

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: GLOBAL ISLAM IN THE AGE OF CIVIL SOCIETY: TRANSNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY, RELIGION, AND POWER

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This dissertation examines the instrumental benefits of civil society discourse for Muslim civil society organizations and their pursuit of conservative agendas. Since early 1990, informal religious communities in the Muslim world have been reestablishing themselves as formal NGOs at unprecedented rates. Additionally, they are joining forces and forming transnational coalitions. The constituents' goals of religious support and solidarity remain unchanged in terms of their commitment to conservative and religious norms. By contrast, existing transnational civil society literature is dominated with assumptions of liberal and secular agendas. Yet, despite the seemingly inherent contradiction, the members of these faith-based organizations and coalitions persistently position themselves within the sphere of civil society. This dissertation problematizes this conflict and asks: Why are the previously informal Islamist networks adopting the discourse of civil society, transforming into formal NGOs, and establishing transnational coalitions?

In this study, I examine one of the largest Muslim NGO coalitions to date - the Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World (UNIW). With its 193 member NGOs from 46 countries, the UNIW aims to consolidate faith-based Muslim NGOs and to coordinate member actions for the welfare of Muslim communities around the world.

Based on fieldwork conducted in Turkey, Germany, the U.S., Malaysia and Cambodia, I employ qualitative and ethnographic methods and draw on diverse sources of data including in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis.

My findings suggest that framing this transnational religious solidarity project as a transnational civil society network provides Islamist groups additional channels of power. Specifically, previously informal communities find opportunities to increase their social capital through membership in a transnational coalition, engage in mutually profitable relationships with states, and claim legitimacy as global political actors. The empirical findings of the dissertation challenge several assumptions of the constructivist and sociological institutionalist literature. These perspectives' contributions to the study of transnational advocacy networks, international NGOs, and transnational NGO coalitions have prioritized ideational and normative concerns over instrumental and interest-based motivations in transnational non-state actor politics. In this dissertation I argue that ideational motivations of transnational non-state actors regularly intersect with instrumental concerns. By demonstrating the instrumental motivations of norm-oriented networks, this dissertation moves beyond the instrumental/ideational divide that permeates the literature on transnational non-state actors.

GLOBAL ISLAM IN THE AGE OF CIVIL SOCIETY:
TRANSNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY, RELIGION, AND POWER

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	VII
LIST OF ACRONYMS	VIII
NOTE ON SPELLINGS AND TRANSLITERATION	X
CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	7
1.2 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS	8
1.3 TOWARDS AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE ANALYSIS	11
1.4 DISSERTATION OVERVIEW	15
CHAPTER 2	
TRANSNATIONAL POLITICS AND ITS ACTORS: THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS	20
2.1 TRANSNATIONALISM AND NON-STATE ACTORS	22
2.1.1 SOCIOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONALISM AND CONSTRUCTIVISM	23
2.1.2 GLOBAL / TRANSNATIONAL NON-STATE POLITICS	32
2.1.3 TRANSNATIONAL NON-STATE ACTORS	35
2.1.4 POWER OF NORMS AND INTERESTS	41
2.2 ANALYTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THEORY	44
2.2.1 OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES	44
2.2.2 FRAMING	47
2.3 CONCLUSION	51
CHAPTER 3	
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	56
3.1 GENERAL METHODOLOGY	56
3.2 RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND DATA COLLECTION	57
3.2.1 INTERVIEWS: TURKEY, GERMANY, THE UNITED STATES	57
3.2.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND FOCUS GROUPS: MALAYSIA AND CAMBODIA	60
3.2.3 DOCUMENT REVIEW AND ANALYSIS	64
3.3 PROBLEMS AND VIRTUES OF THE DATA	65
3.3.1 SAMPLING CONSIDERATIONS	66
3.3.2 LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS	69
3.4 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS	70
3.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS	72

CHAPTER 4	FROM LOCAL CHARITIES TO TRANSNATIONAL COALITIONS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF ISLAMIC NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	77
4.1	TWO TRIGGERS: WARS IN AFGHANISTAN AND BOSNIA	78
4.2	CONTEMPORARY NGOS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD	81
4.3	TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES AMONG MUSLIM FAITH-BASED NGOS	86
4.4	CONCLUSION	90
CHAPTER 5	<i>"IT'S NOT A HOBBY, IT'S RELIGIOUS DUTY":</i> THE UNION OF THE NGOS OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD	93
SECTION I: THE UNION OF THE NGOS OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD		
5.1	HISTORY AND MISSION	94
5.2	ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	97
5.3	UNIW'S MEMBER NGOS	99
SECTION II: MUSLIM NGOS AS FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS		
5.4	HUMANITARIANISM, SOCIAL AID AND FAITH	103
5.5	ORPHAN CARE PROGRAMS	107
5.6	FAMILY, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN	109
5.7	RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	112
5.8	DEVELOPMENT	114
5.9	CONCLUSION	117
CHAPTER 6	<i>"CIVIL SOCIETY IS THE RISING CURRENCY IN POLITICS TODAY":</i> DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY FRAMEWORK	120
SECTION I: CIVIL SOCIETY		
6.1	CIVIL SOCIETY: AN AMBIGUOUS CONCEPT	122
6.2	CIVIL SOCIETY AND ISLAM	128
SECTION II: UNIW AND CIVIL SOCIETY		
6.3	UNIW'S CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY	138
6.4	THE CACHET OF CIVIL SOCIETY	143
6.5	TRANSNATIONAL DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY FRAMEWORK	147
6.5.1	LEGITIMACY	148
6.5.2	RESONANCE	152
6.5.3	PUBLIC VISIBILITY	154
6.6	CONCLUSION	157

CHAPTER 7	<i>“THE EPICENTER OF GLOBAL ISLAM”:</i>	
	<u>GEOPOLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES</u>	160
7.1	ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT	161
7.2	TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AND NEO-OTTOMANISM	164
7.3	UNIW: SOFT POWER INSTRUMENT TO TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY	170
	7.3.1 CASE STUDY I: TYING AFRICA TO TURKEY THROUGH HUMANITARIAN WORK	172
	7.3.2 CASE STUDY II: POLITICS OF SOFT POWER: ISRAELI – PALESTINIAN CONFLICT	179
7.4	CONCLUSION	186
CHAPTER 8	STAKEHOLDERS AND SHAREHOLDERS:	
	<u>INSTITUTIONAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES</u>	189
8.1	LEVERAGE, LEGITIMACY AND THE BOOMERANG EFFECT	192
8.2	INFORMATION SHARING	195
8.3	INCREASING VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS	199
8.4	THE MARKETPLACE OF TRANSNATIONAL ADVOCACY: WHO DESERVES THE SPOTLIGHT?	200
	8.4.1 CASE STUDY: EAST TURKISTAN CONFLICT	203
8.5	CONCLUSION	213
CHAPTER 9	<u>CONCLUSION</u>	215
9.1	OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS	215
9.2	THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY	221
9.3	EMERGING QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	223
APPENDICIES		
APPENDIX A:	COMPLETE LIST OF UNIW’S MEMBER NGOS (BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN)	226
APPENDIX B:	UNIW’S COUNCIL MEETINGS (BY LOCATION AND DATE)	232
APPENDIX C:	ISLAMIC RELIEF ORPHAN WELFARE PROJECTS	233
APPENDIX D:	INTERVIEW GUIDE	235
APPENDIX E:	CODE CHART	236
BIBLIOGRAPHY		238

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 3.1: DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVIEWS (BY COUNTRY)	59
TABLE 3.2: DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES (BY TIMELINE AND LOCATION)	65
TABLE 4.1: LARGEST TRANSNATIONAL MUSLIM NGOS BASED IN UK AND USA	84
TABLE 5.1: UNIW'S COMMISSIONS (BY CHAIRING NGO AND NUMBER OF MEMBERS)	98
TABLE 5.2: UNIW'S MEMBER NGOS (BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN)	100
TABLE 5.3: COUNTRIES AND REGIONS INCLUDED IN IHH'S RAMADAN PROJECT	119

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
AMA	American Muslim Alliance
AMC	American Muslim Council
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CMIA	Cambodia Muslim Intellectual Alliance
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DITIB	Turkish-Islamische Union
EMF	Etudiants Musulmans de France
FAIR	The Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism
FAVDO	The Federation of African Voluntary Development Organizations
FIFS	United Islamic Communities in Sweden
FNMF	National Federation of the Muslims of France
IARA	Islamic African Relief Agency
ICC	The Islamic Coordination Council
ICVA	The International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IHH	The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief
IICO	International Islamic Charitable Organizations
IIRO	International Islamic Relief Organization
IIROSA	International Islamic Relief Organization of Saudi Arabia
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ISRA	Islamic Relief Agency
MCB	The Muslim Council of Britain
MPAC	Muslim Public Affairs Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference

TGTV	Turkey Voluntary Organizations Foundation
TIKA	The Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	The United National High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIW	Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World
UOCII	Union of Islamic Communities in Italy
UOIF	The Union of the Islamic Organizations in France
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAMY	World Assembly of Muslim Youth
WHO	World Health Organization
WIM	World Islamic Mission
WTO	World Trade Organization
WUC	World Uyghur Congress
WYFC	Women, Family and Youth Commission

Note on spellings and transliteration

I transliterated the Arabic terms in this dissertation using a slightly modified version of the system used by the International Journal of Middle East Studies. I wrote the non-English words in the most familiar form, to the extent possible, for example: Qur'an, hadith, waqf, sadaqa. In the interests of simplicity and accessibility, I used the transliterations of Arabic words without diacritics above and below the letters. However, I retained the 'ayn character (').

I italicized only the first occurrence of a foreign word. I provided short translations in parenthesis. I also explained some words in the footnotes in cases where more detail was needed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Civil society is the rising currency today. If we are to be taken seriously, if the voice of the Muslim world is going to be heard in international platforms, we have to be civil society organizations and networks. Who listens community leaders, let alone religious figures at the UN anymore?¹

The quote above is typical of what I heard repeatedly throughout the fieldwork between 2008 and 2011, studying one of the largest Islamic NGO coalitions: the Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World. UNIW is a transnational network of Muslim NGOs from all corners of the globe. Its foremost concern is the “dispersed, disintegrated, and poverty stricken” state of the *Umma* – the global Muslim community. According to its leaders, the only way to help serve Islam’s “revival, welfare and future” is to unite Muslim populations around the world by consolidating Muslim NGOs under one roof.

Launched in 2005 in Turkey, UNIW today has 193 member NGOs from 46 countries. All members of the UNIW are faith-based organizations: they were founded by Muslims, their mission statements explicitly identify Islamic doctrine or tradition as their ideological framework, their agendas focus on the mobilization of Muslim populations, and their activities are exclusively aimed at Muslim persons or groups. The members of UNIW mostly work in humanitarian relief, social aid, development, education, and religious socialization. UNIW, as an umbrella organization, facilitates communication, interaction, and information flow among its members; monitors crisis regions in the ‘Islamic World’, raises awareness about the

¹ Interviewee 7, (UNIW Deputy Secretary General), personal interview by author, September 4, 2009.

issues of Muslim populations around the globe; and mobilizes its members towards collective solutions.

During the initial stages of the project, I endlessly surveyed the academic literature and policy reports about Islamic organizations and networks; read UNIW's annual reports and bulletins; analyzed the UNIW's member NGOs' mission statements and project descriptions. The prevalence of references to Islam, and the overwhelming emphasis on religious solidarity in all of these documents led me to the assumption that this dissertation's center of analysis would be the role of religion in transnational Muslim NGO networks. This assumption was not unwarranted: The integration of faith into development and humanitarian sectors is indeed a growing field in the academic literature and development practice since mid-1990s.

I went on the first phase of my fieldwork in June-August 2008 with a clear focus on the role of religious faith. For three months, I asked my interviewees questions probing how they put religious faith into practice in their projects. My interview subjects did talk about Islam and used a religious framework to explain their missions, projects, and goals. Yet, religious faith did not appear as UNIW's organizing principle. I returned from that first trip confused and frustrated. As I kept transcribing the interviews, I was struck by UNIW members' insistence on framing this global religious solidarity project as a civil society initiative. The interviewees talked frequently about the importance of civil society in contemporary politics: How "civil society is the rising currency in world politics today." It was during the later stages of the fieldwork when I realized that this is a story about civil society rather than religion.

UNIW is a faith-based Muslim NGO coalition that is motivated by religious normative goals. UNIW's and its member NGOs' leaders, members and volunteers are driven by the goal of global religious solidarity. UNIW is not different than previous Islamic networks and alliances in its emphasis on Islamic consolidation through religious revival. However, they are strikingly different than their predecessors as they forcefully emphasize their civil society character. UNIW's leaders assert that the coalition is 'the first *global Islamic civil society coalition*' rather than a global religious solidarity network. The leaders of UNIW's member NGOs argue that they are *civil society organizations* and not religious communitarian movements. This prompts the central question of this dissertation: Why are the previously informal Islamist groups transforming into formal NGOs and establishing formal coalitions? More specifically, why does UNIW, effectively a religious solidarity alliance, adopt the discourse and organizational structures of the civil society framework?

I demonstrate in this dissertation that this is a strategic decision. I argue that the civil society identity and discourse provide these groups additional channels of power by increasing their social and organizational capital, by opening inroads to mutually beneficial relationships with states and governments, and by allowing them to claim legitimacy as political actors in the transnational political sphere. The empirical findings of the dissertation challenge several assumptions of the constructivist and sociological institutionalist literature. Both perspectives have been prolific in demonstrating the ways in which ideational factors such as norms, values, and beliefs supersede interest-based concerns in the formation and sustenance of transnational

non-state actors. While I do not subscribe to the purely interest-based perspective of realism, I argue that ideational motivations of transnational non-state actors regularly intersect with instrumental concerns. By demonstrating the instrumental motivations of norm-oriented networks, this dissertation moves beyond the instrumental/ideational divide that permeates the literature on transnational non-state actors.

Background of the debate: Is it... or isn't it?

“But all they do is service work; are they even civil society?” is the question I heard most frequently over the last two years anytime I discussed my work in academic circles. Herein lies the assumption of the dominant perspectives on civil society that the primary task of civil society is political advocacy. Emerging in the late 1970s and 1980s as an agent of resistance to the totalitarian regimes in Latin America and Eastern Europe, this perspective conceptualizes civil society as an autonomous platform that is independent from the state, and in search of democratic and long-term solutions to social problems. A la Vaclav Havel, the proponents of this perspective assume that civil society is a sphere of action that restrains state power, safeguards individual rights and freedoms, and struggles to materialize active citizenship.

“Are Islam and civil society even compatible?” is the question UNIW executives hear most frequently anytime they claim their identity as civil society actors. Herein lies the second assumption of civil society perspectives pertinent to this study: that the idea of an Islamic civil society is an oxymoron because Islam has a totalistic set of beliefs and values which does not allow pluralism, liberalism, and self-autonomy.

According to this perspective, civil society is a ‘Western dream’ (Mardin 2006) that emerged from the particular historical and political conditions of Western Europe, and thus, has little or no analytical utility in in the Muslim world (Monshipouri 1997: 57). Rooted in the essentialist assumptions of Orientalist scholarship, this perspective considers Islam as a total way of life that infuses every aspect of daily life, institutions, and organization systems. Therefore, the proponents of this perspective argue that the existence of civil society and its institutional arrangements in an Islamic society is impossible. How legitimate are these questions?

First, the statement that the majority of UNIW’s member organizations are humanitarian/social aid/development NGOs that mainly work in service provision has a basis. Most organizations run orphan care programs in war zones and poverty stricken areas, distribute food and clothing in crisis regions, establish mobile and temporary soup kitchens, organize fast-breaking dinner deliveries and animal sacrifices, drill wells and canals in water shortage areas, provide religious education to children and teenagers, give educational scholarships, run vocational training programs, and provide health services. Taken together, the largest portion of UNIW’s member base is indeed service provision organizations.

However, the assumption that service work is not political, therefore these organizations cannot be considered civil society actors, does not stand on as firm a ground. Humanitarian action has always been a form of politics for which the *pretense* of being impartial and neutral, therefore non-political was essential (Leader 2000: 3). In the social aid/charity system, the very decision about which population to help, with what kind of projects, funded by whom, involve ideological reasoning and

political strategy for all non-governmental organizations, be it faith-based or non-faith based. UNIW's member organizations are Muslim faith-based NGOs, which are funded by Muslims, helping exclusively Muslim populations with projects whose ideological framework is derived from Islamic doctrine or tradition. Therefore, ideology and politics are involved in every aspect of their practice.

Additionally, the "harmless façade" of humanitarian action allows organizations to maneuver within a wider range of politics. The best example of how humanitarian frame lends itself to effective political action is the May 2010 "Freedom Flotilla" mission where one of UNIW's largest members, a humanitarian relief organization, orchestrated an overt political action against Gaza's blockade by attempting to deliver 10,000 tons of supplies to Palestinians. The very reason why this operation could be launched in the first place was that it was organized by a humanitarian organization delivering humanitarian aid. Yet, it was direct political action in purpose and effect, since the primary goal was to bring the blockade under the spotlight in the international arena.

It should also be noted that while most member organizations of UNIW work in service provision, UNIW itself mobilizes the collective power of its members towards global political advocacy. It works against Islamophobia; monitors the human rights violations in crisis areas such as Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, East Turkistan, and Kashmir among others; raises awareness about the humanitarian conditions of Muslim populations; and mobilizes its members towards solutions. In doing, UNIW acts as a global advocacy group on behalf of Muslim populations around the world.

The ideological commitments of UNIW are evident in its discourse, activities and objectives. Its mission statement has all the components of a successful mobilizing frame: injustice, identity, and agency. Its executives and members argue that due to the subjugating, disintegrating, and exploiting politics of Western hegemony and colonialism, the Muslim World is in ruins today. They claim that the only solution is to mobilize Islamic agency by consolidating the civil initiatives of the Muslim World to speak in one voice. They repeatedly state that they are disillusioned by state-initiated Islamic solidarity projects and that it is only the collective civil stance that can overcome the social, economic, and political infirmities the Muslim world faces. In that sense, the very existence of UNIW is the product of a political stance.

1.1 Research Questions

“Whether Islam and civil society are compatible?”, “Does Islam allow pluralism?”, “Can service organizations be considered civil society actors”, and “Where do we draw the line between overt and covert civil society politics?” are questions that have been discussed at length in the academic literature on Islam, civil society and non-governmental organizations. Yet, I argue that it is an unproductive exercise because these discussions sidestep the key issue that this dissertation tackles: Why do the organizations themselves and the UNIW claim to be civil society actors? Therefore, the central question of this project is:

Why are the previously informal Islamist networks transforming into formal NGOs, and establishing formal coalitions?

More specifically:

1. How do we explain the insistence of UNIW, which is in effect a transnational religious solidarity project, on framing itself as a global civil society initiative?
2. What kind of benefits does the civil society frame provide to UNIW and its member NGOs?
3. How do UNIW and its member NGOs negotiate the religious framework of an Islamic solidarity network and the liberal framework of the civil society discourse?

I argue that the fact that these actors assert their civil society character is more telling than whether or not they fit into the already contested definitions of civil society actors. I demonstrate in this dissertation that framing this transnational religious solidarity project as a transnational civil society initiative provides Islamist groups unprecedented channels of power. The previously informal communities find opportunities to increase their social capital through membership in a transnational coalition, they find access to cooperative relationships with states and governments, and claim legitimacy as global political actors.

1.2 Theoretical Considerations

Here, constructivist scholarship of the international relations literature and sociological institutionalism lend some insights. Both sociological institutionalism and constructivism have been very influential in putting transnational politics and the power of non-state actors under the spotlight. In reaction to the interest-based perspectives in sociology and international relations, sociological institutionalism and constructivism have called attention to the power of culture, norms, global scripts, and identities in transnational politics.

Sociological institutionalism's argument that world cultural principles yield similar forms and structures across the globe is particularly significant in explaining the spread of isomorphic NGO structures in diverse parts of the world irrespective of domestic characteristics. The international development aid system is particularly influential in shifting the emphasis from states to 'civil society'. International policy makers, development agencies and international institutions, such as the European Union, USAID, World Bank, and the British Department for International Development, regularly emphasize strengthening civil society organizations in developing countries to promote political empowerment and democratic consolidation. Yet, they endorse a particular form of civil society composed of non-governmental and non-profit organizations that take over functions hitherto reserved for the state including providing health and education services, instituting income-generating schemes, and creating safety nets to alleviate poverty. Accordingly, these institutions exclusively work with organizations that fit into the Western associational forms (Nelson 2000: 417) or who are "willing to transform themselves to the required format" (Seckinelgin 2000: 373).

This shift in emphasis from states to 'civil society' has resulted in the mushrooming of non-governmental organizations in all corners of the world. These organizations incorporate formal structural elements that are externally legitimated (Meyer and Rowan 1977), take upon similar activities in similar kind of project forms, and become increasingly homogenous in their "structure, culture and output" (DiMaggio & Powell 1991: 64). The majority of UNIW's member organizations are fairly young organizations that caught the NGO wind in 1990s. They model

themselves after the organizations they consider successful; adopt similar projects, strategies, and governance structures; and use identical elements of the civil society discourse such as ‘democracy’, ‘good governance’, and ‘participation’.

The civil society blueprint does not only deliver development aid, but also political legitimacy to both states and non-state actors. The civil society concept has its roots in classical antiquity, yet its meaning and significance have altered depending on historical conditions and the type of political authority (Kaldor 2003: 16). The concept evolved from a rule of law and a state of ‘civility’, to the hegemony of bourgeois rule, to an agent of resistance against totalitarian states, and gained its key role as a guarantor of participatory democracy and active citizenship. Today, it is distinctively characterized as an indispensable ‘third force’ which is able to organize itself, functions outside the state and ensures democratic stability and regime accountability by keeping the state’s operations in check.

Thus, the civil society idea has completed its life-cycle and now is taken for granted as an essential element of any legitimate political regime. Therefore, it is imperative for collective actors to claim that they are civil society organizations in order to claim legitimacy in the political arena. Similarly, it is imperative for country regimes to establish that they have strong and vibrant civil societies. The existence of a perceivable civil society allows regimes to claim legitimate governance rather than unlawful authority. It is not important that most of those regimes in question do not allow any dissidence in politics. Nor does it matter that half of these organizations do not fit into the conventional definitions of civil society. Best expressed by a UNIW

executive: “civil society is the rising currency of politics today”. In other words, if civil society is what is required, civil society is what we have.

Constructivist scholarship in international relations also sheds a light to the global spread of NGOs and UNIW’s self-claimed civil society identity. Constructivist literature’s contributions to the study of transnational advocacy networks, international institutions and global civil society have shifted the focus in transnational politics from states to non-state actors. According to this perspective, the trends in contemporary transnational politics should be analyzed by ideational and normative variables rather than the traditional realist, power-oriented, interest based analysis. An abundance of empirical studies in this vein demonstrated that ideational factors such as norms, ideas, and culture evolve into global structures. These global structures in constructivist terminology, or global scripts in sociological institutionalist terminology, redefine state and actors interests and change policy. In parallel with sociological institutionalism, constructivism considers principled actors such as transnational advocacy networks, international non-governmental organizations, and social movements as the main agents of norm diffusion. Motivated by norms, values and ideas, these transnational non-state actors are effective in promote causes and deploy norms such as human rights, environmental protection, legitimacy of humanitarian intervention, and poverty alleviation as a development strategy among others.

1.3 Towards an Analytical Framework to Guide Analysis

What is evident from the above discussion is that the studies of transnational politics position transnational non-state actors in the category of the

principled/instrumental classification. Rooted in the “ideas versus interests” distinction of the international relations scholarship, this perspective associates transnational civil society, namely advocacy networks and NGO coalitions, with principled beliefs, ideational concerns and values as opposed to instrumentalist concerns and interest-based motivations. Transnational non-state actors are conceptualized as altruistic groups that promote liberal norms and secular values. Moreover, the power of non-state actors over state actions and interests is given disproportionate attention. Numerous empirical works on the power of human rights, environment and social justice activists present an unbalanced view of the actions of transnational non-state actors and their power over state interests.

