; however, it does not have empirical implications. The ICP extends on the role that an Islamic state should be playing and pursuing. However and in reality, Islamic states do not comply with that conception of the state and there is no Islamic state that

takes such theory as a model to pursue or follow. Some of the generic rules and concepts introduced by the ICP are ambiguous, such as *Al-Wala' wal Al-Bara'*, especially that the Islamic states – states whose majority of population are Muslims – do not adhere to any of those concepts.

The ICP addresses questions of the past more than questions of the future. It tackles the Islamic history; addresses issues as the rise and fall of *Ummam* and civilizations and explains the reasons behind the deterioration of the Islamic world. However, it does not suggest how Muslims can overcome such deterioration, regain their unity or achieve the so-called Islamic idealism that the paradigm is promoting. The main challenge that faces the ICP is that the set of principles, values, and Islamic idealism that the paradigm is introducing do not have any empirical referent. Muslims are unable to reach the Islamic idealism and this makes the ICP lose a great deal of its credibility.

#### **D. Future research prospects:**

The ICP is part of a greater movement that attempts to present an Islamic perspective of social sciences. The main problem that faces theorization from an Islamic perspective, I contend, is that it has a defensive style. In some cases the authors are subjective and they tend to present their ideas to defend and prove the superiority of Islamic civilization and thought. In many cases, when scholars explain Muslims' problems and deterioration, they blame the West – more specifically Western occupation – for the deterioration and the fragmentation that the Islamic world suffers from. This was obvious in the historical analysis that the ICP presented especially the last volume that tackled the status of the Islamic states after the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate. The negative impact of the Western occupation is undeniable.



Nevertheless, scholars need to proceed beyond that fact and focus their research on why Muslims could not achieve the Islamic ideal and how such a goal could be fulfilled.

Theorizing from an Islamic perspective has another challenge as well. The sources of theorization are mainly Islamic thought or history and fundamental sources as *Qur'an* and *Sunna*, while the latter are sacred, the former that are to be open to interpretation and improvements are considered in many cases sacred. The revisionist approach that scholars of ICP are using to revisit and address Islamic heritage and thought are not revolutionizing, in many cases scholars end up concurring and taking the same stances that were promoted centuries ago. Surprisingly, scholars of ICP are promoting principles that do not help to improve Muslims' reality as *Baraa'*.

IRT has voids that were repeatedly discussed and tackled by IR scholars. The Western centrism of the discipline cannot be tamed without introducing fresh non-Western contributions to IR. However, the non-Western contributions are in many cases, especially the ICP, still in the making process and they speak only to their own reality. Accordingly, theorization from non-Western perspectives is seen as ethnocentric and promoting specificities.

However, for IR discipline to claim universality, it has to open up to non-Western perspectives and theory. A dialogue should be initiated among both perspectives, and scholars have to think about possibilities of integration between Western and non-Western perspectives to make the discipline truly pluralistic. Hence, the problem that remain unsolved which the challenges that scholars should tackle are how to integrate non-Western perspectives in the discipline, and how to present a non-Western perspective that can account for Western and non-Western realities.

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