First of all, in line with the “demise of the nation-state” stance within transnationalism/globalization scholarship, the question is overwhelmingly posed as: How powerful are transnational non-state actors against states? Most empirical work in this field has focused on the impact of transnational non-state actors on states and international institutions. However, a closer look reveals that state/non-state actor relationship has a more complex and interdependent character. First and foremost, we need to turn the question around and ask how states impact the organization and actions of non-state actors. Not only do states enable/constrain the actions of transnational non-state actors, in some cases states and non-state actors engage in mutually beneficial relationships. In the case study of this dissertation, we see that the transnational non-state actor and the state have dovetailing interests. On the one hand, the state facilitates the organization and activities of UNIW. On the other hand, UNIW complements the state identity and its interests. Therefore, by showing how

principled non-state actors and the state regularly interact and mutually benefit from their interdependent relationship, this study moves beyond the ideational/materialist divide.

Second, the rigid separation between value-based and interest-based perspectives clouds the material dimension of the non-state actor sphere in transnational politics. While non-state actors and collective movements are mobilized by norms and values, there are instrumentalist elements that ensure the sustainability of networks. UNIW is a transnational NGO coalition established primarily to promote shared values, worldviews and ideological commitments. The normative drive behind UNIW's formation is global Islamic solidarity. On the other hand, the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the network necessitate an instrumental component. In order to ensure deeper commitment from the members, it acts as an interest group advancing their interests. UNIW's members are stakeholders since they have in common a set of normative values and norms that inform their religious solidarity ideal. But they are also shareholders as their commitment depends on the network's provision of sufficient benefits to outweigh the membership costs. In other words, the network not only engages in an interest-based relationship with the host state, but also with its members. By examining the instrumental as well as normative dimensions of the network, the analytical framework of this study takes on a middle-ground approach in the way of new transnationalism.

Third, the emphasis on secular transnational non-state actor networks that promote liberal norms disregards a considerably large section of transnational civil society: religious networks that promote conservative norms. The constructivist

scholarship has been silent about the non-liberal networks, particularly those that espouse political Islam. At the root of this oversight is the assumption that liberal and Islamist discourses are competing normative claims in world politics. However, non-liberal networks aptly connect the liberal framework of civil society and the conservative framework of religion. While Islamist groups employ religion as a mobilizing frame, they position themselves within the sphere of civil society. They adopt the organizational models of the liberal networks and employ the discursive tools of civil society. They make their conservative claims using the liberal discursive opportunities of civil society and religious freedom. Therefore, a well-rounded analysis of religious solidarity networks necessitates not only an examination of the role of religion as an organizing principle, but also the role of civil society discourse and its organizational models.

The epistemic strategy I choose in building my analytical framework suggests a triangular reasoning. I position my argument as a ‘middle ground’ between the interest-based and value-based positions of the state/non-state actor relationship debate. The logic of triangular reasoning, as Arendt (1972: 12) explains, requires the “enumeration of three options – A, B, C – whereby A and C represent the opposite extremes and B the ‘logical’ middle-of-the-road ‘solution’ of the problem”. Arendt warns against the logical fallacy of this strategy by noting that presenting both A and C as undesirable options, therefore settling on B, restricts the exploration of the multitude of real possibilities.

I employ a triangular reasoning in which A and B positions are constructed in binary oppositions. These binary oppositions appear in various constellations. They

are aligned along a line separating the value-based approach from the interest-based position. I use various combinations of terms to highlight a particular aspect of each position as well as to avoid repetition. I apply instrumental concerns and material motivations in reference to the interest-based position. Conversely, I use ideational concerns and normative motivations in reference to the value-based position throughout the document. However, I do not suggest a rigidly defined B position to settle the debate. Instead, following Arendt's caution, I point to the 'multitude of real possibilities' in which state/non-state actor interaction may take various forms. The versatile 'give-and-take' between these two parties suggests that the 'middle-ground' is not located at an equidistant point. Rather, the frequent overlaps between as well as the malleability of their normative concerns and material motivations, as I demonstrate in the empirical analysis, suggest that the B position shifts depending on the particular conditions of interaction.

1.4 Dissertation Overview

Including the introduction, the dissertation is composed of nine chapters. In the next chapter, I review the transnationalist research agenda within sociological institutionalist and constructivist literatures. Both of these are vast and diverse literatures. Guided by the analytical framework of the study, I primarily discuss these literatures in relation to their perspectives on (1) instrumental (interests) versus ideational (norms) divide, and (2) dynamics of state and transnational non-state actor relationship. I build on insights from works on the non-state actors of transnational politics, namely transnational advocacy networks, international non-governmental organizations, and transnational NGO networks. I argue that while non-state actors

are motivated by value-oriented concerns, instrumental factors play a key role in their emergence, organizational structures, strategies and objectives. In the final section of the chapter, I briefly discuss the opportunity structures and framing concepts of social movements literature. As I point out in the following chapters, UNIW cannot be categorized as a transnational social movement, as it has a formal structure and well-defined organizational boundaries. However, these two concepts of social movements literature are useful tools to identify UNIW's discursive means, ideological motives, and geopolitical and organizational opportunities. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology of the study. It overviews the study design, data gathering and analysis.

Chapter 4 briefly traces the history of humanitarian NGOs in Muslim-majority countries. As described in this chapter, NGO structures, in the Western sense of the term, are fairly recent. The transformation of informal religious communities into formal NGO structures was triggered by two critical events: the Soviet War in Afghanistan in 1980s and the war in Bosnia in the first part of 1990s. Both conflicts were interpreted as acts of aggression against Islamic communities and therefore became catalysts for Islamic mobilization. Islamist groups' works in the refugee camps and in the war-inflicted areas were the training grounds for contemporary Islamic non-governmental organizations. By the mid-1990s, not only faith-based humanitarian and social aid organizations started to mushroom in all corners of the Islamic world, they also started to form transnational networks and alliances.

The Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World (UNIW), as introduced in Chapter 5, is one of the largest and most significant of these transnational NGO networks. In this chapter, I overview UNIW's history, mission, and organizational structure. I

situate the organization within the faith-based organization context, and assess the extent to which UNIW and its member organizations translate religion into practice. Both UNIW and its member organizations are faith-based organizations whose identity and mission are derived from Islamic religion and traditions. In the chapter, I investigate the influence of religious faith in the member organizations' activities, agendas and ideological frameworks. I discuss the role of religion in each issue area in detail; namely humanitarianism, social aid, development, education and socialization.

While UNIW is a transnational faith-based network whose primary goal is to consolidate Islamic solidarity around the world by bringing together Islamic organizations, it does not characterize itself as an Islamic solidarity alliance. As presented above, UNIW defines itself as a "global civil society coalition", "the voice of Islamic civil societies", or "the representative of Muslim civil society in the international arena". In other words, the language of its self-description is infused by notions of the civil society discourse. In Chapter 6, I tackle the explicit references to its civil society character and investigate the reasons why UNIW chooses to adopt a civil society language. In this chapter, I first overview the trajectory of the civil society idea, and I present the Islam and civil society debate. Next, I identify the ways in which civil society framework provides UNIW an invaluable discursive opportunity structure. In light of the arguments of sociological institutionalism, I state that UNIW's discourses, practices and structure are embedded in the prevailing political culture that deems the civil society framework as the most legitimate form of collective action. Thus, UNIW frames itself as a civil society initiative because they

are aware of the norms of contemporary transnational politics. Civil society character allows UNIW to claim legitimacy as a credible political actor. In other words, UNIW employ the organizational models and discursive elements of the civil society framework as instrumental tools.

The next two chapters discuss the geopolitical and organizational opportunity structures that come with the civil society discourse and the NGO format. In Chapter 7, I explore the intersections between Turkish foreign policy strategy and UNIW's mission and ideology. Shaped by the pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party since 2002, Turkey's foreign policy vision seeks to cast Turkey a regional, if not global role by cultivating stronger relationships with its interconnected regions. The proponents of this policy maintain that this venture requires more than geopolitical and economic vigor: Establishing social and cultural ties with these regions is essential. In that respect, UNIW, as a global Muslim NGO network, led by Turkish pro-Islamic NGOs, complements the government's vision to be a leading actor in the region and in the broader Islamic World. Throughout the chapter I present the ways in which UNIW's operations dovetail with the goals of Turkish foreign policy goals. I conclude the chapter with two cases studies that demonstrate how UNIW acts as an ideal soft power instrument for the Turkish government: 1) enhancing economic and political engagements between Turkey and African countries, and 2) playing strategic roles in Turkey's foreign policy position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In Chapter 8, I continue to conduct an instrumental reading of UNIW - this time by analyzing power *within* the network. While UNIW is a value-oriented network, which is inspired by ideational factors, interest-oriented motivations are essential to

its performance and long-term sustenance. Again, UNIW's members are faith-based organizations, which are motivated by religious beliefs and values. Yet, these ideational factors are not sufficient to ensure their commitment to the network. In other words, UNIW's members are simultaneously stake-holders and share-holders. They subscribe to a common set of values, beliefs and ideological commitments, but at the same time, they expect instrumental benefits from their involvement in the network. In the chapter, I identify the expectations of the members in entering the network and the benefits they reap from their involvement. I specifically focus on leverage, legitimacy, boomerang effect, information sharing, and increasing visibility. In the last section of the chapter, I present a case study of the East Turkistan conflict. By analyzing the ways in which the Uyghur groups frame their grievances to match UNIW's ideological interests, I demonstrate that internal workings of transnational non-state groups depend on instrumental factors as much as ideational ones.

In the conclusion chapter I pull together the arguments and analyses of the study and suggest a rethinking of the civil society concept as a global norm. Considering the elasticity of the ways in which the civil society concept is used and reused, I discuss the usefulness of the term. Should we discard it altogether? I conclude that the empirical findings of this study alone are proof that the concept still holds currency. It is a legitimizing and leveraging tool for groups that are in the peripheries of global politics. Finally, I raise some new questions that emerged out of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2
TRANSNATIONAL POLITICS AND ITS ACTORS:
THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Since the mid-1990s, a renewed interest in transnationalism has emerged in international relations, political science and sociology disciplines. The transnationalist research agenda put transnational networks, global/transnational civil society, transnational social movements and world polity on the academic map. Despite their differences, these diverse literatures all made the common point that transnational non-state actors play a prominent role in world politics.

The transnationalist research program is intrinsically linked to broader discussions of the constructivist and sociological institutionalist scholarship in its emphasis on the power of ideas, norms, and identities. As opposed to interest-based perspectives, these two parallel scholarships prioritize the ideational and normative concerns over material and interest-based ones. Sociological institutionalism proposes that world-cultural principles and norms produce actor identities and interests; constructivism follows suit by arguing that non-state actors are primarily motivated by these ideational factors rather than instrumental ones.

The ideational/material divide that defines these paradigms is the theoretical basis of this dissertation. In this project, I reassess the principled transnational non-state actors with regards to normative and instrumental concerns. Not subscribing to a rational-choice perspective, I argue that norm-motivated non-state actors' instrumentalist motivations are critical to their survival and performance.

In order to evaluate this argument, I dissect its theoretical components that are spread across multiple disciplines and scholarly literatures. Each of these theoretical schools is vast and multilayered. My objective here is not to write a genealogy of each field but to pull together the links as pertinent to the case. In the first section, I review the norms and interests discussion within sociological institutionalism and the constructivist turn in international relations theory. Next, I move on to examine transnational non-state actors and collective action; namely transnational advocacy networks, international NGOs and NGO networks. In the second section, I briefly introduce social movements literature's opportunity structures and framing concepts in order to apply them as analytical tools. In the final section, I connect the links and flesh out this project's analytical framework to guide analysis.

The organization of theoretical debates throughout the dissertation's chapters reflects the analytical framework of the study. The project puts forward a three-tiered analysis: (1) the instrumental/ideational divide, (2) the use of civil society framework's ideational tools in instrumental ways, and (3) the demonstration of this argument in the case of UNIW.

The theoretical foundations of the study rest on the tension between instrumental and ideational motivations of non-state actors. This tension is debated most specifically in the constructivist and institutionalist literatures of international relations and sociology. I elaborate on the 'norms versus interests' debate by discussing these two main fields in this chapter.

Within that framework, the project focuses on the ways in which non-state actors utilize the ideational tools of the civil society discourse towards their instrumental

goals. In that sense, civil society theory serves as a second-level empirical case for the overarching theoretical discussion of ideational/instrumental motivations of non-state actors. Therefore, rather than grouping all theoretical debates in this chapter, I cover the civil society theory separately in Chapter 6.

Only on the third-tier, I analyze the specific case of UNIW and demonstrate the instrumental benefits of framing a transnational solidarity project as a transnational civil society initiative. In the remainder of the chapters, I delineate the material outcomes of this strategy; namely increasing social capital, instituting cooperative relationships with states and governments, and claiming legitimacy in global politics.

2.1 TRANSNATIONALISM AND NON-STATE ACTORS

Transnational politics has garnered attention within sociology, political science and international relations disciplines recently but the idea of transnationalism and non-state actors is not new. The paradigm shift in the study of transnational actors emerged in early 1970s as a reaction to the rigidity and state-centrism of the (neo)realist paradigm² in international relations. Nye and Keohane's (1971) seminal work on transnational relations presented an alternative perspective by introducing non-state actors and transnational relations as powerful actors. In their view, states are not the only actors in world politics: non-state actors, that is "any somewhat autonomous individual or organization that controls substantial resources and participated in political relationships with other actors across state lines" (Nye and Keohane 1971: xxi), play critical roles in transnational politics.

² The realist approach assumed that states are the only significant actors in world politics; world politics are dictated by competitive self-interests; and state ideologies are dictated by national security and material interests. World politics, according to the realist ideal type, is composed of pure interstate relations dominated by zero-sum security conflict.

Nye and Keohane's world politics paradigm has redefined the transnational politics research agenda by shifting the focus from unitary states and their relations towards nonstate actors' resources and interactions. While Nye and Keohane's work triggered an interest in political sociology and international relations fields, the subsequent research wave restricted its empirical focus to the political economy of transnationalism (Tarrow 2001: 4). Studies about non-state actors focused on multinational corporations (Gilpin 1971, 1975), expansion of powerful complexes of governmental and business organizations leading world capitalism, and resistance to transnational economic penetration (Arrighi and Silver 1984, Walton 1989).

In 1980s and 1990s, the study of transnational politics took a turn away from political economy towards the ideational and normative analysis of cross-border non-state actors. Particularly the end of Cold War steered the attention of international relations and political science scholars from structuralist theories such as realism and state-centered institutionalism towards domestic politics and transnational relations (Risse 2002: 258). Constructivism in political science and institutionalism in sociology have put the social and ideational aspects of transnational life under spotlight.

2.1.1 Sociological Institutionalism and Constructivism: The Power of Norms

Sociological institutionalism and constructivism opened a new path towards the study of transnational politics and the power of non-state actors. In contradiction to the interest-based perspectives in sociology and international relations,³ sociological

³ In international relations, the (neo)realist approach takes the interest-oriented actors to its center, and explains international politics in terms of power and national interest. Realism considers the world as an anarchic terrain that is manipulated by states that seek to maximize their power and interests. For

institutionalism and constructivism push toward a culture and norm centered perspective. Interest-based approaches conceptualize international politics as a domain populated by actors who act solely on their instrumentally rational pursuit of fixed interests. Sociological institutionalism and constructivism, on the other hand, bring culture and norms into the discussion. Sociological institutionalism challenges previous approaches' notion of purposive actors with its "constituted" actors. For the world society theorists, actors' identities and interests are not exogenous but constructed by world-cultural conceptions. In other words, actors' collective identities, interests, roles and subjective selves are defined and shaped by global scripts. Constructivism shares sociological institutionalism's emphasis on the role of ideas, knowledge and culture. Constructivists conceptualize these ideational elements as 'norms' and argue that norms shape state identity and interests.

Sociological institutionalism and constructivism are not only relevant because of their contributions to the interests versus ideas debate, which lies at the heart of this project, but also because both perspectives propelled an interest in transnational non-state actors. According to both perspectives, these non-state actors - professions, epistemic communities, international nongovernmental organizations, and transnational advocacy networks – are conduits of world cultural principles/norms.

states, power involves military capability and economic resources, and national interests are contained in wealth and security. (Neo)liberalism's assumptions are not entirely different. It still takes states as the key actors that seek to maximize their wealth and explains transnational cooperation among states as one of strategic, interest-driven moves. Interest-based theoretical perspectives of the international system analysis have their counterparts in sociology as well. For instance, state-competition theory (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985; Goldstone 1991; Skocpol 1979; Tilly 1975, 1992) explains transnational structures by military power of states. Similarly, world-system theory (Wallerstein 1974, 1979; Chase-Dunn and Grimes 1995) reduces the mechanisms of transnational contention to economic competition between capitalist powers.

Both sociological institutionalism and constructivism are multifaceted perspectives with diverse empirical interests. In the remainder of this section I will discuss their contributions in relation to their respective takes on: (1) state versus transnational non-state actor dynamics, and (2) materialist (interests) / ideational (values) divide.

2.1.1.1 Sociological Institutionalism

Sociological institutionalism, particularly, posed a direct challenge to the materialist assumptions of prevailing approaches by introducing the roles of norms and culture at a global level. The emphasis on ideational factors influenced international relations and political sciences disciplines, which resulted in the constructivist turn in the study of international politics.

Sociological institutionalist research has produced an extensive body of literature about nation-states, individuals, and organizational structures across the globe. The starting point of the sociological institutionalist research is the empirical observation that modern state structures and their policy domains are strikingly similar to each other despite the differences in socioeconomic conditions, country resources, cultures and local task demands. Sociological institutionalists explain this commonality by the pervasiveness of a world society/polity⁴ that is based on Western cultural standards of rationality. They maintain that social structures and social actors are embedded in

⁴ The differences between world society and world polity have not been clearly defined in sociological institutionalist theory. In fact, the two terms have been used interchangeably to a large extent. Thomas (2009: 117) addresses this conceptual ambiguity by stating that world society, world polity and world culture “are not three systems, levels, or spheres; rather, they are *concepts* each of which points to or foregrounds certain aspects of the world.” According to this framework, *world polity* refers to the patterns and sources of authority and political action, *world culture* denotes ontological and moral schema, and *world society* covers the properties of a stateless society (Thomas 2009: 119).

these widespread norms and meaning sets. Thus, nation-states are not simply actors within the world culture; they are embedded in and produced by that world polity and culture. One step further, organizations are embedded in national institutional environments that are the products of world polity (Jepperson 2001: 3). Following this reasoning to its micro implications, individual agency is directed by the norms of institutional cultural environments rather than self-interest.

Sociological institutionalists, then, could argue that the sprawling world culture produces similar forms and structures across the globe, which they labeled isomorphism. The sociological institutionalist research program was very prolific in mapping isomorphism in state structures, policy domains, and organizations. Extensive research has documented isomorphism in areas as diverse as education⁵ (Meyer and Hannan 1979; Meyer, Ramirez, and Boli-Bennett 1977; Ramirez and Rubinson 1979; Meyer and Ramirez 1981), welfare policies (Strang and Chang 1993), population control programs (Barrett and Frank 1999), environmental policies (Frank 1997, Meyer et al. 1997), science policies (Finnemore 1996), constitutional articulations of citizen rights (Boli 1987). The main thread that ties such diverse empirical domains is the thesis that isomorphic forms and structures proliferate as the world polity/society structuration deepens (Gulmez 2010: 256).

Compared to the actor-centric and power-based theories, sociological institutionalism does not put much emphasis on autonomous and purposive actors and

⁵ The field of education proved to be a very fruitful research area in fleshing out the main tenets of sociological institutionalism in a cross-national capacity. Research established that national systems of education not only expanded cross-nationally, but also, and more importantly, demonstrated surprising similarities irrespective of domestic characteristics (Meyer and Hannan 1979). Educational systems and curricula, in particular, displayed remarkable isomorphism, which supported the pervading world culture thesis (Meyer, Ramirez, and Boli-Bennett 1977; Ramirez and Rubinson 1979; Meyer and Ramirez 1981).

their interests. Instead, it highlights the wider global-institutional environment that produces the actor identities and interests. Sociological institutionalists fall short of specifying the *mechanisms* by which these scripts of global-institutional environments create the actors (Finnemore 1996: 339). Yet, they specify the conduits of world society models and discourses. According to the world society/polity theorists, “epistemic communities”⁶ (professions), advocacy networks, international governmental and nongovernmental organizations propel the diffusion of world-cultural principles and “shape the frames that orient other actors, including states” (Boli and Thomas 1999: 15). International nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), among the conduits of world-cultural models, have received the most attention from world society/polity scholars. INGOs, according to Boli and Thomas (1999: 19), enact, code, modify and propagate world-cultural structures and principles:

“INGOs are loci of transnational contextual knowledge...The INGO context supplies purposes and meanings of action, models for global organizing, forms of discourse and communication, and avenues for influencing states and other actors. The larger cultural reality is translated by individuals into specific forms and actions that reveal broad homologies” (Boli and Thomas 1999: 34).

INGOs, then, are the primary organizational field in which world cultural principles – universalism, individualism, rational voluntaristic authority, progress, and world citizenship – take structural form. In doing, sociological institutionalism

⁶ Epistemic communities are groups of technical specialists who share common causal understandings and policy prescriptions. Haas (1992: 3) defines an epistemic community as “a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular political domain and an authoritative claim to policy- knowledge and an agreement on a “common set of cause and effect relationships” (Haas 1989: 384 n20). Epistemic communities encourage states to act in consistence with norms, beget policy coordination between states, and in some cases change state identities and preferences by advocating the internationalization of new norms. For example Haas (1989) illustrates how the spread of scientific knowledge by epistemic communities has altered states’ interests and persuaded the southern European and North African states to regulate international marine pollution in the Mediterranean Sea.

maintains, INGOs lobby and force states to act on these principles. In that respect, world polity scholars bestow significant power to the world culture and INGOs as its conduits rather than nation-states.⁷

2.1.1.2 Constructivism

Constructivism in international relations complement sociological institutionalism's view on the significance of ideational factors as well as the role of non-state actors in transnational politics. Constructivists replace sociology's *culture* concept with *norms*, and argue that world politics are embedded within a framework of norms and values, which alter the identities and preferences of international actors. Contrary to the previous theories that viewed sovereign states as the single most important actors with material interests, constructivists maintain that state identities and interests are neither exogenous nor determined by domestic politics⁸ but constructed by intersubjective structures⁹ (Wendt 1994: 385). Therefore,

⁷ This is not to say that world polity theorists dismiss the nation-state as a powerful actor. Boli and Thomas (1997: 188) clarify this point: "We think of the operation of the world polity only as a world proto-state. A singular authority structure is lacking, states monopolize the legitimated use of violence, and states jealously guard their sovereignty. Nevertheless, the world as a proto-state has shared cultural categories, principles of authority, and universally constructed individuals who, as world proto-citizens, assume the authority to pursue goals that transcend national and local particularisms."

⁸ From the early 1990s, constructivists have problematized the conceptualization of the nation-state on a wide range of issues including state interests, security, territory, and sovereignty. Katzenstein's (1996) edited book on culture and national security is seminal both in terms of illustrating the arguments of constructivism and questioning the assumptions of security studies. Katzenstein and his collaborators (1996: 4) rejected the realist assumption that states and their interests are given, and argued that cultural-institutional context and the constructed identity of states, governments, and other political actors are the key, yet often overlooked, determinants of national security policies. Following Katzenstein's critique of the core assumptions regarding the study of state, some constructivists problematized international political system's unquestioned basics such as sovereignty and territory. They argued that state sovereignty is not a fact, but a social construct (Walker 1993; Bartelson 1995; Biersteker and Weber 1996). For constructivists, state sovereignty was never a constant of the Westphalian system (Fowler and Bunk 1995; Krasner 1999); it was continuously revised and violated for diverse causes and purposes.

⁹ Constructivist arguments were largely influenced by the structure-agency debates in other social sciences, especially philosophy and sociology. Giddens' structuration theory was a starting point for suggesting the mutually constitutive nature of the state and the international system. Giddens (1984)

constructivists argue, the international system is a constitutive domain, rather than simply a strategic one.¹⁰

Constructivism is not a single unified movement. In fact, constructivists present differences in their arguments and theoretical assumptions.¹¹ Yet they agree on (1) the socially constructed nature of behavior, interests and relationships, and (2) the role of values and ideas in international relations (Wendt 1987, 1992; Kratochwil 1989; Onuf 1989; Katzenstein 1996; Lapid and Kratochwil 1996; Friedman and Starr 1997; Ruggie 1998).

If state identity and interests are not constants, what is it that constructs them? The answer to this question, that it is international norms that shape and define the identities and preferences of states and international actors, is the foremost constructivist argument that opened the intellectual space to discuss the state - transnational non-state actor relationship in international politics.

Constructivism, influenced greatly by sociological institutionalism, employed a sociological approach to bring in the discussion of socially constructed norms and identities to a debate that was largely dominated by interest-based perspectives. While sociological institutionalists call these social and cognitive structures institutions, constructivists refer to them as norms and rules (Finnemore 1996: 326). Norms are

argued that structures (i.e., the rules and conditions that guide social action) do not determine actors' behavior. There is an intersubjective relationship between actors and structures based on shared understanding and meaning. While structures constrain actors, actors in turn transform structures by reflecting and acting on them in new ways. This notion of structuration led Wendt (1992) to argue that the structure of anarchy does not constrain state actors. Anarchy, Wendt states, *'is what states make of it'* because "it can only have meanings attached to it by states in the process of interaction" (Rengger 2000: 85).

¹⁰ Wendt illustrates the constructivist view with the following statement: "500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons because the British are friends and the North Koreans are not" (Wendt 1995: 73). That is to say, it is less the material fact of numbers of nuclear warheads that matter; what matters is how the actors think about each other, i.e. their ideas and beliefs. Material facts enter the picture but they are secondary to ideas.

¹¹ For a review of the constructivist research program see Adler 1997 etc.

broadly defined as “shared (thus social) understandings of standards for behavior” (Klotz 1995: 14). Katzenstein (1996: 5) draws attention to the identity component of norms by defining them as “collective expectations for the proper behavior of actors with a given identity”. Norms are critical to the production and reproduction of identities. They can be “constitutive” in that they create the actor’s identity, thus, interests and actions. They can be “regulative” in that they prescribe and shape the actor’s behavior (Klotz 1995: 14).

Akin to sociological institutionalist research agenda, which emphasizes the significance of global norms and culture in the formation of institutions, constructivists initially focused on demonstrating the significance of norms in comparison to “brute material conditions like biology, geography and technology” (Fearon and Wendt 2002: 57). Also similar to the world polity/culture paradigm, constructivists who worked on the sweeping effectiveness of norms demonstrated that certain norms diffuse and evolve into global structures which in turn shape state and actor interests despite local conditions and task demands.¹²

Constructivists have been prolific in demonstrating the ways in which the global diffusion of norms affect international politics and state behavior¹³ as well as nonstate

¹² International norms were argued to be so potent as to govern the conduct of war and control patterns of violence. For instance, Price (1997) used a Foucauldian genealogy to demonstrate that the prohibition against the use of chemical weapons is a political construct that has evolved throughout the 20th century. Constructivists documented the construction of new international norms and institutions against torture, disappearances, and political killings (Clark 2001), governing the use of landmines (Finemore and Sikkink 1998; Price 1998; Cameron 1998).

¹³ For example, Finemore (1996) suggests that the pervasiveness of international norms result in isomorphism in the science policies of very diverse countries. She argues that international organizations like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) “teach” states to value certain goals and define their interests accordingly. Klotz (1995) poses a similar question: why a number of international organizations and states adopted sanctions against the Apartheid regime in South Africa despite their security and material interests? Klotz answers this question by the strength of a global norm of racial equality. She argues that the rising antiapartheid sentiment, which was embedded in the racial equality norm, compelled nonstate actors such as the

actors (Katzenstein 1996, Cortell and Davis 2001, True and Mintrom 2001). While not all constructivists agree on the importance of non-state actors in the international system, the largest and growing segment of constructivist research agenda prioritizes the role of non-state actors in the creation and international diffusion of norms.¹⁴

Constructivism's focus on the agents of norm diffusion, i.e. norm entrepreneurs, furthered the interest about transnational non-state actors in various disciplines in 1990s. Once the first wave of constructivists established that "norms matter" and that norms have structural effects on state behavior, the next logical step was to identify its agents. Transnational relations, social movements and contentious politics scholars began to examine the emergence and politics of nonstate actors who organized transnationally. In that sense, work on the agency of non-state actors complement the constructivist research program on norms (Pierce 2003: 583).

Scholars in this vein examined networks and coalitions of nonstate actors (Smith et al. 1997; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Gills 2000; O'Brien et al. 2000; Smith and Johnston 2002; Armstrong et al. 2003), transnational human rights and democracy

Organization of African Unity and the United Nations General Assembly to mobilize international public towards sanctioning the apartheid regime. More importantly, the growing tide of antiapartheid sentiment pushed states like the United States and the United Kingdom to act against their security and material interests and join the sanctioning coalition.

¹⁴ Nadelman's work is illustrative of the constructivist research agenda's focus on the relationship between international norms and nonstate actors. Nadelman (1990) puts the global diffusion of norms under the spotlight and traces the historical evolution of particular norms into what he calls "global prohibition regimes". He traces the historical evolution of international norms prohibiting piracy, slavery, international drug trafficking, and trafficking in women and children for purposes of prostitution. These norms have been institutionalized in international law and in the domestic criminal laws of states, thus created global prohibition regimes. Nadelman argues that the conduits of global prohibition regimes are nonstate actors like transnational nongovernmental organizations. Transnational nongovernment organizations act as "transnational moral entrepreneurs" in diffusing norms¹⁴ to a global audience. They "mobilize popular opinion and political support both within their host country and abroad; they stimulate and assist in the creation of like-minded organization in other countries; and they play a significant role in elevating their objective beyond its identification with the national interests of their government". Transnational nongovernmental organizations reach beyond their host countries to appeal to foreign governments and elites.

movements (Risse et al. 1999), global and regional environmental movements (Young 1997; Khagram et al. 2002), and immigrant rights coalitions (Soysal 1995). In the next section, I discuss the work on transnational non-state politics in relation to the purposes of the study. Again, the literature on transnational politics and its non-state actors is a complex and multifaceted one. In the rest of the chapter, I discuss the theoretical and empirical work in this area pertaining to the normative/instrumental divide, as well as the organizational patterns of global/transnational networks, and their relationships with states.

2.1.2 Global/Transnational Non-State Politics

The contributions of sociological institutionalism and constructivism on the cross-border actions and influence of non-state actors have helped set the stage for a thorough study of transnational politics and non-state actors in 1990s. The end of Cold War and the intensification of the globalization process led scholars researching political activism to argue that the framework of politics has shifted away from the sovereign state.¹⁵

Globalization is a multidimensional process, not to mention an overused and underspecified concept. In broad terms, it is a set of contingent economic, political, technological, and social processes and practices that transcends territorial boundaries (Castells 1996; Giddens 1990; Held et al. 1999; Rosenau 2003; Sassen 1998; Scholte 2000). Globalization has rearticulated the structural power and mobility of capital,

¹⁵ Even though arguments about the demise of the territorial/nation-state have been subject to critical debate, it is generally maintained that as a result of the globalization process “territorial location, territorial distance and territorial borders no longer have a determining influence” on social connections (Scholte 1999: 9). In other words, globalization concurrently intensifies and extends “the worldwide social relations which link distant localities” (Giddens 1990).

which in turn increased economic integration and deregulated the trade in goods, services and financial flows. The flow of global capital also facilitated transborder production processes and the globalization of markets. Globalization is also conceptualized as a cultural process, which is marked by an increased flow of ideas, knowledge, experiences and information across international borders. The “interconnecting” nature of global processes decreases the importance of territorial location, distance and borders on social connections (Scholte 1999: 9). Therefore, globalization concurrently intensifies and extends “the worldwide social relations which link distant localities” (Giddens 1990: 64).

Non-profit associations and social movements have been forming network and alliances across borders for almost two centuries (Risse 2002). However, this process has been immensely accelerated thanks to the expansion of technological infrastructure. Increases in the usage of the internet, mobile phones, and landlines have enabled the development of more intense networks and have allowed greater access for groups outside the main centers of international power (Anheier, Glasius, and Kaldor 2001: 6).¹⁶ The informational revolution has strengthened NGOs’ capacity to collect, collate, select, and publicize information on various issues ranging from development disasters, the environment, the effect of World Trade Organization (WTO) policies such as patenting, to human rights violations (Chandoke 2002: 40).

¹⁶ Conversely, it can be argued that while 2 billion people in the world earn less than 2 dollars a day, access to information technologies remain a distant prospect. Whereas estimated internet user population is 78.3% in Canada and the USA , 58.3% in Europe, and 36.2% in Latin America, it is 31.7% in the Middle East, 23.8% in Asia, and 11.4% in Africa. In total, only 30.2% of the world population are Internet users (Internet Usage Statistics, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>, March 2011).

The growing economic, technological and cultural integration of a globalizing world allow domestic civil societies and socio-political movements to organize transnationally. Politics are no longer conceptualized as a nationally bounded activity run by state actors. To the contrary, it is agreed upon that there are new arenas for political action,¹⁷ and that “there are no longer clear distinctions between domestic and global levels of politics” (Khagram et al. 2002: 4).

The amalgamation of politics and the emerging power of the non-state actors led some authors to herald the emergence of a transnational civil society (Florini 2000), global civil society (Anheier et al. 2001; Kaldor 2003; Keane 2003), cosmopolitan society (Delanty 2006), world politics (Lipschutz 1992), international civil society (Colas 2002), and their corresponding notions of global citizenship (Dorsey 1993; Wapner 1995; Falk 1998), as well as global governance (Rosenau 1995; Reinicke 1998; Hewson and Sinclair 1999) and global justice (Falk 2000; Mollendorf 2002).

The scope and definition of each term varies. The scholarly literature on transnational/global political action has problematized its ‘globalness’ (Florini 2000; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith et al. 1997), actors (Kaldor 2003; Tarrow 2001), values and ideology (Colas 2002; Seckinelgin 2002), plurality (Kenny 2003; Pichardo 1997; Scholte 2002), and material resources (Edwards and Hulme 1995; Malhotra 2000; Riddell 1999; Salm 1999). But the common thread is the networks of associational activity and social agency that reach beyond territorial boundaries. This sphere of political activity is “located *between* the family, the state, and the market and operating *beyond* the confines of national societies, polities and economies”

¹⁷ See, for example, Risse-Kappen 1995; Smith, Charfield and Pagnucco 1997; Lipschutz 1992; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Boli and Thomas 1999; Stiles 1998; Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999; Peterson 1992; Florini 2000.

(Anheier, Glasius, and Kaldor 2001: 17). Non-state institutions, organizations and networks cooperate transnationally to advance shared agendas and engage in political activities. The issues that occupy the agenda of global non-state actors include, but are not limited to, “ecological problems, globalizing economy, transborder protection, trade, investment, money and finance, human rights, and civic activism that are directed at global governance agencies like the United Nations, Bretton Woods institutions, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the World Trade Organization (WTO)” (Scholte 1997: 10).

This transnational/global sphere of non-state politics is attributed an *ipso facto* positivity. It is argued to bear the possibility to secure material welfare across the globe, promote civic education, give voice to the marginalized groups, provide a platform for alternative perspectives, increase transparency and accountability, promote legitimation with regard to supranational governance, and consequently enhance social cohesion (Scholte 1997: 25-28). As the transnational non-state political action is posited as the panacea to every problem under the sun, its actors receive an equally over-glorified treatment. The literature assumes that value-oriented, altruistic concerns rather than materialistic ones drive non-states actors. Their normative ideals are overstated at the expense of instrumental motivations. In the next section, I briefly introduce the actors of the transnational non-state politics and elaborate on the normative and instrumental concerns that drive/motivate their actions.

2.1.3 Transnational Non-State Actors

As the boundaries and interdependencies of politics transcend local/national territories toward regional/global spheres, the actors multiply as well. Global and

regional economic and political actors increasingly dominate international politics.¹⁸

The complexity of transnational non-state politics results in disagreements on who exactly are the actors of this burgeoning platform. Yet NGO coalitions, transnational advocacy networks, and transnational social movements appear as the major actors of non-state politics.

NGOs have emerged in the post-World War II context and have proliferated significantly in the last two decades. The term NGO is often used referring to groups providing social welfare services; development support organizations; social action groups struggling for social justice and structural changes; support groups providing legal, research, or communications assistance; and local groups providing social services. The universe of NGOs includes, but is not limited to, charitable, religious, research, human rights, and environmental organizations (Scholte 1997).

¹⁸ The interconnected nature of the globalization process has significant implications on the sovereignty of the nation-state. The nation-state has to share its sovereignty and regulatory functions with several local and global players, including intergovernmental organizations, international and supranational agencies and institutions such as the United Nations, European Union, World Bank, IMF as well as non-state actors and transnational bodies such as multinational corporations, pressure groups and nongovernmental organizations such as Greenpeace or Amnesty International, among many others. Likewise, the sole authority of the nation-state over the citizenship body has been challenged due to the increasing circulation of capital, substantial international migration, rise of transnational organizations, and regional integration. In this sense, as the boundaries of an exhaustive and mutually exclusive citizenship have blurred, taking descent or inhabitation in a well defined territory and defining political community in spatial terms have become more difficult (Hammer 1990, Joppke 1999, Soysal 1994). The appearance of concepts such as transnational society, post-national society, regional society, and global society is a significant indicator of the transformation in the range and content of the contemporary political community. While nation-states are still of key significance, they are no longer the sole actors of the international system. To be sure, these developments have by no means heralded the demise of the nation-state. Nation-states are still of central significance as they continue to legitimize themselves through the implementation of diverse policies over issues such as security, social welfare and environment. As such, nation states become increasingly dependent on global political communities and transnational agencies, and continue to be relatively decisive on domestic regulations at once. Correspondingly, territoriality continues to dominate certain issues such as migration, sense of identity and community, and markets for certain goods (Scholte 1997: 9). Therefore, rather than proclaiming the demise or rise of the nation-state, the argument developed here maintains that states are reconstituting themselves in a political system increasingly populated by global and regional economic, political and cultural players. In other words, the nation-state is becoming a multi-layered and multi-centered component of this transnational mechanism and a major agent of global capitalism (Robinson and Jerry 2000: 184).

There is not an agreement in the literature on how to classify the complex world of non-governmental organizations (Lewis and Wallace 2000; Vakil 1997). For the purposes of this study, I classify the multitude of NGOs in three categories based on their orientation: welfare, development, and advocacy. Welfare oriented NGOs are based on the charity model. They provide medical care, housing, potable water, clothing, food, educational services, and vocational training and humanitarian relief to disaster stricken areas. Development oriented NGOs aim to reduce long-term poverty through capacity building, sustainability and self-sufficiency projects. They provide technical assistance in agriculture, small business development, microcredit programs and income-generating schemes. Welfare and development NGOs take over functions hitherto reserved for the state as they typically act in areas which government action is non-existent or inoperative (Ghils 1992: 421). Advocacy NGOs pursue specific policy goals and make their claims against governments, businesses or other advocacy organizations. They work in areas such as environmental protection, labor, healthcare, religion, democracy and social justice (Prakash and Gugerty 2010: 1-2).

In the last two decades NGOs have taken on a global character as the organizations increasingly began to act internationally. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are “organizations that operate independently of governments, are composed of members from two or more countries, and are organized to advance their members’ international goals and provide services to citizens of other states through routine transactions with states, private actors, and international institutions” (Tarrow 2001: 12). INGOs focus more on pressuring

governments when the legitimacy of their actions is in doubt. They pursue objectives at the transnational level, either for the benefit of their members or for that of individual social groups through economic and social development; assistance to refugees; scientific and technological research; and the dissemination of ideological, cultural and religious ideas.

NGOs have also started to create or join networks and coalitions to pool ideational, strategic and material resources with their like-minded counterparts. NGO coalitions are not new; they formed networks, coalitions and umbrella organizations before the advent of communication technologies. International women's organizations, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, and the World Conservation Unit are only a few of the NGO coalitions that predate the introduction of relatively cheaper communication technologies. As global communications became more affordable in 1990s, the number of such networks and coalitions skyrocketed. Coalitions, such as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the Coalition for an International Criminal Court, and Jubilee 2000, could facilitate information exchange among member NGOs, devise common strategies, pool economic and social capital, and mobilize support (Willets: 2001).

NGOs are also the driving force of transnational advocacy networks. Advocacy networks connect diverse non-state actors – domestic and international NGOs, social movement activists, research and advocacy organizations, international institutions – from different countries by “shared values, a common discourse, and a dense exchange of information and services” (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 2). Values act as the

common denominator for the activists of different countries. In fact, Keck and Sikkink argue, activists are motivated by values rather than material concerns.

Advocacy is the core activity of transnational networks. Organized to promote causes, transnational advocacy networks run campaigns on a wide range of issues. These activists use *information politics* to spread politically useful information to where it will have the most impact, *symbolic politics* to frame issues in a way that create awareness and expand the constituency, *leverage politics* to persuade and mobilize powerful actors and institutions, and *accountability politics* to pressure governments to live up to previously endorsed policies and principles. By promoting interests, running agenda-setting activities, and deploying new norms, transnational advocacy networks force states to accept new norms. They by-pass state authority and establish direct links between domestic and international levels of politics.

Empirical studies in this area have successfully documented transnational non-state actors' role in generating international norms, redefining state interests, shaping the policies of international institutions.

Environmental policy making is one of the biggest issue areas in which transnational non-state actors have been effective. The number of environmental non-state actors has increased dramatically over the last 30 years. They create international awareness about environmental problems, affect legislative process inside the states, lobby for environmental laws, influence international treaties, and pressure states to adopt domestic environmental policies which in turn address international environmental problems (DeSombre 2006: 73-76). Environmental NGOs have indeed become the auxiliaries of international environmental diplomacy

when states cannot operate due to their operational constraints (Princen and Finger 1994). In addition to environmental NGOs, networks of scientists and policy research institutes have politicized environmental issues and have directly influenced world politics with regards to ozone-depleting substances (Litfin 1994). Lipschutz takes the power of non-state actors argument to the next level and heralds the emergence of a global civil society around ecological interdependence. Lipschutz and Conca (1993) state that the traditional authority structure of world politics has deteriorated and governments are ill-equipped to grapple with emergent issues. Instead, they argue, social movements and non-state actor networks “play an increasingly important role – perhaps in concert with the state, perhaps in competition, and perhaps even as an alternative organizing principle for world politics, based on new constitutive rules and institutional forms” (Lipschutz and Conca 1993: 9). Similarly, Wapner (1996) argues that transnational environmental NGOs practice world civic politics outside the standard state centric channels. By creating international ecological sensibility, framing environmental problems in political terms, and creating links between local, national and international levels of action, environmental NGOs construct a global civil society, or a ‘slice of associational life that exists above the individual and below the state, and across national boundaries’ (Wapner 1996: 4).

Domestic and institutional effects of international human rights norms have proved to be another productive issue area to analyze transnational non-state actor and state relationship (Brysk 2000; Klotz 1995; Cook 1996; Korey 1998; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse et al. 1999). Keck and Sikkink (1998) developed a complex model of norm diffusion – the boomerang pattern – by which domestic human rights

groups, who are denied access to political processes at home, appeal to transnational actors and publicize information about human rights violations. In cooperation with transnational actors, human rights groups are able to generate bilateral pressure from key states or multilateral pressure through international human rights mechanisms. The complex relationship between the domestic actors, the repressive state and external mobilization was later developed into the ‘spiral model’ which identified the multiple phases and tactical concessions of the process (Risse and Sikkink 1999).

2.1.4 Power of Norms and Interests

Located in the constructivist tradition, Keck and Sikkink’s interpretation of transnational advocacy networks prioritize normative goals over materialist ones. In fact, an overwhelming majority of the literature on transnational non-state actors, including the global/transnational civil society literature, transnational advocacy networks literature and the NGO literature among others, stress the actors’ principled beliefs and values and discount their instrumental concerns. Non-governmental organizations do not pursue material gains per se, as they are by definition non-profit seeking entities. However, many organizations and networks still have instrumental concerns.

First, their organizational forms require a certain set of instrumental considerations. Most non-governmental organizations stem from loosely organized social movements. In their evolution to non-governmental organizations and coalitions, the formerly volatile and informal groups adopt bureaucratized organizational structures (Kriesberg 1997: 12). They have permanent members, offices and administrative staff. NGOs, which establish international chapters or

coalitions, also have headquarters, development offices and committees, and governing bodies. Some organizations such as Oxfam and Amnesty International have multimillion-dollar budgets and employ hundreds of field officers and staff members (Fisher 1997: 447). In that sense, although non-governmental organizations are readily assumed to be operating on principled beliefs rather than material interests, in operation they act like firms or businesses (Sell and Prakash 2004).

Second, attaining the ideational goals require instrumental use of strategies, leverage politics, and tactical cooperation with government agencies, international organizations, and in some cases, states. In order to influence policy or state behavior and to advance their causes, organizations seek access to power through cooperation, and compromise with likeminded counterparts, and adjust their organizational structures accordingly. For instance, small NGOs with limited power and resources adjust their goals and agendas in order to fit with those of international NGOs or larger NGO coalitions. NGOs' strategies and structures also depend on the type and capacity of their resources (Gamson 1975; McCarth and Zald 1977). In crude economic terms, NGOs have to strategize their economic, political and social capital in order to gain increasing returns to scale. They choose the issues they want to advance and the tactics they employ strategically. Organizations also consider their members' and donors' political reservations and expectations when deciding which tactics to pursue and which issues to agitate for. This is particularly critical for development NGOs. In general, donors want a large part or preferably all of their donations to be used in projects and "not on overhead or on something as amorphous as 'advocacy' even if this produces tangible results in the long-run" (Khan et al 2009,

6). The result-oriented expectations of donors force development NGOs to pursue short-term projects that deliver immediate results rather than long-term ones, which would ensure long-term self-sustainability.

To sum up, while non-state actors are motivated by value-oriented concerns, instrumental factors play a key role in their emergence, organizational structures, strategies and objectives. In social movement terms, non-state actors make strategic use of opportunity structures to gain power, attain their goals, and sustain mobilization. Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World (UNIW) is a transnational NGO coalition established primarily to promote shared values, worldviews and ideological commitments. The normative drive behind UNIW's formation is global Islamic solidarity. However, while it is a religious solidarity organization directly guided by normative/ideational concerns, it would be a mistake to frame it as a solely value-oriented network. UNIW is no different than any other network or coalition in terms of its instrumental concerns. A richer analysis is only possible if we consider the ideational and material resources available to UNIW. To that end, in the next section, I briefly introduce social movement literature's opportunity structures and framing concepts.

2.2 ANALYTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THEORY

UNIW is by no means a transnational social movement. Transnational social movements are the most rare of the transnational action forms. Social movements require higher levels of density, cohesion and coordination. Social movements are dynamic and hard to control (Tarrow 1998); they engage in contentious politics, frequently use protests and disruptive action, and threaten social order (Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002: 8). Most distinctively, transnational social movements are *informal* networks that link various actors across borders. As opposed to UNIW's formal membership system and well-defined organizational boundaries, transnational social movements are loose networks of actors who assume a shared collective identity and solidarity across borders despite infrequent and limited personal interaction. In that sense, UNIW does not fit into the description of a transnational social movement in the collective action taxonomy. While this study is not an analysis of UNIW as a transnational social movement, the contributions of the social movement literature in providing the analytical tools to theorize means, motives and opportunities are indispensable to the study of any collective action form. In this study, I borrow two key concepts from social movement theory: (1) opportunity structures, and (2) framing.

2.2.1 Opportunity Structures

That "social movements do not operate in a vacuum" is almost a platitude within the social movement literature. Mobilization of any collective action depends on multiple external factors: level of grievances, access to resources, and the availability of mobilizing structures. Perhaps the most important of these exogenous factors are

those that restrict or enhance the likelihood of mobilization, and determine the choice of claims, strategies and actions. This set of external constraining or permitting factors make up the ‘opportunity structures’ within which a collective movement maneuvers.

While movement scholars have produced a large body of work on opportunity and constraint structures, until recently they have restricted their analytical scope to domestic institutions and processes. Most research on opportunity structures sought to explain the cause/effect relationship between institutional and political change in a national system and opportunities for mobilization (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1989). Furthermore, the majority of North American social movement theory in the 1990s has disproportionately focused on domestic *political* factors. Among the most widely employed dimensions of domestic political opportunity structures were the openness of the institutionalized political system, shifts in political alignments, stability of elite coalition, availability of elite allies, and the nature of state repression (Tarrow 1998).

Opportunity structures, then, are the possibilities and obstacles presented by specific political and social structures of a particular political system. The globalization process, on the other hand, has linked international and domestic politics in complex ways. As the links between states, non-state actors, and international institutions integrated,¹⁹ domestic movements found opportunities to build transnational alliances. These new transnational opportunity structures

¹⁹ Tarrow (2005: 7) argues the integration increases “horizontal density of relations across states, governmental officials, and nonstate actors”. It also increases “vertical links among the subnational, national, and international levels”. Finally, it enhances “formal and informal structures that invite transnational activism and facilitate the formation of networks of nonstate, state, and international actors.” These three trends create complex vertical and horizontal relationships within institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank; regional alliances like the European Union, and NAFTA; and informal networks among capitalists, NGOs and advocacy networks; and in transnational systems of migration, crime, and religious activism.

transformed the way in which activist groups wage political struggles. For instance, international institutions create additional political spaces for non-state actors to organize and mobilize (Tarrow 2005: 26-7). Also, transnational social movement organizations offer activists opportunities to establish and formalize their ties (Smith 2005). The participation of transnational organizations, networks, and coalitions in international institutions creates further transnational opportunity structures (Sikkink 2005: 156).

Domestic or transnational in scope, most research in this field focuses on the structural and political aspects of opportunity structures. Yet, the new political spaces opened by transnationalism also brought about an interest in the nonstructural dimensions of opportunity structures in social movement research. Before the “cultural turn” in social movement analysis, theorists had explored nonstructural elements such as ideologies (Noonan 1995); changes in the prevailing cultural climate (Brand 1990); the availability of innovative master frames (McAdam 1996: 25); and moral visions, cognitive understandings, and emotions (Goodwin and Jasper 1996). In line with the analytical focus of collective action frame perspective, theorists separated “objective structural opportunities from the subjective cultural framing of those opportunities” (Polletta 2004: 165).

A broader perspective on the role of cultural processes in collective action developed parallel to the cultural turn in social movement theory. Ferree et al. (2002) proposed the concept of “discursive opportunity structures” to refer to the ideational resources that constrain and enable particular discourses at a given time. These nonstructural resources include elements such as cultural context, mass media norms,

interpretive packages, metaphors and symbols. Discursive opportunity structures enable social movement groups to frame and strategize their efforts within the contours of discursive politics. As part of the broader political opportunity structure, the discursive opportunity structure encompasses “the framework of ideas and meaning-making institutions” (Ferree 2002: 62).

“Worldviews and values, and the more specific norms, ways of thinking, practices, resources, and rules that support them, provide a pool of potential legitimating devices for particular ways of framing an issue and justifying one’s position on it. They offer discursive opportunities as rivals compete in linking their framing of an issue with broader cultural symbols, themes, and narratives.” (Ferree et. al. 2002: 70)

This meaning-making process has institutional implications. Organizational actors that have relatively “regularized access to the political-legal system” (Ferree et al. 2002: 70), seize advantages by promoting particular frames in public discourse. Transnational networks cast a wider net and employ discursive politics on a global level. Uninhibited by the relatively consistent and restricted discursive opportunities of a national system, transnational non-state actors enjoy the latitude to choose the most fitting symbolic, cultural, and ideational resources to frame their claims and strategize action.

2.2.2 Framing

Meaning making and interpretive efforts by social movement activists is a critical dimension of discursive opportunity structures. Social movement activists develop and employ collective action frames to define the issues with which they are concerned (Snow and Benford 1992; Jasper 1997; Oliver and Johnston 2000; Westby 2002). Collective action frames are “action oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that

inspire and legitimate social movement activities and campaigns” (Snow and Benford 2000: 611). Social movement activists construct frames by using the available elements of the “cultural toolkit” (Swidler 1986). Metaphors, symbols, and themes of the larger cultural system help activists shape ideas and meanings, and interpret events and occurrences. By framing issues and events in particular ways, movements legitimate their actions, generate support, mobilize potential adherents, and demobilize antagonists (Benford and Snow 2000: 613). In sum, then, collective action frames help movement activists to define issues in particular ways to articulate grievances, identify sources of injustice, propose solutions and alternative modes of action, and motivate collective mobilization.

Collective action frames can be broken down into three principle components: injustice, identity and agency (Gamson 1992). The injustice component refers to the conditions and actions that create harm and suffering for those represented by the social movement. The identity component identifies those who are responsible for these conditions (they) and those who are affected (us). It provides the latter group a collective vision of itself. The agency component conveys the consciousness that movement participants can alter the conditions to which they are subject by “defining them as potential agents of their own history” (Gamson 1992: 7).

Collective action frames are not the sum of “individual attitudes and perceptions but also the outcome of negotiating shared meaning” (Gamson 1992: 111). In other words, frames are generated through “active, ongoing, and continuously evolving” (Snow and Oliver 1995: 587) processes. Throughout this dynamic process, social movements select certain elements from the cultural toolkit, highlight some issues

and ignore others in order to generate frames to mobilize participants. One of the frame development processes is the *discursive* one. By articulating and amplifying particular issues, events and experiences, social movement entrepreneurs offer a new perspective, vision, or interpretative schemata. The selective adoption of particular issues, events, or beliefs is a *strategic* process in that it is “deliberative, utilitarian, and goal-directed” (Benford and Snow 2000:624). Social movement activists develop frames to recruit new members, mobilize adherents, and acquire new resources. Social movements package and repackage events and issues in order to present alternative ways of interpreting reality, so framing is also a *contested* process. Since social movements are not centralized and homogenous entities, different parties within a movement may experience disputes about how to frame issues in the most advantageous way. Framing disputes also occur externally. Opponents challenge the movement’s frame and counterframe the issues to weaken the latter’s position.

Most of the framing literature has focused on national contexts (McCarthy 1997; Smith 2002). Creating a widely embraced frame on a national scale is a challenging effort for social movements. Undertaking such an effort on a transnational scale is “far more lengthy, extensive, and multifaceted” (Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco 1997: 245). Transnational framing provides dispersed actors a common ground to act collectively. It “links grievances at various local and national levels with each other in such a way as to promote shared actions and interpretations of social and political problems” (Olesen 2006: 181). Tarrow (2005: 60) defines global/transnational framing as “the use of external symbols to orient local or national claims”. Transnational movements aim to create frames that resonate in diverse cultures and

contexts. By extrapolating Snow and his collaborators' (1986: 497 - 475) proposed frame alignment typology, one can identify four mechanisms by which transnational social movements construct broader frames. First mechanism, *frame bridging*, links two ideologically compatible but structurally separate frames that refer to a particular issue. Second mechanism, *frame amplification*, refers to the clarification and invigoration of an existing values or beliefs to connect the issue to people's lives. Third mechanism, *frame extension*, is broadening the frame to make the message salient to potential participants. The forth and most ambitious mechanism, *frame transformation*, refers to a general reframing effort by which old ideas, values and meanings are replaced by new ones.

Framing is directly linked to broader opportunity structures such as political environment and institutional resources. The success of any social movement depends on the available organizational resources in order to successfully frame their issues and to form strategic alliances between groups. As mentioned above, while UNIW is not a social movement, its use of civil society discourse and religious solidarity ideal can be understood through the lens of opportunity structures and framing. The next section pulls together the theories and concepts discussed above to explain the analytical framework with which I analyze UNIW's organization, discourse and resources.

2.3 Conclusion

As emphasized above, UNIW is not a social movement as it has a more formal, united and structured organizational model. Thus, treating it as a social movement restricts the scope of analysis. For example, its intra-organizational dynamics and its interrelationship with states and governments open up particularly productive analytical paths. These paths would not be as accessible from a strictly social movement perspective. Nonetheless, social movement scholarship's analytical contributions such as framing and opportunity structures lend themselves as useful devices throughout the analysis. In the remainder of the document, I borrow Adamson's (2005) three types of systemic-level opportunity structures to organize the argument: 1) discursive opportunity structures, 2) geopolitical opportunity structures, and 3) institutional opportunity structures.

Discursive opportunity structure framework helps me analyze the ways in which UNIW employs a civil society discourse as an instrumental tool to achieve its normative goal of global Islamic solidarity. Discursive opportunity structures help norm-motivated groups to frame their causes and strategize their actions in line with the resonant political discourses. They allow activists to "reinterpret, reformulate, rethink, and rewrite the norms and practices" (Katzenstein 1998: 17). UNIW's stated objective is to ensure global Islamic solidarity and as a coalition of Muslim faith-based NGOs, it could define itself as a religious solidarity alliance. Yet, as UNIW's representatives frequently repeat, it identifies with civil society actors and defines itself as a *global Muslim civil society network*. It does so because UNIW's leaders are aware that in order to be taken seriously as legitimate political actors, and

consequently attain their stated goals, they have to frame their mission and identity within the contours of the civil society discourse. This is especially imperative in the post-9/11 politics where any Islamic alliance is met with skepticism among the international public. Intergovernmental organizations choose to cooperate exclusively with organizations that fit into the Western associational forms. International media is more receptive to statements from civil society organizations rather than informal religious networks. Channels to state access is more open to particular forms of civil society; namely non-governmental and non-profit organizations. Country regimes, which claim to have legitimate governance in the international politics, are eager to announce that they have strong and vibrant civil societies. In other words, civil society provides opportunity structures to non-state actors as well as states on multiple levels.

UNIW, then, uses the discursive opportunity structures of the contemporary transnational politics and employs the civil society framework strategically. In the process, however, it draws selectively from the “normative toolbox and ideational resource pool” (Adamson 2005: 554). In contradiction to the copious empirical cases of constructivist scholarship on transnational non-state actors such as transnational advocacy networks and social movements, UNIW is not a secular network that promotes liberal norms. To the contrary, UNIW is a religious network that espouses conservative norms. Yet, UNIW’s leaders and member NGOs aptly choose the most fitting ideational resources of the liberal toolbox and combine them with conservative norms. They simultaneously employ liberal norms such as human rights, anti-discrimination, and freedom of speech and conservative norms such as

communitarian duty, family loyalty, gender and sexuality. In that sense, UNIW is able to make its conservative claims using the liberal discursive opportunities of civil society.

Next, geopolitical opportunity structures provide an analytical basis to examine UNIW's mutually beneficial relationship with states and governments. As presented in the discussion above, constructivist scholarship downplays the role of state interests and geopolitics (Adamson 2005). To the contrary, it magnifies the power of norm-motivated non-state actors. Accordingly, the empirical work in this field puts an unbalanced emphasis on the impact of transnational non-state actors on states and international institutions. This tendency presents an off-balanced picture of the power of NGOs, INGOs and transnational advocacy networks over states. However, geopolitics and countries' interests provide structural incentives and constraints (Risse 1994). In that sense, the state/non-state actor relationship is a more complex and interdependent one.

The specific case of UNIW is the best example to this argument. As mentioned in the introduction chapter, UNIW is based in Turkey and has received significant support from Turkish government agencies. Both material support and international connections were made available to UNIW by the Turkish government agencies because UNIW dovetails with Turkish government's foreign policy interests. Explained in detail in chapter 7, Turkish government's foreign policy strategy aims to cast Turkey as a regional leader, and possibly a global actor since 2002. Therefore, Turkey's foreign policy vision prioritizes establishing cultural and trade relations with its interconnected regions. Drawing on the religious and cultural bonds through a neo-

Ottomanist policy, Turkey's foreign policy necessitates the services of a soft-power actor; preferably a civil society initiative. UNIW's mission of consolidating global Islamic solidarity and its identity a global civil society actor fit the bill perfectly. The geopolitical interests of the state supply the norm-motivated non-state actor structural incentives and material benefits. In other words, contrary to the constructivist scholarship's assumptions, the transnational non-state actor and the state are engaged in an interdependent and mutually benefiting relationship.

Finally, the concept of institutional opportunity structures is particularly productive is examining the workings of power within the UNIW and the material dimensions of the intra-organizational dynamics. Institutional opportunity structure idea is closely linked to constructivist scholarship on transnational advocacy networks and international nongovernmental organizations as organizational platforms that promote interests, provide leverage to domestic groups to amplify the visibility of their issues, attain ideational and material resources, and influence state practices directly (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). Individual local organizations and groups turn to the institutional opportunity structures that are available to them at the level of transnational non-state politics when domestic regimes are unresponsive and channels of institutional access to states are blocked.

UNIW's member NGOs enter the network because they have similar ideational motivations; they subscribe to UNIW's values, worldviews, and ideological commitments. In other words, they make their commitments based on normative goals. However, this commitment comes with two caveats. One, the sustainability of members' commitments depends on UNIW's ability to offer sufficient benefits to

outweigh the members' investment of time, staff and resources. Members stay committed insofar as they obtain added values from the network, such as leverage, legitimacy, resources, and visibility. Two, UNIW will support the individual NGOs' causes and extend its resources insofar as the NGOs fit with its institutional culture. Therefore, member NGOs which expect UNIW's support, have to frame their causes, organizational identities, and structures to match UNIW's goals, tactics, ethics, culture and organizational structure. In other words, while UNIW is a network that is mobilized by norms and values, there are instrumentalist concerns and power dynamics that underline its sustainability.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Global/transnational processes have become subjects of great interest in social sciences and political philosophy. There is an abundance of theories about global civil society, transnational society, world society, transnational networks and movements. However, much of the literature on global/transnational networks remains theoretical. In Riles' (2000:4) words, scholarly literature on this field "is characterized by the armchair approach to global institutional knowledge".

One undisputable explanation to this tendency in scholarly literature is the obvious logistic and material limitations. Cost and time constraints remain formidable obstacles in front of the study of transnational phenomena. This is especially the case for qualitative research. Second is the problem of 'the analytical case study': Networks are fuzzy, hard to define and circumscribe. The challenge in drawing the boundaries of transnational networks renders actual field research and data collection difficult. Moreover, as discussed above, the blurry lines between domestic and global levels of politics, as well as local and transnational actors, (Khagram et al. 2002) complicates in-depth empirical research.

As a result, majority of research in this area is based on quantitative data. Most sociological institutionalist research, Finnemore and Sikkink (2001: 35) point out:

use quantitative methods to describe overall characteristics of normative or cultural structures and plot change in these over time...These analyses can provide correlative evidence about the timing and patterns of normative change but are less suited to understanding how and why change happens. To accomplish this, constructivists have used a variety of tools to capture intersubjective meanings, including discourse analysis, process tracing, genealogy, structured focused comparisons, interviews, participant observation, and content analysis.

Although I challenge constructivist scholarship's assumptions and arguments on specific theoretical points, I find its methodological recommendations pertinent to the study of UNIW. In order to explain the reasons why informal faith-based groups are establishing formal NGOs and transnational coalitions, I employed a 'multi-year, multi-method, and multi-site approach (Riles 2002). I used qualitative and ethnographic methods and drew on diverse sources of data including in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis. UNIW's sheer size and geographical coverage necessitated a multi-year and multi-site data collection. Throughout the research process I conducted interviews in Turkey, Germany, and the United States. I conducted additional on-site interviews in UNIW's 9th Council Meeting in Malaysia and observed UNIW's fieldwork in Cambodia. Over the years, I attended several international meetings and conferences organized by UNIW or its member NGOs. I also collected and analyzed numerous written materials published by UNIW and its members. In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss these research procedures and the data collection methods in detail. Next, I describe data management, and analysis. In the final sections of the chapter, I discuss the issues that arose during data collection and define the terms and concepts that are frequently used throughout this document.

3.2 Research Procedures and Data Collection

3.2.1 Interviews: Turkey, Germany, and the United States

Between June 2008 and May 2010, I conducted a total of 52 interviews with people including UNIW's secretary general, executive council members, and

representatives of member NGOs from 22 different countries. Most interviews were conducted on-site. I met the interviewees at their workplaces, NGO offices, the UNIW headquarters in Istanbul, or at international conferences.

The majority of interviewees had university degrees and came from middle to upper-middle class backgrounds in their countries. The age of the interviewees ranged from 19 to 62, with a median of 42. The younger interviewees were in the lower positions in the organizational hierarchy. Tenure of interviewees in their organizations ranged from 1 to 18. Of the 52 interviewees, 18 were women who were the representatives of either women's organizations or the women's branches of larger organizations.

I used semi-structured in-depth interviews, which lasted from 45 minutes to 3 hours. For each interview, I used a guide which covered 1) the history, mission, and projects of the individual member NGO, 2) the member NGO's engagements with UNIW, 3) opinions about the necessity of a transnational Muslim NGO coalition. I sent potential interview subjects the abstract of the project and interview guide by e-mail beforehand. In all the interviews, these points served as opening questions during which interviewees started to feel comfortable in the interview setting and with me. In most cases, interviewees continued to talk about issues pertinent to the study, gave concrete examples, shared personal experiences, and explored nuances.

I taped each interview with the interview subject's consent. The introduction of the tape-recorder resulted in unease at the beginning of each interview without exception. In most cases, after developing some rapport during the opening questions of the interview, the interview subjects started to feel comfortable, 'forgot' about the

tape recorder, and the interaction became normal. None of the interview subjects refused to be tape recorded, but several interviewees asked me to stop recording at times when they wanted to explain a ‘sensitive’ issue.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Interviews (by Country)

Country	# of Interviews	Country	# of Interviews
Albania	1	Macedonia	1
Bahrein	1	Malaysia	3
Bangladesh	1	Mauritania	1
Cambodia	2	Morocco	1
Cameroon	1	Pakistan	1
East Turkistan	2	Palestine	1
Germany	2	Sri Lanka	1
Indonesia	1	Sudan	1
Iran	1	Syria	1
Kuwait	1	Turkey	25
Lebanon	1	USA	2

Although interviewing is always a conversational process (Guna 1981; Lincoln and Guba 1994), the traditional (sometimes called asymmetrical) methods of interviewing positions the interview subjects as “vessels of answers”. The interviewer’s job in this case is to ask the right questions to reveal information, without allowing her biases to intrude in the process. However, it is impossible for the researcher to strip the interview from the interpersonal dynamics of the process. In fact, treating the interviewee simply as a *repository of knowledge* can hinder the development of rapport.

In order to “incite the respondent’s answers” (Holstein and Gubrium 1995: 123) and build rapport in the process, I used the format and principle of active interviewing. This format enabled me to pay attention to the social context and the

interactional dynamics of the interview. This approach was essential for me to build a sense of trust with my research subjects. As I discuss in detail below, due to the sensitive political nature of the research topic, the research subjects were hesitant in disclosing information during interviews, and even agreeing to meet with me. Therefore, explaining myself, my position, and creating a sense of trust through a conversational process was critical to the progress of the research. Active interviewing format also allows the researcher to challenge the interviewees by pointing out the inconsistencies in their responses. The interviewer and the subject, then, engage in an interactional process, during which they co-construct and negotiate interview responses (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). This technique was especially useful in discussing contested topics like the nature of civil society under authoritarian Islamic regimes. The interviewees' first response to this question was to take defensive positions and list examples of charitable organizations in Islamic tradition. Except for a few tense cases, I asked probing questions about the conditions of authoritarian regimes, the respondent's opinion about the normative functions of civil society, and the dissonance between the conditions of authoritarian regimes and civil society. It was during these conversational, and sometimes uncomfortable, processes that interview subjects reflected on their assumptions, and elaborated on their positions, occasionally diverging from their initial response.

3.2.2 Participant Observation and Focus Groups: Malaysia and Cambodia

In addition to interviewing subjects, I attended meetings and conferences organized by UNIW, and spent extensive time in the offices and headquarters of

member NGOs in order to familiarize myself with UNIW's ideological commitments and its organizational culture. Throughout the research process, I attended several meetings held in Istanbul by UNIW or its Turkish member NGOs. The type, length and scope of the meetings varied considerably. Some were large, three-days long international conferences that were attended by high-profile politicians, diplomats and social movement activists. Others were half-day internal committee meetings where the progress of projects was discussed. I also attended several informal events such as Sunday brunches of women branches of NGOs or alumni functions.

Some of the most informative research opportunities appeared spontaneously. For example, in June 2009 I was at the UNIW headquarters for a prescheduled interview with one executive member. After the interview, the UNIW staff suggested that I stay longer to meet a Syrian NGO member who was visiting the UNIW headquarters later that day. Not only I had a chance to meet the Syrian visitor that day, I also had the opportunity to hang out and have off-the-record conversations with the UNIW staff between meetings. Similarly, I spent the entire day with UNIW's German NGO members when I was visiting them for prescheduled interviews in Cologne, Germany. The spokesperson of one member NGO took me out to lunch with his family and volunteers, and gave me a tour of the Muslim neighborhood in between my appointments. These informal settings were very helpful in erasing the pressure of the formal interview environment and allowing me to probe more freely on issues that were discussed during interviews.

The most fruitful of such informal interactive settings was the two weeks I spent with UNIW's staff, executive committee members and the spokespeople of UNIW's

member NGOs in Malaysia and Cambodia in May 2010. As I discuss in detail in Chapter 5, UNIW holds periodical council meetings every three months in a different country. These meetings are summits intended for member NGOs to convene, review projects and activities of the previous year, discuss new business, and form working relationships. UNIW held its 9th Council Meeting in Malaysia in May 2010. Although I voiced my interest in attending council meetings since my first meeting with the UNIW secretary general in 2008, it was not until 2010 that the UNIW executive committee members were comfortable enough to allow me observe these internal meetings. In November 2009, I contacted the UNIW secretary general about the upcoming council meeting in Malaysia but I did not get the green light until the executive committee discussed my request privately and reached a decision in March 2010.

Attending UNIW's council meeting was a critical turning point in the research because it was at this international summit that I had access to a wide range of UNIW's members. NGO spokespeople from 26 countries attended the council meeting in Kuala Lumpur. The four-day long meeting involved presentations by spokespeople, open discussions about issues and projects, decision-making sessions for further action. On the last day of the meetings, an open to public symposium –the International Symposium on Good Governance in Islamic World- was held with the participation of Malaysian political figures, scholars, and journalists in addition to the council meeting attendees.

UNIW's council meetings are held in a different country each time. Subsequent to the meetings, a select delegation travels to a neighboring country to visit and support

NGOs, to introduce UNIW to state officials and government agencies, and to get information about the conditions of Muslim populations in the country. In the days following the council meetings in Malaysia, I traveled to Cambodia with the UNIW delegation. In Cambodia, the delegation visited the Cambodian Muslim Intellectual Alliance, met with the Cambodian Secretary of State, and visited a Muslim village 50 km outside of Phnom Penh to observe the living conditions of Muslim minority population in Cambodia. UNIW executives allowed me to participate in all meetings in Cambodia so I had the rare opportunity to shadow the UNIW delegation for the duration of their stay. Thanks to my all-access status, I had a chance to observe the decision-making, agenda setting, strategy building and networking processes of the organization in action.

Attending UNIW's formal meetings in Malaysia and Cambodia was very productive to better inform my knowledge of the organizational culture and how various actors interacted within these settings. However, the most important aspect of this field trip was having the opportunity to interact with UNIW members and executive informally. We stayed in the same hotels, ate all meals together, and traveled as a group. In fact, I learned most about the organization and its ideology while 'hanging out' with some of the UNIW executive members in the evenings in the hotel lobby. During these casual conversations, UNIW discussed everything ranging from the humidity in Malaysia to international politics. For example, a key dimension of this dissertation, namely UNIW's close engagements with the Turkish government, emerged during one of these casual conversations with six people from the Turkish delegation late at night at the hotel lobby in Malaysia. An offhand

question I asked to UNIW's secretary general sparked a heated debate in the group about the role of the pro-Islamic AKP government in Turkey on UNIW's success. After twenty minutes of circumventing the issue, one member put it bluntly: "Let's be honest. Could we do all this if it was not for the AKP?" Although I did not record and quote the conversations in these informal settings due to ethical concerns, information revealed during these encounters was essential in framing the focus of the project.

3.2.3 Document Review and Analysis

Throughout the research process, I collected written material published either by UNIW or by its member NGOs. These published material included periodicals, press releases, bulletins, brochures, mission statements, and reports that address the activities, projects, and opinions of the organizations. Periodicals were particularly essential in gaining insight to the ideological positions of the organizations. Periodical journals and newsletters are mostly circulated within the organization that publishes them. The opinion pieces and essays in these publications take up issues that are debated within the community around the publishing organizations. Therefore, such material revealed insider information and perspectives that were otherwise brushed aside or remained undisclosed in interviews.

Table 3.2: Data Collection Procedures (by timeline and location)

	Research Activity	Procedure	Location	Timeline
Stream 1	Research Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preliminary Approval• Arranging Logistics for Research	Maryland, USA	March /May 2008
Stream 2	Data Collection I	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviews• Document collection• Building initial contacts with the gatekeepers	Istanbul, Turkey	June/August 2008
Stream 3	Data Collection II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviews• Document collection	Cologne, Germany	November 2009
Stream 4	Data Collection III	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional Interviews• Follow-up Interviews	Istanbul, Turkey	December 2009 – January 2010
Stream 5	Data Collection IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviews• Document collection	Washington DC, USA	February 2010
Stream 6	Data Collection V	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviews• Document collection• Participant Observation	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Phnom Penh, Cambodia	May 2010

3.3 Problems and Virtues of the Data

The transnational qualitative methodology of the project presented particular challenges throughout the data collection process. One of the main challenges results from elite interviewing methods. Elites are “a group of individuals, who hold, or have a privileged position in society” (Richards 1996:199) and therefore they can speak on behalf of groups they represent. On the other hand, the very nature of their privileged positions creates a number of operational challenges in data collection. The most significant of these is the issue of access. As Richards (1996: 200) explains, “Sometimes, it is simply not possible to obtain a representative sample, because certain individuals or categories of individuals refuse a request for an interview.” This was definitely the case at the initial stages of the research. The sensitive political

nature of the research topic and my lack of former connections with any religious network made it difficult to secure interviews with UNIW executives at the beginning. My outsider status to the network, and my affiliation with an American university raised concerns in the initial stages of the research. Three NGO spokespeople I contacted for interviews rejected my appointment requests on the spot. UNIW's secretary general was the key *gatekeeper* in the organization. I could get access to him only towards the end of the first phase of data collection. After our initial interview 2008, he was willing to provide me additional connections and facilitate my interaction with other NGO spokespeople and executive committee members through his staff. Once I conducted interviews with the secretary general and other higher-level individuals in the organization, it became easier to get interview appointments with UNIW members on the phone during the second phase of the data collection.

The challenges of data collection did not only stem from the specific issues of elite access. Transnational qualitative research also involves challenges of logistics and language. In the remainder of this section, I describe both in detail and identify the strategies I used to ensure the reliability of data.

3.3.1 Sampling Considerations

As described above, UNIW is one of the largest Islamic NGO coalitions in terms of its geographical scope. While this was one of the critical reasons why I chose UNIW as this dissertation's case study, the very geographical reach of the organization presented unique challenges during data collection. Most importantly, logistical and material limitations prevented me from collecting first-hand data on

UNIW's all 193 members NGOs. In order to improve the coverage of the data, I attended UNIW's international council meetings. These international member summits provided access to a total of 46 NGOs, which constitutes 23.8 % of UNIW's member NGOs. The data fares better in covering the geographical scope of UNIW's membership base. Having the opportunity to conduct face-to-face interviews with NGOs from 22 different countries, I could cover 47.7 % of UNIW's country membership. I remedied the data's partial coverage of UNIW's membership base in two ways: (1) focusing on UNIW's missions, projects, and goals as an umbrella organization, and (2) reflecting on the data collected from 46 NGOs rather than generalizing it to UNIW's entire member base.

This dissertation project analyzes UNIW's objectives and practices as an umbrella organization. Accordingly, the research questions aim to identify the reasons why UNIW's founders and current directors strive to vitalize civil society initiatives in Muslim countries, bring Muslim NGOs under UNIW's umbrella, and most notably, frame this religious solidarity alliance within the discourse and organizational structures of the civil society framework. As such, the dissertation project aims to analyze UNIW as a global Muslim NGO coalition project, rather than the specifics of its individual member organizations. Therefore, I could firmly draw conclusions on UNIW's discourses and practices as an NGO coalition since I had the opportunity to collect data from UNIW's founders and executive members throughout the course of the research.

Conversely, the data does not allow me comment as firmly on UNIW's membership base. As described above, the data covers 23.8% of UNIW member

NGOs and 47.7% of country membership. Broken down to regional membership, some world regions are represented more strongly than others.²⁰ In the few cases in which I discuss member NGOs' discourses and practices, I solely rely on the collected data on the particular NGO rather than generalizing the data to UNIW's entire membership base. In those cases, I specify the particular NGO, the interview subjects' roles in the organization, provide a brief overview of the organization's history, mission, and projects. As a result, certain aspects of the network's ideological concerns and commitments become more salient. For instance, the data on South East Asian, Central Asian, and European NGOs allows me to delve deeper into the grievances of religious minorities in these regions. Similarly, the data on West African and Middle African member NGOs provides detailed information on the pros and cons of humanitarian efforts. The overrepresentation of Turkish member NGOs both in UNIW's membership and in the collected data results in a thorough analysis of the ways in which Turkish member NGOs benefit from the Turkish government's foreign policy vision. On the other hand, insufficient data from the East African, South African and the Arabian Peninsula (except for the data on Kuwaiti and Bahraini member NGOs) hinders analysis on the particular issues, concerns and actions of these regions' NGOs.

²⁰ Data covers 14.3% of Middle Eastern and North African member NGOs, 22.2% of European member NGOs, 16.7% of West African member NGOs, 50% of Middle African member NGOs, 36.7% of South East Asian member NGOs, 66.7% of Central Asian member NGOs, and 100% of North American NGOs. Due to the strong affiliation to Turkish NGOs and executive committee members, ratio of Turkish NGO data is calculated separately. The collected data covers 30.9% of UNIW's Turkish member NGOs.

3.3.2 Language Considerations

The second issue that emerged during the data collection process involves the language in which the interviews are conducted. I interviewed the Turkish members of UNIW in their first-language. The rest of the interviews were conducted in English, which is the interview subjects' second-language. All interview subjects were middle-class professionals who were rather fluent in English and none of them expressed discomfort about the interview language. At the same time, I recognize the potentially limiting nature of having to express multifaceted political opinions in a second language. In order to avoid mistranslations, I only quote comments, which the interview subjects restated and elaborated on.

I also did not include data that might have been potentially mistranslated by a third party. For instance, in the exceptional case of the Syrian NGO interview, I had to use a non-professional translation. The NGO spokesperson spoke French and Arabic, and not English or Turkish. The interview opportunity presented itself spontaneously at the UNIW headquarters therefore I had not had a chance to recruit a professional translator beforehand. A Cameroonian member who spoke Turkish volunteered his services on the spot. Each question and answer underwent translations in multiple languages. Since I cannot trust the quality of translations, I did not include this interview to the data analysis. I use a single quote from this interview in the document, only because it was a typical comment that came up multiple times during the data collection.

3.4 Data Management and Analysis

As mentioned above, one of the main challenges of qualitative research on transnational networks is the problem of the analytical case study. A transnational NGO coalition such as UNIW presents the researcher a vast number of angles and foci to systematize the data collection. In light of my research question, I decided to adopt a two-tiered perspective: 1) data about UNIW across organizations, and 2) in-depth data on the member organizations within the network.

In order to manage, code, and analyze the collected data, I used the qualitative analysis software, QSR NVIVO⁷. NVIVO was allowed efficiency in data management by keeping all transcribed interviews and field notes in one file. Coding is the analytical process of identifying and recording different passages of the text for significant events, experiences, and ideas (Strauss and Corbin 1998). As the advocates of grounded theory suggest (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987), the most appropriate coding approach for qualitative analysis is to employ in vivo coding, using the expressions and phrases from the text as codes. In vivo codes are particularly useful in identifying new variables than adopting constrained literature-based codes (Diamantopoulos and Souchon 1996). While the exploratory nature of all qualitative research in the emergent field of transnational faith-based NGO networks necessitate this coding approach as opposed to a predetermined coding scheme, I did not go into the field without any ideas or preconceptions. Recognizing the impossibility of the *tabula rasa* approach (Gibbs et al. 2002: 62), I paid extra effort to avoid interpretations based on pre-existing theory.

I analyzed the data along the following lines:

- Analysis of the data for certain themes: UNIW's history and mission, UNIW's composition, shared values and ideological commitments across UNIW's members, discrepancies between discourse and practice, opinions about the West/Islam dichotomy, opinions about the normative functions of civil society, state/business/civil society relationship. I recoded the data as new themes and patterns emerged.
- Data were coded for how particular discourses and organizational structures were used to access additional channels of power by attaining legitimacy, public visibility, and resonance.

I started the analysis with *open coding*. Open coding is the labeling of concepts and categories during the early stages of coding. I continued this process until some codes began to stand out as significant and links between codes began to cohere (Benaquisto 2008). NVIVO's code organizing system in a *tree node* structure was particularly useful at this stage to build a hierarchy of concepts and sub-concepts²¹. I then moved on to *axial coding* in order to refine specific concept categories and to present the links between concepts and sub-concepts (Strauss and Corbin 1998). In the last stage of the coding process, *selective coding*, I refined the core categories, identified the conditions and consequences of the core category, and integrated the theoretically constructed codes to in vivo codes.

²¹ For a full list of codes, see Appendix E: Code Chart.

3.5 Definition of Terms

I have discussed the terms below in detail throughout the dissertation. However, given the degree of ambiguity with which many of these terms are often used, I clarify each of them here and provide brief definitions that might help the reader.

Advocacy: All activities designed to influence the decision-making process of an institutional elite or change legislation, policy or practice on behalf of a collective interest. Non-profit advocacy may take the form of conducting research, publicizing issues or policies, lobbying members of decision-making bodies, campaigning to generate public support, and coalition building to mobilize resources towards a common goal.

Community-based organizations: Organizations that are organized at a local level and are representative of a community or a significant segment of a community. Community-based organizations focusing on identifying and addressing community needs such as social, educational, environmental, or public safety services. Their activities depend heavily on voluntary labor and financial support.

Geopolitics/ Geostrategy: Geopolitics refers to the location of the particular country, and the geographic distribution of economic and national resources. Geostrategy is the direction of a state's foreign policy with regards to geopolitical factors. States selectively focus their diplomatic and material resources to specific geographical locations based on territory, location, and potential alliance partners. However, the geostrategy of a state is wider than crude geographical realities of a

region. A state may devise its geostrategy “because of ideological reasons, interest groups, or simply the whim of its leader.” (Grygiel 2006: 22).

International/Multinational/Transnational: The interchangeable use of international, multinational, and transnational often clouds the differences between distinct political spheres. I find Portes’ (2001) classification very useful in distinguishing the terms. In this classification, international activities are conducted by states or nationally based institutions. Multinational activities are carried out by formal institutions whose purpose and interests transcend a single nation-state. Transnational activities on the other hand are initiated and sustained by non-institutional actors across borders.

Islam/Islamism/Muslim/Islamist: Similarly, there is a great deal of confusion about the difference in meaning between these terms. In this dissertation I use these terms in different ways. Islam is a religion with its scriptures, rituals and obligations. Muslims are the adherents of the religion of Islam. Whereas Islam refers to the faith and cultures, Islamist refers to the political ideology based in Islam. In Gole’s (2000:93) terms, Islamism “carries the ideal of changing society as a whole – of Islamization of all spheres of life, ranging from gender relations, private/public boundaries, scientific knowledge, and governance principles”. Islamism, therefore, is a religio-political ideology based in Islamic principles. Muslims who believe that Islam can and should form the bases of political ideology are termed as Islamists.

Muslim World/ Islamic World/ Muslim-majority countries: Muslim World, Islamic World, Islamic geography, Muslim geography are terms that are used frequently both by UNIW’s leaders and its members in reference to the geographical

areas where Muslims live as a majority or minority. I retain terms when paraphrasing the interview subjects' comments. In the rest of the document, I use *Muslim majority countries* to refer to parts of the world in which a substantial Muslim population live even if the degree of attachment to Islam in all these regions is different.

Non-Profit Organizations / Non-Governmental Organizations: Non-profit, or not-for-profit, organizations are self-governing and formalized associational entities that do not pursue self-serving aims. Non-profit organizations do not particularly seek profit-producing goals. Any material gain, such as income or financial surplus, is not shared by members but plowed back into the organization. Similarly, members cannot divide the assets among themselves for personal benefit if the organization ceases to exist. Non-governmental organization is a non-profit group or association that pursue social, cultural, legal, and environmental goals by lobbying, persuasion, or direct action. Salamon and Anheier (1992) identify five common characteristics of NGOs: (1) *formal*, institutionalized with regular meetings; (2) *non-profit distributing*, the financial surplus does not accrue to owners or directors; (3) *self-governing*, able to control and manage its own affairs, (4) *voluntary*, members join by choice, and (5) *private*, independent of institutionalized political structures.

Philanthropy / Charity: While both philanthropy and charity are associated with voluntary giving, they are often defined in contrasts. The two terms are differentiated based on the objectives and reach of voluntary action. The idea of charity has closer ties to the religious tradition of altruism, compassion and empathy. Charitable giving is aimed to relieve immediate suffering. Philanthropy is defined in a more impersonal, institutionalized, and professional approach. Philanthropy refers to “voluntary action

for the public good” (Payton 1988) rather than a spontaneous act of mercy or compassion. In the international non-profit domain, humanitarian relief aid that is transferred to disaster stricken areas is associated with charity, whereas the development aid that aims to implement long-term solutions to systemic problems is associated with philanthropy.

Political entrepreneurs: Individuals possessing power positions or access to institutions who attempt to change the political status quo by persuading others. As such, the term is not limited to individuals who are embedded within the formal political system, such as politicians and bureaucrats. Actors who operate from outside the political system, such as NGO leaders, social movement members, or lobbyists, are also considered political entrepreneurs. Political entrepreneurs promote change not only for ideological reasons, but also for political profit including monetary gain, job security, political support, or public prestige.

Social Mobilization / Community Mobilization: Social mobilization refers to the process, through which social actors organize to identify and pursue collective interests. They raise awareness among social constituencies, articulate interest to governing bodies, and strengthen public support by pooling resources and building solidarity. In the development sector, *social mobilization* is used to cover larger and rapid scale efforts while *community mobilization* is used to refer to spontaneous, grassroots efforts that undertake smaller-scale projects.

Stakeholders: Stakeholders are individuals, communities or organizations that benefit from the activities of a non-governmental organization. Stakeholders often include donors, regulators, board members, staff, and volunteers as well as the NGOs’

beneficiaries. An NGO's accountability and legitimacy depend on the performance monitoring by stakeholders.

Transnational non-state actors: This term covers all non-state actors, including transnational advocacy networks, international non-governmental organizations, and transnational social movements that operate across the globe and form part of politics. Critically, these actors are neither states nor intergovernmental organizations. They operate independently of states, governments and intergovernmental organizations, but they act alongside them, and sometimes collaborate with them.

Transnational politics: The term transnational is used to refer to human activities and social institutions that transcend national borders. Transnational politics is the interchange of ideas, issues and conflicts between actors in two or more countries. The term political does not only refer to matters that concern the state, its governments, and its policies but also formal and informal non-state actors.

Voluntarism: Voluntarism refers to the activity of individuals who offer their time for the benefit of others. Two key components of voluntarism are free will and the absence of monetary gain. In the context of NGOs, members volunteer their time without compulsion and they do not seek compensation for their work.

CHAPTER 4

**FROM LOCAL CHARITIES TO TRANSNATIONAL COALITIONS:
A BRIEF HISTORY OF ISLAMIC NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS**

Associational life has a long history in Muslim societies. Social and personal ties of religious communities have functioned as vivid, informal civic networks for centuries. Guilds, sufi orders,²² religious trusts and foundations enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy and leadership role in communities (Zubaida 2001: 233). Particularly *awqaf* (sing.: waqf), charitable trusts funded by philanthropic endowments, have served as social organizations. “Donated in perpetuity for philanthropic purposes” (Clark 2004: 8), *awqaf* funded the maintenance of mosques or charities such as hospitals, schools, universities, pensions and other works of public utility. Yet, the transformation of Islamic charities into NGOs, in the modern definition of the concept, is a recent one. In the early 1980s, Islamic charities started to transform into formal faith-based NGOs to extend modest social aid and humanitarian relief to cities such as Cairo, Tehran, Algiers, Beirut and Gaza (Ghandour 2003).

It was during the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the war in Bosnia that civic action went through a major transformation. As Muslim countries and communities around the world mobilized to provide humanitarian relief to Afghans under invasion,

²² Sufism dates back almost to the time of the Prophet Muhammad, and it has been present in Muslim societies for more than 12 centuries. It is the inward-looking, mystical or psycho-spiritual dimension of Islam, emphasizing personal and emotional religious experiences. Historically, Sufis were organized into brotherhoods, guilds, or mystical orders, each with its own religious rites, saintly lineage and leadership structure (Green 2012).

the number of humanitarian Muslim NGOs rapidly increased. By mid-1990s, some of the more successful NGOs started to implement international relief programs. As faith-based organizations, which are rooted in Islamic traditions of charity and voluntarism, they refer to Qur'anic texts and hadith²³ to explain their inspiration. Furthermore, they work almost exclusively with Muslim populations, and claim to act on Umma's²⁴ behalf.

In this chapter I trace the evolution of non-governmental organizations from charities to transnational NGO networks in the Muslim world. In the first section, I discuss the transformative effects of the wars in Afghanistan and Bosnia on Islamic charities. In the second section, I overview the contemporary NGO field, specifically focusing on transnational humanitarian/social aid organizations in Muslim countries. In the final section, I take a look at the transnational networks and alliances among Islamic NGOs.

4.1 Two Triggers: Wars in Afghanistan and Bosnia

The Afghan War was the first great cause that mobilized support for Muslims in need by blending 'Islamic relief' and 'Islamic solidarity' (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003). The Islamic organizations that mobilized during the Afghan War operated on an ideal of Islamic solidarity which consisted of three elements: *da'wa* (Islamic call), *jihad* (in the sense of armed support of the Islamic Cause), and *ighatha* (humanitarian relief). The *da'wa* organizations were committed to preaching the message of Allah internationally. Their ideological mission was to spread the call to

²³ The collection of traditions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad that includes his sayings and acts.

²⁴ Global community of believers.

Islam among the Afghan refugees in camps in the outskirts of Peshawar. The jihad organizations were paramilitary groups that directly supported Afghan combatants. The ighatha organizations offered mainly medical services by establishing hospitals and medical clinics, and providing medicines and medical equipment (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003: 71-74). The Afghan War period of Islamic mobilization is marked by the convergence in the missions and actions of these three organization types. ‘Islamic relief’ in this period, “was not merely an action of relief for victims, but a part of a total commitment to the support of a political cause with a strong religious component” (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003: 74). Although all three elements of Islamic solidarity (da’wa, jihad, ighatha) were present in Islamic NGOs’ activities during the Afghan War, the organizations evolved towards professionalization over the years. While some organizations became more politically active, others dropped the da’wa and jihad components and specialized in humanitarian aid (Ghandour 2002, Salih 2004).

The Bosnian conflict (April 1992 – December 1995) became a catalyst for another chapter of Islamic mobilization after the Afghan War. The Bosnian case was critical in mobilizing the Muslims of the Umma as they interpreted the conflict as “an aggression against Islam and the Islamic community” (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003: 128). The support from the Umma came in two major strands: military involvement of foreign combatants and humanitarian aid by Islamic relief organizations.

On the one hand, the *jihadist* interpretation of the Bosnian conflict mobilized foreign groups and volunteers to participate in military combat, similar to the Afghan

War experience. Arab combatants who had taken part in the Afghan War, militants from armed Islamist groups, pro-Iranian combatants and new volunteers flocked to Bosnia to participate in fight to defend Islam and Muslim populations. On the other hand, the Bosnian case was transformative as it gave a considerable boost to the development of Islamic charities. Especially between 1992 and 1993, NGOs from all over the Muslim geography mushroomed in an effort to provide aid to the Bosnian population and raise awareness about the humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict. In addition to many Muslim charities such as Helping Hands and Children's Relief Fund, several transnational organizations thrived during this period. Organizations such as Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief refused to participate in military combat and were emphatic in limiting their activities to humanitarian aid.

The Bosnian case was also momentous in launching projects that later became permanent fixtures to the repertoire of Muslim NGOs of all sizes. Displacement of the Muslim population in Bosnia in order to protect the civilians appeared to be a critical decision for both the Western and Islamic NGOs in this period. The decision was critical because it could possibly contribute to the policy of ethnic cleansing and it could also expose the civilians to the risk of extermination in the process. For the Islamic NGOs, the exodus of Muslim populations would bear the risk of elimination of Islam in Bosnia. Furthermore, relocation would expose Muslim populations to the risk of assimilation in their host countries. Therefore, the Islamic NGOs prioritized two objectives: "taking care of refugees, and keeping Muslim populations inside Bosnia" (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003: 140).

The threat of losing or compromising Islamic identity in Bosnia shaped Islamic NGOs' activities and projects. Such projects, which were developed in order to reinstate the role of Islam among the Bosnian population during this period, were adopted and replicated by Islamic NGOs worldwide thereafter. Specifically the food aid programs during religious festivals became the staples of Muslim NGOs. Throughout the Bosnian crisis, Islamic NGOs organized fast-breaking dinners in refugee camps or in Bosnian towns and villages during Ramadan. The organizations gave away new clothes and presents for the festival following the month of Ramadan. During *Eid al-Adha* (the Festival of Sacrifice), these organizations arranged animal sacrifices and meat deliveries to Bosnian Muslims (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003: 143). In addition to providing humanitarian aid and food deliveries, many of these organizations also supported the local Islamic institutions by developing Islamic educational programs. Islamic NGOs sought paths to re-Islamization of Bosnia by building mosques and Quranic schools, distributing Islamic literature such as "copies of the Quran, small leaflets reproducing suras of the Quran and summarizing the principles of Islam" (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003: 143 - 144).

4.2 Contemporary NGOs in the Muslim World

Most contemporary Muslim humanitarian NGOs trace their origins to mostly amateur field work in Bosnia in the early 1990s. The Bosnian case came to be the training ground for organizations to acquire the skills and proficiency that were extended to other areas in the years to come. Since 1990s, these NGOs have evolved and professionalized. While some organizations kept their militant outlook, most

organizations professionalized their operations with an eye towards efficiency, effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003; Ghandour 2003). Muslim NGOs retained their Islamic identity and references to religious values and obligations while adopting the organizational models of the ‘Western’ aid agencies. They use the same technical-logistical, fundraising, and communication techniques that are used by the larger international aid sector (de Cordier 2009:613).

Larger organizations such as Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid started making their recruitment decisions based on competence, expertise in fields of management and administration, information technology, teaching, social work and professional training. Militant commitment or charitable intentions are no longer enough to be recruited in these organizations (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003: 79). The professional staff, as well as voluntary workers, are educated, middle-class, urban professionals majority of whom are doctors, engineers, and school-teachers (Clark 2004: 11).

Today, there are a wide variety of community-based and transnational Islamic NGOs that are involved in social aid and welfare. They have been especially conspicuous in providing food, clothing and shelter to the poor, sick and disabled; bringing emergency relief to disaster stricken areas; sinking wells in water shortage areas; supporting orphanages, schools, hospitals, and youth centers. Transnational Muslim NGOs serve the victims of natural disasters and wars, sponsor viable economic projects and small businesses that can help the victims find employment and earn a living. While these organizations aim to alleviate poverty and suffering, they do not define poverty only in terms of material needs. Markedly different from

secular humanitarian and development organizations, transnational Muslim NGOs are equally concerned about spiritual needs. According to these organizations, religious ignorance and backwardness, the dissolution of Islamic values, and the dispersion of the global Muslim community are as alarming as material poverty and deprivation. In order to solve the problem of religious deprivation, transnational Muslim organizations work to establish solidarity in the Muslim Umma, address individual Muslims' religious needs by providing religious education, constructing mosques and madrasas, and distributing copies of the Qur'an.

Two of the oldest and largest transnational Muslim NGOs are the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIROSA) and the International Islamic Charitable Organizations (IICO). Both are Gulf-based organizations and their headquarters are in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait respectively. Both organizations provide aid in their home countries but they mostly work transnationally through country offices. For example, the primary recipients of IIROSA's aid are Muslims in Jordan, Sudan, Pakistan, Somalia, Azerbaijan, Yemen, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Ethiopia.²⁵ They run orphan sponsorship, urgent relief, health care, education programs; build mosques, Islamic centers and schools; and provide Qurbani sacrifice and fast breaking aid.

The Islamic traditions of charity form the basis of NGOs' funding. Helping the disadvantaged, such as giving money to the poor or helping someone in distress, is an obligation rather than an individual choice (Krafess 2005: 327). Charitable acts, both as *zakat* (Obligatory alms giving) and as *sadaqa*²⁶ (voluntary almsgiving), are close companions to prayer. *Zakat* is one of the five pillars of Islam and as such it is

²⁵ IIROSA Annual Report 2003/2004.

²⁶ Sadaqa is not an obligation, yet Qur'an recommends voluntary almsgiving to win the favor of God.

incumbent on all Muslims.²⁷ Commanded in the Qur'an, zakat is a system that “organizes the transfer of money from the well-off to the poor and needy” (Krafess 2005: 335). Every Muslim is obligated to donate 2.5% of his/her annual possessions as an act of piety to the poor, the needy, recent converts to Islam, slaves, bankrupts, those who have committed themselves to some act of service or devotion, and to wayfarers (Dean and Khan 1995:198). In Islamic countries, governments are obligated to establish agencies to collect zakat. In Muslim-minority countries, where there is no government or state organization to collect and distribute zakat, Muslim NGOs invite Muslims to make their annual zakat donations to them. Zakat donations constitute Muslim NGOs' primary source of funding in non-Muslim countries (Weiss 2002). Especially in the West, the Muslim diaspora has helped the mushrooming of zakat collecting NGOs. Unlike the first generation Muslim immigrants who overwhelmingly transferred their zakat donations through mosques or philanthropic foundations in their region of origin, later generations increasingly donate their zakat in their countries of residence. Furthermore, most of these organizations accept cash donations in lieu of *Qurbani* (animal sacrifice) offerings. As the younger generations of Muslims lost ties with their countries of origin, Eid and Qurbani donations in cash alongside zakat have become major fundraising channels for Muslim NGOs (de Cordier 2009: 612).

²⁷ The other four fundamental obligations are the declaration of faith (*shahada*), prayer (*salat*), annual fasting during the holy month of Ramadan (*sawm*), and the once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*).

Table 4.1: Largest Transnational Muslim NGOs based in UK and USA

Organization	Origin	Budget (USD)
Islamic Relief	UK	96 million
Muslim Aid	UK	73 million
LIFE for Relief and Development	USA	18 million
Muslim Hands	UK	10.6 million
Interpal	UK	4.2 million
Helping Hand for Relief and Development	USA	4 million
Human Relief Foundation	UK	3.5 million
Human Appeal International	UK	3.2 million

As the Islamic NGOs activities described above demonstrate, the humanitarian aspect of aid and the religious aspect of Umma are interwoven in Islamic relief organizations' discourses and practices. Islamic NGOs' discourses are grounded in religion, as it is evident by their references to "Islamic traditions and concepts such as zakat, sadaqa and hadiths rather than the Millennium Development Goals, the Universal Human Rights Declaration or the Human Development Index" (Petersen 2011: 15). The global Muslim solidarity ideal motivates the organizations and their donors and volunteers to mobilize for Umma's well-being, protection and the advancement of its interests.

The rhetoric of Umma in Islamic movements is not a recent one. Having its roots in the Qur'an, the term has been used in modern Islamic discourse, from the nineteenth-century pan-Islamist movement of Jamal al Din al-Afghani throughout many twentieth century movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood and the Iranian Revolution (Halliday 2002: 21). As a blanket term that covers all countries, regions and societies in which Muslims live as a majority, the idea of Umma assumes a unifying cultural bond among the global community of Muslims, and it has maintained its appeal as a discursive ideal. Although the strong nationalisms of the

20th century have complicated the coexistence of “local” and “global,” the flexibility and expediency of the concept still provide a vision of shared identity and tradition beyond the immediate experiences of Muslim communities. In the words of An-Naim (2007: 25), the imagination and shared identity of Umma is “sufficiently present in the consciousness of present generations of Muslims to be mobilized in support of overlapping national and global citizenship.” Petersen (2011: 139) vividly reports IICO and IIROSA’s leaders’ concerns about the state of the Umma today:

[Umma is under threat] at different levels: from within, by immoral and ignorant Muslims on the one side, and religious extremists and fanatics on the other; and from the outside, by ‘an organized invasion’ of Christian NGOs, trying to take Muslims away from their religion, as well as by ‘baseless allegations’ launched against Muslim NGOs by ‘some people in the West’ in particular after 9/11.

Under attack from all angles, strengthening solidarity among the peoples of the Umma is essential according to transnational Islamic NGOs. Thus, almost all of the organizations are motivated by a religious solidarity ideal and claim to act on *Umma*’s behalf (Benedetti 2006: 856). The solidarity rhetoric presents itself in two ways in the practices of transnational Muslim NGOs. First, NGOs predominantly run their projects in Muslim-majority communities, thus a vast majority of the beneficiaries are Muslims.²⁸ Second, it leads community-based and transnational Islamic organizations to build regional partnerships.

²⁸ While this pattern raises questions regarding the aid organizations’ principle of non-discrimination obligation based on race, faith or nationality; it should be noted that the majority of beneficiaries in the world are Muslim. The concerns about the non-discrimination principle of humanitarian organizations “are more acute in contexts that are either religiously mixed or whose religious identity is low key or nominal – like parts of Africa or Bosnia” (de Cordier 2009:614).

4.3 Transnational Networks and Alliances Among Muslim Faith-Based NGOs

Transnational alliances among Muslim countries are not a new phenomenon. There have been various country level coalitions and intergovernmental organizations, which pool the resources of their member countries, combine efforts, and voice the interests and well-being of their peoples and of all Muslims in the world. The most renowned of intergovernmental Muslim coalitions is the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). OIC is the second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations with the membership of 57 states spread over four continents.²⁹ The representatives of the member countries are heads of States and governments, Kings, and Foreign, Information, Culture, and Tourism ministers. Although OIC works on a global level and represents the global Muslim population in the international arena, it is a coalition of states rather than civil organizations.

In the NGO world, the humanitarian sector has been the most prominent in forming transnational partnerships. The earliest efforts in coordinating humanitarian

²⁹ The Organization was established upon a decision of the Rabat Summit in 1969 following the demolition of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Six months after the event, the First Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers was held in Saudi Arabia during which the OIC General Secretariat was established in order to ensure coordination among member states to strengthen Islamic solidarity; cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural and scientific fields; to safeguard the Holy Places; to eliminate racial discrimination and all forms of colonialism; and to work for the settlement of conflicts and disputes involving member states. The Organization has consultative and cooperative relations with United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations. Every year the United Nations General assembly adopts a resolution on “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference”, and requests the U.N. Secretary General to submit a report in this question. The General Secretariat of the Organization, its affiliated and specialized institutions, and subsidiary bodies have Cooperation Agreements or Protocols of Understanding with several international organizations including the Red Cross, World Health Organization (WHO), World Intellectual Property Organization, UN Development Programme, UN Environment Programme, and UN Population Fund. In addition to the United Nations, organizations such as Non-Aligned Movement, League of Arab States, Organization of African Unity, and Economic Cooperation Organization have observer status with the OIC.

projects date back to the Afghan War. As humanitarian organizations mushroomed in mobilization for the protection of Afghan refugees, there emerged the need for effective aid coordination. An efficient coordinating structure is indispensable to humanitarian aid in order to prevent duplication of aid projects, to improve the implementation of relief efforts, to systematize the information collection on the actual needs and available resources (Strand 2005: 87). One of the earliest of coordinating bodies in the Muslim humanitarian world is the Islamic Coordination Council (ICC). ICC was established in 1986 in North-Eastern Pakistan to bring together NGOs and Red Crescent organizations from Islamic countries. Its aim was to prevent “what they regarded as negative influences on Afghan refugees in Pakistan, on women in particular” (Strand 2005:95) and to provide a more unified Islamic aid system.

One of the motivating factors for Islamic humanitarian organizations to build partnerships is to limit the dominating presence of Christian organizations³⁰ in Muslim majority countries. Alarmed by the proselytizing work of evangelical NGOs within Muslim communities, Islamic organizations aimed to block Western NGOs and “to enable indigenous Islamic NGOs to obtain international recognition and legitimacy, to assert identity, and to acquire knowledge, resources, experience and expertise” (Ghandour 2003: 27). On the other hand, many of the Islamic humanitarian organizations disagree with this position and establish partnerships with Islamic and

³⁰ Ghandour (2002) argues that Christian organizations are usually overlooked when talking about Western NGOs as if the Western NGOs were necessarily secular in nature. Evelyn Bush (2007), in her analysis of the Yearbook of International Organizations and the Human Rights Directory, points out that the classification of religious organizations is distorted in international NGO databases. Yet, Stoddard (2003: 26) states, a quarter of the \$2.5 billion US government funding for relief and development in 2000 went to four NGOs of which two were Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and World Vision, both religious in nature.

non-Islamic relief organizations and institutions (Salih 2002: 169). One of the largest relief organizations, International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), has projects in almost 100 countries. Over the years, it has developed working relationships with Western international aid organizations such as the office of the United National High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Organization of Migration, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Federation of African Voluntary Development Organizations (FAVDO), Oxfam, the Refugee Study Program at Oxford University, the Save the Children Fund, the International NGO Working Group on Women Refugees, and many others.³¹

Muslim umbrella organizations and alliances are not only located in the Muslim-majority countries. Muslim groups have established numerous national and transnational umbrella organizations and alliances to safeguard the interests of their communities in countries where they constitute minority populations.³² As the largest

³¹ It should also be noted that the exclusionary politics within the humanitarian sector is not one-sided. Ghandour (2003: 28) explains the polarization in the humanitarian field: “There is no international forum where Islamic NGOs might expect to meet the major private Western humanitarian agencies. At times of great crisis, the four major secular NGOs, CARE, Save the Children, Oxfam and MSF, tend to take major decisions and decide policy amongst themselves, rather than within international coordination bodies, which are deemed too bureaucratic. Those few coordination bodies that do exist, such as the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) in Geneva, have practically no representation from Islamic NGOs: in 2003, only three of ICVA’s 80-plus membership was recognized Islamic NGOs (IIRO, ISRA/IARA and Human Appeal International)”.

³² In the U.S., American Muslims have established representative bodies, coordinating organizations, and political alliances since 1950s. The earliest of those organizations is the Federation of Islamic Associations, established by Lebanese immigrants in 1953. Keeping its distance to any political or social entity, the FIA focused on preserving the immigrant Muslims’ religious identity, developing a sense of Islamic fellowship, and obtaining equal recognition of the American Muslims in the greater American society (Ghanea Bassiri 1997: 25). Subsequent umbrella organizations and alliances have widened the scope of their motivations and projects. Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) not only fosters unity among Muslim communities by developing educational, social and outreach programs, but also engages in political lobbying and encouraging Muslims to run for electoral office. Similarly, American Muslim Council (AMC), Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), and American Muslim Alliance (AMA) seek to increase the participation of American Muslims in the U.S. political and public policy arenas, to foster grassroots organizations, and to promote an accurate portrayal of

religious minority group in Europe, Muslim groups have established coordinating bodies that are aimed at greater activism and community participation (Mandaville 2003: 138). In U.K., France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Austria, Norway, and Denmark, Muslim communities formed regional, national, and local organizations. Some of these organizations provide cultural, religious, and economic assistance to Muslim communities by linking grassroots organizations, mosques and cultural associations.³³ Others focus specifically on coordinating social aid and humanitarian relief projects.³⁴ There are student federations that are established to represent the voices and interests of Muslim student communities.³⁵ In the wake of September 11, 2001 more umbrella organizations and watch groups were established to fight against Islamophobia and monitor the media to ensure a fair and balanced reporting of Muslims in popular culture.³⁶ While some of these

Muslims in the media (Leonard 2003). Leonard, Karen (2003) "American Muslim Politics: Discourses and Practices" *Ethnicities*, 3(2): 147 – 181.

³³ In the UK, The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) represents over 380 grassroots community organizations, mosques, professional bodies, and cultural associations in England, Wales, and Scotland. www.salaam.co.uk. Union of Islamic Communities in Italy (UCOII) is the main representative body of Muslim communities in Italy. www.islam-ucioi.it. National Federation of the Muslims of France (FNMF) aims to meet the religious, cultural, education, social and humanitarian needs of Muslims in France. The Union of the Islamic Organizations of France (UOIF) trains religious leaders and educated Muslim youths in France. www.uoif-online.com. Turkish-Islamische Union (DITIB) is the largest Muslim non-profit organization in Germany that brings together hundreds of member associations throughout the country. United Islamic Communities in Sweden (FIFS) was created in 1974 in Sweden to support Muslim communities economically and culturally. Islamic Foundation of the Netherlands, the Foundation Islamic Center, Union of Moroccan Muslims Organization, and World Islamic Mission (WIM) control the mosques and cultural centers in the Netherlands.

³⁴ UK Islamic Mission, for example, is a nationwide organization with over 40 branches and Islamic Centers working all over British Isles. It offers a range of services including welfare and relief to individuals and communities. www.ukim.org

³⁵ The Federation of Student Islamic Societies in the UK and Eire is the premier Muslim Student representative body in the United Kingdom and Ireland. www.fosis.demon.co.uk. Etudiants Musulmans de France (EMF) is the umbrella organization for student groups in France. www.emf.asso.fr.

³⁶ For instance, The Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR), the Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPAC) in UK.

organizations are national in scope and representation,³⁷ others act transnationally by offering welfare services and relief assistance to communities outside Europe.

4.4 Conclusion

The case study of this dissertation, the Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World (UNIW), is one of the largest transnational Islamic NGO networks. With its 198 member NGOs countries, it covers forty-eight countries in five continents. But it does not differ from previous transnational Islamic NGO alliances due to its sheer size: it stands out among transnational networks because of its organizational identity and mission.

First, UNIW is not just a coordinating body. Although most of its members work in humanitarian/social aid and religious service provision, UNIW does not characterize itself as an aid network. It does coordinate Islamic humanitarian organizations by facilitating communication and information exchange among its members. However, its stated main objective is to “help serve Islam’s revival, welfare and future.” The humanitarian/social aid provision serves as a means to attain the primary goal of Islamic renaissance through welfare.

Second, although it strives to ensure global religious unity, it does not characterize itself as an Islamic solidarity alliance. Again, ensuring religious solidarity among Muslim peoples is a key goal for UNIW but it defines itself as “the first global Islamic civil society coalition” or “the representative of global Islamic

³⁷ The Islamic Cultural Center in the U.K. acts on behalf of all British Muslims vis-à-vis the British government and local authorities in matters such as health, education and welfare. www.islamicculturalcentre.co.uk

civil society” rather than a religious alliance. In other words, contrary to previous networks and partnerships, UNIW frames its *raison d'être* within a civil society discourse. All mission statements, press releases, and declarations issued by UNIW repeatedly underline the need to revitalize the civil societies of Muslim countries and to bring them together as a united bloc. The self-defined civil society coalition character of UNIW sets it apart from other Islamic alliances.

The next two chapters discuss these two components respectively. I start Chapter 5 with an introduction to UNIW’s history, mission, and organizational structure. In the remainder of the chapter, I discuss the role of religion in the discourses and activities of UNIW and its member NGOs. In Chapter 6, I move on to analyze UNIW’s foremost discursive opportunity structure: civil society. After a discussion of civil society theories as well as the Islam and civil society debate, I focus on UNIW’s interpretation of civil society. Here, I discuss the member organizations’ views of civil society, the ways in which they negotiate the religious and liberal frameworks, as well as the way in which they justify their civil society claims despite the strict political regimes of their home countries.

CHAPTER 5

“IT’S NOT A HOBBY, IT’S RELIGIOUS DUTY”:

THE UNION OF THE NGOS OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD (UNIW)

The previous chapter traced the trajectory of Muslim NGOs from community-level charities to transnational organizations and networks. The Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World (UNIW) is a significant example of such networks. It is a transnational Islamic network whose members are Muslim faith-based non-governmental organizations. Both UNIW and its member NGOs derive their mission and identity from Islamic religion and tradition, and their projects purposely target areas with a strong Islamic presence. While the organizational structures, membership models, funding patterns, and even the individual projects demonstrate isomorphism with their secular counterparts, the frequent emphasis on their religious character prompts the question: How does religion factor in the Muslim faith-based organizations’ identities, missions and modes of operation? How does faith and practice interact? What are the ways in which Muslim faith-based organizations make Islamic religion and traditions relevant to their principles of conduct?

This chapter discusses the UNIW and its member NGOs in detail. I start the chapter with a brief history of the UNIW, its mission, and its organizational structure. Next, I introduce its member organizations and their foremost activity areas. Throughout the chapter, I discuss the extent to which religious discourse is employed in their goals, projects, and organizational identities.

SECTION I: THE UNION OF THE NGOs OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD

5.1 History and Mission

The Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World is one of the largest Muslim faith-based NGO coalitions. It was founded in 2005 at an international meeting held in Istanbul, Turkey. The meeting, “International NGOs of the Islamic World Conference: Research for a New Vision in a Changing World” brought together more than three hundred NGO leaders, academics, and journalists from forty countries. The decision to launch a global NGO coalition was made in the last session of the conference with participants’ votes. Necmi Sadikoglu, Turkey Voluntary Organizations Foundation (TGTV) Chairman of Board of Directors was appointed as UNIW’s General Secretary for the first three year period.

The Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World declares its mission as:

- ensuring a sustainable progress, unity, and coordination among the non-governmental organizations of the Islamic world; contributing to the realization of an environment of justice and peace, and stability in the entire world
- enhancing the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals and communities
- strengthening the civil society based on participatory and pluralistic principles by doing collaborative technical and social activities
- working towards disseminating information about the Islamic culture and values

As mentioned in the previous chapter, UNIW’s main goal is to “help serve Islam’s revival, welfare and future.” Even though their objectives such as enhancing welfare, peace, justice, accountability, freedoms and liberties are comparable to those

of their Western counterparts, the Union and its member organizations specifically work with Muslim populations around the world. For the founders of UNIW and its member NGOs, the religious duty of serving humanity surpasses national boundaries and requires them to serve the Islamic world in general.

It should be noted that neither UNIW nor its member NGOs define the “Islamic World” geographically. Globalization, immigration and deterritorialization have blurred the “connection between a religion, a pristine culture, a specific society and a territory” (Roy 2004: 24). Thus, Islam is no longer ascribed to a specific geography, nor is Umma restricted to national territories. UNIW’s Secretary General, Necmi Sadikoglu, explains the borders of Umma (global community of believers):

All right, but where is exactly the Muslim World? Is it just Muslim countries? No. Muslim world has deepened and extended in terms of geography and demography with the changes after Cold War. Wherever Muslims live, it is called Islamic world from now on.³⁸

The borders of the Islamic World might be blurry to the founders of UNIW, but the state of despair it is in is not. The plight of the Umma is the leading concern for UNIW’s leaders and member NGOs. It is “dispersed, disintegrated, poverty stricken”³⁹ and under Western political and cultural siege. For the Iraqi people the results of the occupation have been abuses, killings, tortures, displacements, and sectarian conflict;⁴⁰ Afghan people have been living in catastrophic situations under US-led occupation following thirty years of successive wars;⁴¹ Kashmiri people’s

³⁸ Necmi Sadikoglu, (UNIW Secretary General), 2010 Introductory Meeting, Ankara, Turkey.

³⁹ Interviewee 7 (UNIW executive committee member), personal interview by author, September 4, 2009.

⁴⁰ Dr. Muthanna Haris al Dhari (Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq, President) Official Visit to UNIW headquarters, 2009, Istanbul.

⁴¹ Muhamad Haroun al Khatibi (Afghanistan Social Reform and Development Society, Foreign Relations Chair), Official Visit to UNIW Headquarters, 2011, Istanbul.

rights are violated;⁴² in Eastern Turkistan Muslims face human rights violations under the Han rule;⁴³ Palestinians live under an unjustified and illegal embargo;⁴⁴ and Muslims living in U.S. and Europe face religious discrimination.⁴⁵ Thus, according to its founders, UNIW's foremost goal is to unite all Muslims to contribute to the solutions:

An independent state of Palestine with its capital city of Quds, an eastern Turkistan free of injustice and oppression, a Kashmir free from sixty years occupation, an Iraq and Afghanistan free from the occupation and chaos and an Islamic World with welfare, peace, stability and development lies in the realization of this vision.⁴⁶

In that, vitalizing and consolidating civil societies of the Islamic World is the key to solving Umma's pressing problems. UNIW leaders assert that civil society is the "rising currency of the century and it is only civil society that can fight against the injustices the Muslim world faces."⁴⁷ NGO leaders argue that civil society organizations are in the unique position of being the most active, dynamic and flexible of social actors in the contemporary world. They maintain that NGOs possess a great deal of political power and can be major forces of mobilization. Thus, they assert that extant NGOs should reorganize, pool their resources, support their local constituencies, and take the lead to overcome the social, economic and political infirmities that make Islamic countries vulnerable to foreign interventions.

⁴² Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, (Kashmiri-American Council Executive Director), Islamic Society of North America 2009 Annual Convention, Washington D.C.

⁴³ Necmi Sadikoglu, (UNIW Secretary General), New Hegira Year Message, 2009, Istanbul.

⁴⁴ Necmi Sadikoglu, (UNIW Secretary General), International Union of Muslim Scholars General Council Press Conference, 2010, Istanbul.

⁴⁵ Necmi Sadikoglu, (UNIW Secretary General), Introductory Meeting, 2010, Ankara.

⁴⁶ Necmi Sadikoglu, (UNIW Secretary General), Pakistan Consultation Meeting, 2010, Istanbul.

⁴⁷ Interviewee 4, (UNIW Executive Committee Member), personal interview by author, June 12, 2008.

5.2 Organizational Structure

UNIW's leaders use the terms alliance, coalition, union, and network interchangeably when referring to the organization but it is officially registered as an umbrella organization: a coalition of independently incorporated NGOs. All of its member organizations have similar interests but they have their own governing boards, funds, and members. UNIW acts as a common platform for its members "to facilitate discussion and debate, to reach common understandings and strategies, and perhaps to manifest collective action on those strategies" (Young 2001: 293).

In 2005 UNIW opened representative branches and country offices. Since 2007, it has been working on projects that support the regional and local organizations, charities, and voluntary organizations and that establish joint working groups.

The organizational structure of UNIW consists of a general assembly, a council, commissions, consultancies, and an advisory board. UNIW facilitates communication, interaction, and information flow among its members through its commissions and its periodical council meetings. UNIW's commissions group member NGOs with similar interests and issue areas. Members of these commissions exchange information and expertise, and develop action plans.

UNIW's council is composed of NGO leaders from twenty countries⁴⁸ and meets every three months in a different country. The meetings are open to all members, and bring together large numbers of member NGOs from neighboring countries for two to four days. A typical council meeting starts with opening speeches by the Secretary General, followed by presentations from commissions and member organizations

⁴⁸ UNIW's council, which has remained intact since its establishment, consists of NGO leaders from twenty Islamic countries: Turkey, Kuwait, Egypt, Malaysia, USA, Sudan, Azerbaijan, Syria, Yemen, UK, Iran, Indonesia, Bosnia, Somali, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Ethiopia, Pakistan and Palestine.

about the state of ongoing or previous projects. In the remainder of the meetings, participants are briefed about financial matters of the Union, official procedures, and upcoming meetings. The most important agenda items of council meetings are the status reports from the poverty and war inflicted regions of the Muslim world. These reports are followed by interactive discussions from the floor during which action plans are debated.

The council meetings are followed by four to seven day visits to a member NGO in a neighboring country. The delegation pays official visits to local or national government authorities, visit the local NGO’s office, and hear briefings about the social, cultural and economic conditions of Muslim populations in that country.

Table 5.1: UNIW’s Commissions (by chairing NGO and number of members)⁴⁹

Commission Title	Commission Chair	# of Members
Culture and Education Commission	Munazzamat al-Da’wa al-Islamiia (Sudan)	17
Financial and Administrative Affairs Commission	The Foundation of Volunteer Organizations of Turkey (Turkey)	6
Research, Development and Scientific Research Commission	Arabian Research Center (Egypt)	11
Human Rights and Freedoms Commission	Jamiyyat al-Islah (Bahrain)	10
Women, Families and Youth Commission	Komite Kemanusiaan (Indonesia)	14
Social – Humanitarian Affairs and Solidarity Commission	Global Peace Mission (Malaysia)	12

⁴⁹ This table is built based on the information from UNIW’s organizational schema.

5.3 UNIW'S Member NGOs

By the end of 2011, UNIW's membership base has reached to 198 non-governmental organizations from forty-eight countries.⁵⁰ Spanning five continents, UNIW demonstrates significant diversity in geographical distribution, areas of work, membership size, funding sources and political influence.⁵¹ There are international relief organizations, local organizations, youth and alumni associations, and human rights and peace organizations within its composition. UNIW's members include international relief organizations, such as Islamic and Muslim Relief based in UK, European Muslim Union based in Germany, the International Islamic Relief Organization based in Saudi Arabia, the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation based in Turkey and the Eurasian International Development Association based in Azerbaijan. There are local organizations, such as the Zam Zam Foundation in Somalia, the Cambodian Muslim Intellectual Alliance, and Al-Awn Development and Relief Association of Ethiopia. There are also youth and alumni associations such as Assembly of Muslim Youth in Saudi Arabia, the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, the National Union of Kuwait Students, and the All Ceylon Young Men's Muslim Association in Sri Lanka. Finally, there are human rights and peace organizations such as the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms based in Yemen, the Global Peace Mission in Malaysia and the Awareness and Consolidation Association in Lebanon. Many of the member organizations are registered with or hold consultative membership to the U.N. Economic and Social

⁵⁰ For a full list of UNIW's member NGOs and their countries of origin, see Appendix A.

⁵¹ Since UNIW is a Turkey based initiative, it has built efficient networks among the Turkish Faith-based organizations. This explains the large number of Turkey based organizations in UNIW's member base. For a detailed analysis of the mutually profitable ties between UNIW, Turkish faith-based NGOs and the Turkish national authorities, see Chapter 7.

Council. Most of the international NGOs in the Union, which work on emergency relief and poverty eradication, cooperate with UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, WAMY, Global Medic, the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid, and Red Cross.

TABLE 5.2: UNIW's MEMBERS (by country of origin)⁵²

Country	# of organizations	Country	# of organizations
Afghanistan	1	Maldives	1
Albania	3	Mongolia	1
Algeria	1	Montenegro	1
Azerbaijan	1	Mauritania	1
Bahrain	2	Morocco	15
Bangladesh	7	Netherlands	1
Bosnia	2	Palestine	3
Britain	2	Pakistan	3
Burkina Faso	2	Russia	1
Cambodia	1	Saudi Arabia	2
Cameroon	1	Seychelles	1
Chad	1	Senegal	1
Egypt	1	Serbia	1
Ethiopia	1	Sierra Leone	1
Germany	2	Somalia	4
Indonesia	3	South Africa	1
Iran	7	Sri Lanka	3
Ivory Coast	1	Sudan	4
Kazakhstan	1	Switzerland	1
Kosovo	2	Syria	2
Kuwait	3	Turkey	81
Lebanon	10	USA	2
Macedonia	3	Yemen	2
Malaysia	7		

What bring such a wide array of organizations together are their self-defined identities as faith-based organizations and their shared concerns over the Muslim world. Faith-based organizations have become significant actors in the humanitarian

⁵² This table is built based on the information from UNIW's members list.

aid and development sector in the last two decades. Faith-based or religious NGOs are formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions (Berger 2003: 16). Although religious NGOs carry out projects in diverse activity areas, they share defining characteristics such as being affiliated with religious bodies, having mission statements with explicit references to theology, acquiring financial support from religious sources, or basing decision making processes on religious values (Ferris 2005: 312 – 313). UNIW’s membership base is composed of *Muslim faith-based organizations*, which are:

[non-governmental organizations that] were founded by Muslims, and whose action is, to varying degrees and in various forms, inspired and legitimated by the Islamic religion or at least certain tenets thereof (de Cordier 2009: 609).

All members of UNIW have (1) mission statements that explicitly identify Islamic doctrine or tradition as the ideological framework, (2) agendas that focus on the mobilization of Muslim populations, (3) activities that aim to disseminate theological information and (4) activities that are exclusively aimed at Muslim persons or groups.⁵³

The donors of projects are Muslims, organizations frame their projects within a religious discourse, and beneficiaries are Muslim communities around the world.⁵⁴

⁵³ While there is not a single widely accepted definition, faith-based organizations are characterized by their core philosophy, programmatic approach, funding source, and membership. For the purposes of this chapter, I propose a four point criteria based on the organizations’ mission statement, mobilization agenda, theological objectives and the target population. The first three of these points are loosely based on Evelyn Bush’s (2007: 1655) criteria to measure religious mobilization in global civil society. The fourth point is based on a self-identified characteristic that all 185 members of UNIW share.

⁵⁴ The substantial presence of religion as a common link between the donors, organizations and beneficiaries has led the development sector to claim that ‘cultural proximity’ is key to success on the field. The concept postulates that the symbolic sense of community is essential to the aid process as it “[ensures] easier and safer access to Muslim countries and areas, and provides logistical advantages through religious solidarity with national and local governments and local communities; ensures that

Although the extent to which religious faith is reflected in the activities and projects of Muslim organizations varies, the focus remains almost exclusively on implementing projects in and providing services to areas with a strong Islamic presence. In addition to Muslim majority countries, transnational Muslim organizations distribute aid in countries where Muslims constitute minority populations.⁵⁵ The humanitarian NGOs of the coalition are concerned about poverty and its effects: hunger, malnutrition, lack of access to safe potable water, illiteracy, lack of access to health service, social isolation and exploitation. Those who work with families and children call attention to threats to traditional family structure and the increase in drug abuse in Muslim societies. Most organizations that are concerned about the dissolution of Islamic values in the modern world offer religious socialization programs. The development organizations implement ‘sustainable livelihood’ projects to tackle the root causes of poverty. The following section discusses each activity area in detail and demonstrates the extent to which religion is made relevant to NGO practices.

aid is provided effectively and that the services offered are sensitive to religious needs; and creates positive relations between (local and expatriate) staff and beneficiaries through shared beliefs and respect for religious values and practices” (Palmer 2011: 98).

⁵⁵ For instance, IHH distributes periodical food aid, iftar (fast-breaking) packages and runs orphan programs in Muslim communities in Cuba, Haiti, Ecuador and Peru in Americas where Muslims constitute less than %0.1 of the countries’ population.

SECTION II: MUSLIM NGOs AS FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

5.4 Humanitarianism, Social Aid and Faith

As mentioned above, faith-based organizations are increasingly recognized in the international humanitarian aid system and have become significant actors in the Muslim world.⁵⁶ Although faith-based and secular humanitarian NGOs reveal many similarities in terms of the projects and conditions they deal with, faith-based NGOs distinguish themselves through their discourse. Whereas secular NGOs employ a rights-based language in their actions, faith-based NGOs routinely invoke a language of religious duty and obligation when explaining individual civic action. For the members of Muslim NGOs, civil society is not a liberal category framed by a language of rights, but refers to a morally loaded category framed by the duty-oriented language of religion (Falk 2001). The notion of *hizmet* (service to God and humanity) pertains to religious duty in assistance to fellow Muslims in particular and to humanity in general. To perform such a duty in the form of humanitarian action “is a way of receiving help from heaven, of erasing sins, and of meriting paradise” (Krafess 2005: 327). An executive committee member of UNIW explains the connection between engaging in humanitarian activities and one’s prospects in the afterlife as:

In Islam there is a strong tradition of foundations. For centuries people established foundations, small or large, to provide help in all kinds of issues. The culture of Islam encourages that. People know that if they do a good deed in this world, they will be rewarded in the afterworld. This is what nourishes civil society today. It is

⁵⁶ In Yemen, Islamic Relief runs the Al Mazrak camp, providing more than 19,000 refugees with shelter, food, water and healthcare. International Islamic Relief Organization offered iftar meals to more than 25,000 families in Africa, Asia and the Middle East in 2010. (Petersen 2010)

not a hobby for us. It is about being human, being a Muslim, being concerned about the afterlife.⁵⁷

Muslim humanitarian/social aid organizations frequently refer to the Qura'nic *ayat* (verses) and *hadith* (the collection of traditions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad that include his sayings and acts) to explain the rationale behind the most popular charitable projects. Some of the projects adopted across the board are urgent food aid programs, orphan care programs, shelter and clothing programs, vocational training programs and assistance in drilling wells and canals in water shortage areas. Each of these projects has their roots in Islamic theology, as they are explicitly encouraged in the Qur'an and hadiths. For instance, Qur'an (Surah 13: 29) encourages charitable acts in verses such as "For those who believe and do charitable works is every blessedness and a beautiful place of final return". Similarly, Surah 2:83 states "[and be good] to the orphans and the very poor, speak kindly to men, make prayer, and give in charity." Charitable giving is not only ordered to the members of the Islamic faith, but also suggested as a way to erase sins and obtaining God's satisfaction: "Alms extinguish sins exactly as water extinguishes fire".⁵⁸ Food aid is encouraged in hadith as "the best of alms is to feed the hungry".⁵⁹ Similarly, sharing one's food is commended in hadith as "He who sleeps with a full stomach knowing his neighbor is hungry is not a believer".⁶⁰ NGOs which run water provision programs frequently refer to Prophet's hadith on the issue: "Whoever digs a well will

⁵⁷ Interviewee 7 (UNIW executive committee member), personal interview by author, September 4, 2009.

⁵⁸ Al Bukhari, *Sahih Al Jami'e*, Hadith No. 2951, in Krafess 2005: 329.

⁵⁹ Al Baihaki, *Chouab Al Iman*, Hadith No. 3367, in Krafess 2005: 332.

⁶⁰ Al Baihaki *Chouab Al Iman*, Hadith No. 3389, in Krafess 2005: 333.

be rewarded until the Day of Judgment every time a human, a *jinn*⁶¹ or an animal drinks from that well".⁶² Drawing on these texts, Saudi Arabia based International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) states in its 2006 report:

IIROSA drives its inspiration from the blessed land of the Two Holy Mosques, adopting the prophetic guidance in relieving the distressed, helping the needy and consoling the grieved. It strives to provide food for the hungry, medical care for the sick, clothes for the unclothed, helps wipe tears of the orphans, provides shelter, social and educational care for those who have lost their homes due to wars or natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods and drought (IIRO 2006: 8).⁶³

Food aid programs are omnipresent in the world of Muslim NGOs, especially during the Muslim holidays of Ramadan and *Eid-ul-Adha* (Festival of Sacrifice). Local and international organizations establish mobile and temporary soup kitchens, food deliveries to the crisis regions, fast-breaking dinner organizations during Ramadan and arrangements for animal sacrifices and meat deliveries for Muslim families around the world during the Feast of Sacrifice. Meat deliveries and animal sacrifices are powerful projects for Muslim NGOs as they are a religious obligation in Islam. Muslim NGOs emphasize the significance of this practice in their calls for donors by arguing that it is imperative for any Muslim to share his or her fortune with the poor by donating money for animal sacrifices around the world. One NGO arranges animal sacrifices in over a hundred countries within the four days of *Eid-ul-Adha*. Another one does so in forty-five countries during the same days. These

⁶¹ The Arabic term *jinn* refers to invisible beings made out of fire. They are intelligent beings and imperceptible to humans. More important in Islamic folklore than in theology, Jinns are capable of salvation or damnation (El-Zein 2005: 421).

⁶² Al Bukhari, *Sahih Al Jami'e*, Hadith No. 5757, in Krafess 2005: 334.

⁶³ International Islamic Relief Organization (2006) Annual Report (Achievements and Activities of Various Programs and Departments) For the Fiscal Year 2005/2006.

countries include almost all Muslim countries in addition to Muslim communities in Europe, North America, Latin America, East Asia, and even Oceania.

Similarly, projects that provide safe and clean water have a particular resonance among Muslims. For Muslim religious organizations, providing access to water is a religious duty mandated by Islamic teachings. Water is a necessary element of Muslim purification rituals, most commonly those performed before prayer. Additionally, according to the Muslim beliefs and practices “one who founds a public fountain on Earth for the poor or passers-by is promised relief in the afterworld.”⁶⁴ WEFA (Weltweiter Einsatz für Arme), a humanitarian organization based in Cologne, Germany, collects donations to drill wells in areas with water shortages such as Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Chad. The project advertises that “for 110 Euros a donor can sponsor a surface, hand operated well in his/her name or the name of a deceased family member in Bangladesh.”⁶⁵

Most humanitarian organizations run projects that provide clean water and sanitation services to water shortage areas in Africa and Southeast Asia. Water and sanitation services are typical projects for both faith-based and non-faith based organizations. The common objectives of these projects are to prevent hygiene related deaths and preventable diseases, to decrease the cost of obtaining an unpredictable supply of water, to decrease the daily burden of carrying water, and consequently, to improve girls’ chances of getting an education or women’s prospects of keeping jobs.

⁶⁴ Interviewee 15 (WEFA spokesperson), personal interview by author, January 4, 2009. The interviewee is paraphrasing the hadith on water use: “He who sinks a well in Rawma will go to Paradise” (Al Hafid, *Al Fith*, Vol. 5, p. 510, in Krafess 2005:335)

⁶⁵ Weltweiter Einsatz für Arme. <http://www.wefa.org/de/projekte/wasserbrunnen.html>. (Accessed June 3, 2011)

5.5 Orphan Care Programs

Watching over orphans in disaster and conflict areas is of utmost importance to Muslim NGOs as it is considered a religious duty for Muslims. "Whoever supports an orphan from among his own or any other family, he will be as close to me in Heaven as these fingers are close to each other"⁶⁶ is a statement attributed to the Prophet Muhammad as related in a hadith. In addition to several hadith, which require kindness to orphans, Muhammad himself is believed to have been an orphan. Stories about the Prophet's life and such hadiths are popular sources of inspiration for Muslim humanitarian/social aid organizations that run orphan care programs. These programs consist of building and managing orphanage facilities, providing food, clothes, shelter as well as educational and sanitary services to children made orphan by wars, natural disasters and occupations.

While the orphan care programs of Muslim NGOs are very similar to those of secular or Christian NGOs, Muslim organizations follow a route that is different than most non-faith based organizations. Respectful of the Islamic law that "advises to provide a home environment to orphans with their blood relatives rather than accommodating them in one's own home",⁶⁷ Muslim NGOs choose to put orphan children up exclusively with their distant relatives or in orphanages in the local community. This route, in their perspective, blocks the risk of assimilation posed by the actions of Christian missionaries in Africa:

When we go to these areas we see many NGOs from everywhere. While a lot of them are sincere in helping these children, we also see many organizations that work under the title 'NGO' but they are in fact Christian missionary

⁶⁶ Al Hafid, *Fath al Bary*, Hadith No. 5034. Vol. 9, in Krafess 2005: 333.

⁶⁷ Interviewee 52 (Malaysian Global Peace Mission spokesperson), personal interview by author, May 18, 2010.

organizations. They adopt these children and put them up with families in Europe and North America. We believe that this leads to cultural and religious assimilation. These children are uprooted; they forget where they come from, who they are. We specifically intend to keep these children where they are. We put them up either with extended family members, if they have a relative in the area we ask them to take the child in. Or we put the children in the orphanage facilities we build in the area. That way, they stay where they are, maintain their roots in their culture and do not forget that they are Muslims.⁶⁸

Numerous Qur'anic ayat and hadith that encourage help for orphans, the specter of assimilation by Christian missionaries in Muslim communities, and the obligation to take care of Umma's children make orphan care one of the most popular programs for Muslim NGOs and donors. Organizations either place the children in orphanages and meet their needs collectively or place them with distant relatives and implement one to one sponsorship. One of the largest and oldest Muslim humanitarian organizations, Islamic Relief, supports over 27,000 orphans in more than 20 countries worldwide. Being a more established organization, Islamic Relief's projects have wider objectives and reach. In line with the Millennium Development Goals, the orphan sponsorship program aims to eradicate child poverty, reduce child mortality and ensure primary education in disaster and conflict stricken areas. To that end, the organization provides orphans and their families sponsorship to cover food, shelter, healthcare and education costs. The sponsorship includes a monthly financial assistance, Ramadan and Qurbani food parcels, vaccinations, regular health checks and follow up school and home visits. At the beginning of each school year, sponsored orphans receive school uniforms and school bags filled with books and stationery. Orphans who are enrolled in the educational programs receive computer

⁶⁸ Interviewee 6 (IHH spokesperson), personal interview by author, July 3, 2008.

skills and English lessons. Older orphans receive vocational training to improve computer, sewing and handicraft skills.

The social and cultural ramifications of the Bosnian conflict are still at the center of Muslim NGOs' attention. The orphan care programs in Bosnia started in 1993, two years before the Bosnian conflict ended. Similar to the orphan care programs in other areas, Islamic Relief initially provided aid in the form of food, shelter, water and sanitation facilities, health care and educational support to the children of the war zone. In 2005, it launched a Housing Loans project in Drenica, which provides interest-free loans to orphans and their families to repair and reconstruct houses that were damaged during the 1996-1999 conflict. In 2006, the organization initiated a psychosocial trauma project in Sarajevo and Tuzla to help orphans and their caregivers cope with the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder. Islamic Relief also runs a Summer School program in this area to help orphans recover from the war with access to social, educational and recreational activities.

5.6 Family, Women, and Children

As the foundation of the Islamic sociocultural structure and the fundamental social unit, the family institution is central to Islamic social order. It reproduces and disseminates codes of social morality, transmits Islamic values through generations, prevents illicit sexual activity, secures a peaceful emotional and psychological atmosphere for men and women, tightens the bond between generations and ensures the expansion of the Umma.

Marriage is not only encouraged in the Qur'an but also considered a duty for a man who has the means to pay the dowry and to support a wife and children (Wiktorowicz and Farouki 2000: 689-91). Qur'an explains in detail the structure and function of the family, principles of choosing a spouse, conditions of marriage and financial maintenance of the household, conditions of divorce or dissolution of marriage, rules of child support and custody, and rules for remarriage. In the same vein, according to Islamic traditions, any obstacle, such as exorbitant dowries or economic injustice, should be combated in defense of family and marriage institutions (Wiktorowicz and Farouki 2000).

UNIW's member NGOs are mainly concerned about delayed marriage age, reduction in birth rate, rising divorce rate, dissolution of ties across generations, increasing isolation of the nuclear family in metropolitan areas due to the pressures of liberal capitalist globalization and "westoxification".⁶⁹ For concerned NGO leaders, such trends lead younger generations to be fascinated by prevailing attitudes of consumerism, remaining ungrounded in their own traditions and unaware of the possibility of a culturally rich Islamic life.

In order to keep young generations closely connected to the community, UNIW's members provide extra venues of socialization and moral education for children and teenagers. Several member NGOs that focus on women, family and children offer day care facilities for younger children, as well as organizing picnics, art and culture trips, movie hours, book clubs, tea times and sports events for teenagers. The main

⁶⁹ Westoxification (*gharbzadegi* in Farsi), refers to the corruptive influence of the Western cultural, political and economic domination. The term was coined by Jalal al-Ahmad and became a key element of the Khomeini era of Iranian politics. The westoxification discourse has informed and mobilized both anti-imperialist and conservative religious movements in Iran (Najmabadi 1991).

objective of these activities is to help generate a peer group for children and young adults within the community, and “to encourage them to socialize with kids from the neighborhood rather than random ones they meet at internet cafes or arcades.”⁷⁰

UNIW’s members uniformly value the survival of the family institution in Muslim societies and agree on women’s vital role in keeping marriages and families intact. Some NGOs organize projects to educate marriage-age women and newly married women about the role and responsibilities of spouses, as well as the keys to leading a successful marriage. Erdem-Der, a member NGO based in Istanbul, Turkey, has held nine-week long seminar series every year for single young women titled “Is Your Dowry Ready?” In the program director’s words:

We use dowry as a pun to get attention. We teach young women skills and information that will be useful their entire married life. We know of so many couples that stay engaged for years and divorce in the first six months of the marriage. We have to do our part to stop marriages from dissolving at this rate.⁷¹

The seminar topics include home economics, interior decoration, skin care, makeup and wardrobe as well as religious education, conditions of an Islamic marriage, and constructive communication methods between spouses.

NGOs that work on women and family uphold the mother’s role as the essential building block of the Islamic family structure and the guardian of its moral order (Kadioglu 1994). The woman’s position as mother is highly praised, since raising virtuous and morally grounded children for the future of the individual family, the community and the Umma is considered the most rewarding task. Therefore, motherhood transcends the private sphere of the family to the civil sphere of Muslim

⁷⁰ Interviewee 36, (Gul-Der spokesperson), personal interview by author, December 12, 2009

⁷¹ Interviewee 39, (Erdem-Der spokesperson), personal interview by author, December 7, 2009.

society, reinforced with the legitimacy of social responsibility. One NGO member expressed her concerns about the devalued role of motherhood in modern society:

Motherhood is more important than being a high-level executive; you are raising a person. But it is not valued as much anymore and that is very dangerous. After all, the hand that rocks the cradle runs the world.⁷²

Regardless of their particular areas of activity, most Muslim NGOs share concerns and develop projects for the well being of the family structure in their societies. Since the survival of the family and its moral values is one of the key priorities of Muslim organizations, most members of the UNIW offer assistance to families in crisis. Marriage counseling, reproductive health assistance, financial support, and vocational training are some of the wide-ranging programs offered by the organizations to local communities.

5.7 Religious Education

Muslim NGOs that work in the field of education respond to UNIW's concerns about the dissolution of Islamic values and the dispersion of the Umma. In countries where the state does not provide religious or Islamic education, NGOs take it upon themselves to offer Qur'anic and moral education courses to local communities. Most of these courses are designed for children of primary school age. The common curriculum in these courses emphasizes Islamic studies and a greater understanding of Islamic principles governing the day-to-day lives of Muslims. The Qur'an, Islamic law (*fiqh*), the Prophet's sayings (*hadith*) and traditions (*sunna*), and interpretation of the Qur'an (*tafseer*) constitute the majority of curricula.

⁷² Interviewee 36, (Gul-Der spokesperson), personal interview by author, December 12, 2009.

Educational projects devised for students of high school and college age are mostly limited to providing financial assistance in the form of scholarships. NGOs that fund students from modest backgrounds are not limited to the organizations that work in the educational field. Various NGOs act as bridges between private donors and students in need. Although some NGOs do not seek to establish personal relationships with the students, most organizations involve students in their events in order to create a community. They frequently pay home visits to students, hold community events such as picnics, dinners, seminars and establish connections with similar organizations. In that sense, educational scholarships serve as a means to form strong links with the students and the local communities.

Exchange programs for college-age Muslim students are held in high regard by UNIW. For member NGOs, hosting college level students from the Middle East, Africa, the Balkans or Central Asia through exchange programs materializes UNIW's foremost goal of uniting the Umma by bringing together the future leaders of the Islamic world. The declaration issued by the 150 participants from 25 countries at UNIW's 4th Youth Gathering articulated the mission to achieve unity, solidarity and mutual understanding among Muslim youth as follows:

We strongly emphasize the development of the youth, with respect to their profession to materialize their Islamic visions. We will have to start encouraging Muslim talents to be part of a cross border organization that would gather competent people and help them serve the Islamic World, wherever and whenever required. ⁷³

For the organizations that work with youth run transnational exchange programs, promoting the unified Umma ideal is an essential goal. In fact, "we are one nation" is

⁷³ 4th Youth Gathering, 2010, UNIW, Bursa Declaration. (Accessed June 3rd, 2011) http://idsb.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=436:bursa-declaration&catid=1:haberler&Itemid=2

uttered frequently during meetings and events that bring together young people from different parts of the Muslim world.⁷⁴ Transgressing the racial, language and national barriers facing the future of the Umma, students are encouraged to imagine themselves as a unified community and as the future leaders of a strong Muslim world.

5.8 Development

While Muslim faith-based organizations run projects very similar to those of non-faith organizations, the religious emphasis in their actions differentiates them from the typical development organizations. Muslim NGOs' extensive efforts in addressing socioeconomic needs of communities in need are termed in 'alternative development' perspective as 'Social Islam'. It is argued that integrating socioeconomic need and religious values allow these NGOs to "serve as institutions for the production, articulation and dissemination of values" and to "offer a model of Islam in practice to combat Western approaches and values" (Wiktorowicz and Farouki 2000: 686).

Most Muslim humanitarian NGOs under UNIW employ the long-term development-oriented jargon emblematic of development NGOs in the West. The International Islamic Charitable Organization of Kuwait, for instance, has the mission of "providing global and humanitarian aid, aiming and assisting the poor communities and helping them develop their resources in the most efficient ways so that they become self-sufficient [*sic*]." ⁷⁵

⁷⁴ "We are one nation" The Pen Magazine. Interviews from 3rd Youth Gathering, 2009. (Accessed June 9th, 2011) <http://www.thepenmagazine.net/we-are-one-nation/>

⁷⁵ International Islamic Charitable Organization of Kuwait. <http://www.iico.org/home-page-eng/index-eng.htm>. (Accessed June 1, 2011)

However, the focus of most Muslim humanitarian organizations remains short term and charity-oriented. Easily implemented charity-oriented projects which provide services in the form of material or financial aid and health services are favored over the longer-term projects oriented towards the achievement of social and economic rights, self-sustainability and the elimination of the root causes of poverty. There is a recent trend in the Muslim NGO practices that demonstrate a move towards sustainable development projects. Some organizations run vocational training programs such as donating fishery boats and motor taxis to needy families, providing trainings in farming and carpentry, tailoring, painting, embroidery, etc. Yet, these projects do not invest in the infrastructure to facilitate long-term development. The majority of longer-term projects are in the healthcare field. In collaboration with state agencies and transnational humanitarian networks, NGOs build health facilities, set up mobile clinics, medical buses, permanent hospitals, temporary tent hospitals; deliver medication and medical equipment aid; and provide health services such as health screenings, voluntary health personnel, and cataract surgeries.

Why do Muslim NGOs limit their projects to short-term social aid goals? Bayat (2002) provides several answers: (1) Islamist ideology does not provide an alternative order that mobilizes community members. Therefore, community members are seen as welfare recipients rather than active participants in the making of their communities; (2) this leads organizations to act paternalistically and on behalf of the communities they work with; (3) as a consequence, beneficiaries do not claim responsibility in assessing “the quality and adequacy of services or the accountability of the organizations” (Bayat 2002: 18).

Treating community members as welfare recipients rather than partners in sustainable development, inevitably leads to project duplication in most activity areas. One of the reasons of project duplication is suboptimal coordination, which is a problem in all humanitarian circles, Western or non-Western. Poor communications, lack of professionalism, inadequacy of collaborative networks and coordinating bodies, and unfamiliarity with the specifics of the target community result in wasted provisions, especially aftermath of natural disasters. Another reason behind project duplication is rooted in organizations' inexperience in the bureaucracy and implementation of humanitarian projects. It is an endemic problem in international projects, particularly longer-term social aid programs such as water provision and orphan care. Most Muslim humanitarian organizations are fairly new and thus lack the personnel and funds to research and develop projects from the ground up. Therefore, they opt for already tried and tested models from more experienced organizations. Rather than dovetailing their operations, these organizations end up replicating the same, occasionally outdated projects.

It is also maintained that "traditional donors want to see a large part or preferably all of their donations being used directly in projects and not on overheads or on something as amorphous as 'advocacy' even if this produces tangible results in the long-run" (Khan et al 2009: 6). The pressure from donors to see the immediate results of their funds forces organizations to carry out short-term social aid programs rather than long-term development projects which would maintain self-reliance.

The authority of donors is also posited as the reason why certain projects are preferred over others which may be more vital to the needs of the community.

Muslim organizations perceive their donors as conservative individuals who would not fund controversial projects. While orphan care and water provision programs are run by almost all organizations, projects that are more controversial but very pressing such as reproductive health and HIV/AIDS are not implemented as extensively as needed. In the same way, the need for women's shelters is largely overlooked on account of traditional family dynamics.

5.9 Conclusion

As the discussion above indicates, religion provides UNIW and its member NGOs their overarching ideational frame. The project descriptions and mission statements demonstrate that religion shapes UNIW's and its members NGOs' value systems, worldviews and ideological commitments. As a transnational non-state actor, UNIW is motivated by the normative ideal of consolidating global Islamic solidarity. UNIW's and its member NGOs' staff, volunteers, and membership base are similarly motivated by religious solidarity and Islamic revival. In other words, UNIW is a truly value-oriented network that is motivated by normative ideals.

While UNIW appears to be a typical solidarity network, it does not identify itself as a religious solidarity alliance. If UNIW acted only as a network of religiously motivated Islamic groups, it would be rather ineffective and short-lived. Therefore, it chooses to deviate from previous religious alliances and strategically defines itself as a civil society coalition instead. I argue that this is an instrumental choice because UNIW makes strategic use of its opportunity structures to gain power and legitimacy,

to attain its political goals, and to sustain the engagement of its member NGOs in the coalition.

One of the opportunity structures available to UNIW is the legitimacy provided by the civil society identity and discourse. By adopting the civil society discourse and identity, UNIW claims legitimacy as a serious actor acting on behalf of global Muslim community in the international arena. I flesh out this argument by borrowing the concept of discursive opportunity structure from Koopman and Olzak (2004) and Ferree et al. (2002). The discursive opportunity structure of civil society provides UNIW a normative toolbox and an ideation pool that is deployed in pursuit of their political objective of global religious solidarity. They attain 1) visibility, 2) resonance, and 3) legitimacy in the international public. In other words, UNIW strategically frames itself as a civil society coalition because it provides legitimacy to their mission and identity; it resonates with the norms of transnational non-state politics; and allows them to publicize their ideational objectives. In the next chapter, I analyze the ways in which UNIW employs the civil society discourse. I start with a critical discussion of civil society in the mainstream, Anglo-American literature and examine the compatibility of Islam and civil society debate. Next, I identify UNIW's selective use of civil society 'toolbox' as a legitimating tool. I conclude with the analysis of the instrumental benefits of UNIW's civil society discourse with regards to visibility, resonance, and legitimacy.

TABLE 5.3: COUNTRIES AND REGIONS INCLUDED IN IHH'S RAMADAN PROJECT⁷⁶

	COUNTRY / REGION	FOOD AID	IFTAR	ORPHAN	MUSLIM POPULATION (%)		COUNTRY / REGION	FOOD AID	IFTAR	ORPHAN	MUSLIM POPULATION (%)	
AFRICA	Burkina Faso	•	•	•	59	MIDDLE EAST NORTH AFRICA	Palestine	•	•	•	~98	
	Djibouti	•		•	96.9		Syria	•	•	•	99.2	
	Chad	•	•	•	55.8		Lebanon	•	•	•	59.3	
	Ethiopia	•	•	•	33.9		Iraq	•	•	•	~99	
	Ivory Coast		•		36.7		Turkey	•	•	•	97.8	
	Ghana	•	•	•	15.9		Yemen	•	•		99.1	
	Liberia		•		12.2		Jordan	•	•	•	98.2	
	Cameroon	•	•		17.9		Egypt	•		•	94.6	
	Kenya	•	•		7		Libya	•	•		96.6	
	Somalia	•	•	•	98.5		CAUCASUS CENTRAL ASIA	Tunisia	•	•	•	99.5
	Malawi		•		12.8			Azerbaijan	•	•	•	99.2
	Tanzania	•	•	•	30.2			Georgia	•	•	•	9.9
	Uganda	•	•		12.1			Adjara	•	•		30
	Mauritania	•	•	•	99.1			Akhalsikhe	•	•		
	Rwanda		•		1.8			Crimea	•	•		
	Madagascar	•			1.1			Abkhazia	•			
	Sudan	•	•	•	71.3			Dagestan	•			
Pakistan	•	•	•	96.3	Ingushetia	•						
Bangladesh	•	•	•	89.6	Chechnya	•						
Thailand-Patani	•	•	•	5.8	Kabardino-Balkar	•	•					
Philippines-Moro	•	•	•	5.1	Karachay-Cherkess	•	•					
Sri Lanka	•	•	•	8.5	EUROPE AMERICAS	Ossetia	•			15		
Nepal	•	•		4.2		Adygea	•	•		25		
Jammu Kashmir	•	•	•	30.69		Bosnia-Herzegovina	•	•	•	~40		
Azad Kashmir	•	•	•	~75		Macedonia	•	•	•	33.1		
Indonesia-Aceh	•	•	•	88.2		Kosovo	•	•	•	89.6		
Vietnam	•	•		~0.07		Albania	•	•	•	79.9		
Myanmar	•			~4		Bulgaria	•		•	12.2		
Tajikistan	•	•	•	84.1		Romania	•	•		0.3		
Tatarstan	•	•	•	53.2		Hungary	•	•		0.2		
Kazakhstan	•	•	•	56.4		Serbia-Sandjak	•			3.2		
Kyrgyzstan	•	•	•	86.3	Montenegro	•			17.7			
Mongolia	•	•	•	5	Cuba	•	•		0.1			
Afghanistan	•	•	•	99.7	Haiti	•	•	•	<0.1			

⁷⁶ The table is built on the information from IHH's Monthly Bulletin 2001 (46): July, August, September; Pew Research Center's Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population; and the 2001 Census India District Profiles.

CHAPTER 6

“CIVIL SOCIETY IS THE RISING CURRENCY IN POLITICS TODAY”:

DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY FRAMEWORK

UNIW as a transnational Islamic network is similar to its predecessors in that its primary aim is to consolidate world’s Muslim populations and mobilize them to solve Muslim world’s economic, social and political problems. While UNIW is a typical religious solidarity network to a large extent, it diverges from its predecessors as it highlights its civil society character above all. UNIW’s leaders and its member NGOs choose to frame their efforts within the discourse of civil society. I argue in this chapter that this is a strategic decision. UNIW uses the ideational tools of the civil society discourse as it allows the network and its members to access additional channels of power. One of the main channels of power is the discursive opportunity structure of the civil society framework. As the sociological institutionalist and constructivist literatures suggest, the prevailing political culture of transnational politics considers civil society framework as the most legitimate form of collective action. Therefore, by claiming their civil society identity, UNIW and its member NGOs achieve legitimacy in the international public discourse, resonate with the claims of other transnational non-state actors, and gain international visibility.

UNIW’s leaders frame the network’s identity and message within the contours of the prevalent civil society discourse. In the process, however, they draw selectively from “the normative toolbox and ideational resource pool” (Adamson 2005: 554) of civil society. As most overused concepts in academic scholarship, civil society has become a “sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect” (Gamson and Meyer 1996:

275) of civic action. Most civil society discussions in scholarly literature draw simultaneously from various traditions; they employ its communitarian characteristics as much as its reactionary aspects. Therefore, even the mainstream academic literature and policy circles present a highly ambiguous understanding of civil society. UNIW is not at all unique in its selective use of civil society's discursive elements. UNIW's leaders and member NGOs conveniently use liberal norms of civil society framework in pursuit of their conservative goals.

In order to identify the particular ways in which UNIW negotiates the contradictions of civil society framework and seize its discursive opportunities, I start the chapter with an overview of the civil society idea's trajectory in Western scholarly tradition. Next, I present the Islam and civil society debate in the literature. In the second section of the chapter, I identify the discursive opportunity structures of civil society. I argue that civil society discourse and identity allow UNIW to claim legitimacy as a credible political actor, to frame its message in ways that resonate with the norms of transnational non-state politics, and to attain public visibility in international platforms.

The findings of the chapter fill a gap in the study of transnational non-state actors. Constructivist scholarship on transnational non-state activism has paid a disproportionate attention to secular networks that promote liberal norms. Numerous empirical studies explored the normative motivations of transnational advocacy networks, international NGOs, and transnational NGO coalitions that promote human rights, environmental protection, social justice and so on. These works were very fruitful in laying the foundations of the constructivist perspective as well as the study

of transnational non-state politics. The majority of scholarship has overlooked non-secular networks, particularly Islamist ones, that promote conservative norms. However, as UNIW demonstrates, there is an ever-increasing movement among previously informal religious groups to adopt formal NGO structures and form transnational networks and alliances. These faith-based networks effortlessly negotiate across the conservative/liberal divide and make instrumental use of the liberal civil society discourse's ideational tools towards their conservative goals. Therefore, I argue that a well-rounded scholarship of transnational non-state politics necessitate the inclusion of conservative networks in its body of work.

6.1 Civil Society: An Ambiguous Concept

Civil society has been one of the most debated and ambiguous concepts within and across several academic disciplines. Its capacity, normative values, and political function have stimulated much debate in both social science scholarship and policy circles. The ambiguity of the concept starts at drawing its boundaries. While some theorists draw the borders of civil society around autonomous institutions, others include any social activity outside of the state. Kumar (1993: 282), for example, suggests a narrower definition of civil society as “the arena of non-state institutions and practices which enjoy a high degree of autonomy.” Positioning civil society in relation to state, Keane (1988: 3) defines it as “the realm of social (privately owned, market directed, voluntary run or friendship based) activities which are legally recognized and guaranteed by the state.” Cohen and Arato (1992: ix) extend this definition to “a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed

above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication.” As the boundaries of the definition are pushed further to include ‘communitarian’ institutions, the term encompasses a variety of actors, ranging from business organizations, political groups, and media institutions to churches, family networks, neighborhoods and schools. Therefore, the meaning and function of civil society carry a high degree of ambiguity even within the *mainstream* political theory. Foley and Edwards (1996: 38) aptly illustrate the ambiguous character of the civil society idea in a list of questions:

[Does] it, for instance, include business (“the market”) as well as voluntary organizations, or does the market constitute a separate “private” sphere? If we exclude the market, should we nevertheless include economic associations – trade groups, professional organizations, labor unions, and the like? What about political organizations? Does it make sense, following Gramsci, to distinguish “civil” from “political” society? If so, how are we to distinguish between political associations per se and the political activities of groups in civil society, from interest groups to religious bodies, which are intermittently mobilized in pursuit of political goals? *Just when does the “civil” become the “political”?* [Italics added]

The lack of a precise definition and thus a coherent theory of civil society has given rise to endless debates, to such an extent that some scholars like Giddens (1990) dispute its utility altogether. Similarly, Luhmann (1990) takes issue with the concept’s semantic overextension and normative content. He argues that it has lost its political and analytical value. The ambiguity of civil society’s meaning is a valid concern. According to Kaldor (2003: 16), the problem is rooted in its multiple analytical dimensions:

The changing content or coverage of the term – what it was not; the tension between normative and descriptive, idealistic and empiricist, subjective and objective implications of the concept; and the relative emphasis on the private and the public or the individual and the social.

Civil society's prevalence as an operational concept has been quite sporadic in the history of social theory. Theorists transformed the function and elements of civil society depending on the particular social and political conditions of the historical period. The idea of civil society started as synonymous with the state, yet concluded in a demarcation between itself and the state. While civil society was introduced originally as a political force against despotic states, in the course of political history its status and function have evolved to those of an actor in opposition to the totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe and Latin America in the late 1970s and 1980s. Today, civil society is distinctively characterized as a 'third force' that is able to organize itself, functions outside the state and puts pressure on the state.

The common thread that runs through the multiple phases of the evolution of the civil society concept is its restorative character. Each definition has proposed civil society as the panacea to the social and political problems of the particular era. In classical thought, *societas civilis* protected the public against the despotic and barbaric rule of the state. In the 18th and 19th centuries, with the rise of the nation-state and the market economy, civil society came to be defined in relation to the division of labor, the mass production of commodities, and private property relations (Colas 2002: 33). For the thinkers of this period, civil society ensured a rights-based economic society, private property, and individualism. In the middle of the 19th century, civil society concept briefly disappeared from social theory. In a period of

strong nation-states, industrial capitalism and bureaucracy, issues of democracy and liberty were replaced by those of social mobility, poverty, and class conflict (Alexander 2001: 17). In the 20th century, Gramsci (1971) revived the concept and theorized it as a cultural space between state and society. According to Gramsci, civil society enabled the hegemony of ruling classes with the consent of the subordinate ones. Gramsci considered civil society as the key agent in organizing hegemony. Nevertheless, he argued that civil society could serve as a temporary and strategic tool in revolutionary struggle. Therefore from classical philosophy to Gramsci, civil society was conceptualized vis-à-vis the despotic state and market capitalism.

Even though these perspectives theorized the concept in the context of confrontation between the state and society, they still presumed a symbiotic relationship between civil society and the state. It was during the anti-totalitarian movements of 1970s and 1980s in Latin America and Eastern Europe that theorists started to locate civil society explicitly in a position against the state. For Latin American thinkers, civil society held the potential to bring together entrepreneurs, church groups, and labor movements in their opposition to the regime. According to this perspective, civil society enables self-organization and individual responsibility through voluntary associations, interest groups, political organizations, and local communities. The works of Eastern European writers such as Vajda (1988), Konrad (1984), and Havel (1988) contributed to the understanding of civil society as the key to individual rights and freedoms, independent thinking, debate, and democratic governance.

In the post-Westphalian era of global politics, civil society has come to denote self-organizing or autonomous forms of associational life beyond state supervision. Here, civil society is attributed a key role in constituting participatory democracy and substituting the state in carrying out long-term solutions to social problems. The non-profit, voluntary third-sector which is composed of interest groups, grassroots organizations, non-governmental organizations, and so on, is invited to provide solutions to global crises, “ranging from environmental problems to poverty, from unequal development to warfare, conflicts and social injustice which are considered too difficult for individual nation-state to respond” (Keyman 2005: 7-8). In this way, civil society is regarded as the basic reference point for the stability of democracy and development. It is posited as a cure-all remedy for participatory democracy, public deliberation, human progress, rule of law, material welfare, active citizenship, and individual rights and freedoms.

While the politics of civil society were conceived as limited to national or regional scales until the end of Cold War, the interconnected nature of the globalization process has extended its domain. Politics is no longer conceptualized as a nationally bounded activity populated by national actors. As the boundaries and interdependencies of politics transcend local/national territories toward regional/global spheres, actors multiply and transform as well. Today, it is argued that the transnational organization of political actors carries the possibility for a global civil society. Global civil society is attributed an ipso facto positivity as well: advocates such as Scholte (1997: 25-28) argue that it bears the possibility to secure material welfare across the globe, to promote civic education, to give voice to

marginalized groups, to provide a debating platform for alternative perspectives, and to enhance social cohesion.

The ambiguity of the current civil society discourse also arises from the tendency in the literature to draw from various theoretical traditions. Civil society discussions today make “as much reference to de Tocqueville and Adam Smith as to Gramsci and Hegel, thus making civil society the subject matter of both liberal and leftist political theory” (Abdelrahman 2004: 19). An alternative classification to the chronological trajectory above is Foley and Edwards’ (1996) taxonomy of civil society traditions: Civil Society I and Civil Society II. The first strand conceptualizes civil society in terms of civic networks and associational life. This perspective defines civil society as the networks of civil associations that produce trust and social capital. Therefore, the universe of civil society is composed of traditional secondary associations including parent-teacher associations, sports clubs, and churches, even weekly bowling leagues (Putnam 1995). The latter strand conceptualizes civil society as a political actor in alternative to the state. Rooted in the anticommunist movements in the 1970s and 1980s, this perspective sees civil society as an autonomous and resistant sphere of action that restrains state power and facilitates the transition to democracy. As a normative project to be realized, this view of civil society promises individual rights and freedoms, active citizenship and a democratic society.

Either way, civil society is associated with Enlightenment ideals, individualism and the existence of autonomous institutions. It is conceptualized as a formation whose prerequisites are derived from Western political and historical conditions. In other words, the scholarly literature associates civil society with “what the West has”.

Almost all perspectives described above overlook, if not outright reject, non-Western formations of civil society, specifically those in the Muslim world.

6.2 Civil Society and Islam

The proponents of the incompatibility between Islam and civil society argument often quote the powerful prose of Serif Mardin (1995) who argues that civil society is a “Western dream”. According to Mardin, civil society is a western dream because it has emerged from Western Europe’s social history and therefore it does not have an Islamic equivalent. In this perspective, Western Europe’s social and cultural elements such as moral autonomy, civic associations, and the rise of an independent bourgeoisie are the historical building blocks of the civil society ideal. The Muslim dream, on the other hand, “shifted to the ideal of a social equilibrium created under the aegis of a just prince” (Mardin 1995: 285). The charismatic authority of a ruler, rather than the rationalized and self-referential rule of law, was dreamt to ensure social cohesion:

The dream itself, the ability to dream the dream, is the expression of a unique premise concerning the components of a social system, a premise that also assumed more precise outlines within modern European history. That postulate is the idea that social relations are both sustained and energized by autonomous, secular collectives with legal personality operating within a frame of rationalized and self-referential law (Mardin 1995: 278).

Individual self-creation and human agency, hence modern citizenship, remain elusive for Muslim societies in practice. They may acquire the institutional forms of Western modernity, Mardin argues, yet the Muslim dream remains tied to collective

rights rather than individual rights. Therefore, “the dream of Western society has not become the dream of Muslim societies” (Mardin 1995: 295).

The elusiveness of human agency and individual rights is a frequent point of discussion in the Islam and civil society debate. Of particular significance is Gellner’s oft-cited argument on Islam, secularization and individualism. Gellner agrees with Mardin that the autonomous institutions and associations model does not satisfactorily gauge the state of civil society in Muslim contexts. The model captures only one of the values assigned to civil society: autonomy from the state. The critical point is not that such associations did not exist but that they did not provide individual self-creation. He illustrates his point by referencing the “internally well-organized, self-administering and partly or wholly autonomous sub-communities” which allowed individuals independence from the king yet did not ensure human agency. These groups “maintained their cohesion, internal discipline and solidarity” through kinship rules, relationships, and obligations. In other words, the tyranny of kinship replaced the tyranny of kings. Therefore, the existence of autonomous associations is but one of the conditions of civil society. The essential building bloc of civil society, for Gellner, is for the individual to enter associations and choose identities “freely rather than imposed by birth or by awesome ritual” (Gellner 1994:42). The modern self who is unencumbered by his clan, caste, religion or oath is the pre-requisite building block of civil society. In Gellner’s view, civil society is an outcome of modernity, and the human result of modernization is the ‘Modular Man’⁷⁷:

⁷⁷ Gellner (1994: 97) picks a metaphor from the furniture industry to describe the modern individual who is unbound by his clan, caste, religion or oath: “you can buy one bit which will function on its

Modular man is capable of combining into effective associations and institutions, without these being total, many-stranded, underwritten by ritual and made stable through being linked to a whole inside set of relationships, all of these being ties in with each other and so immobilized. He can combine into specific-purpose, ad-hoc, limited association, without binding himself by some blood ritual. He can leave an association when he comes to disagree with its policy, without being open to an accusation of high treason.

Modernization and the concurrent process of secularization in the West dissolved communal loyalties, hence produced the modular man. Islam, on the other hand, Gellner argues, remained *secularization resistant*. Islam's control over the populations has not diminished because of its "scripturalism, pervasive rule-orientation and Puritanism, regulation though not sacralization of economic life, monotheism, restrained ritualism and religious though not political individualism" (Gellner 1994: 199). This explains, in Gellner's view, the incompatibility of Islam and civil society.

Gellner is not alone in arguing that the existence of civil society and its institutional arrangements in non-Western, specifically Islamic, contexts are problematic, if not impossible. Arrays of Orientalist scholars have vigorously argued that the very existence of civil societies in Muslim contexts is an oxymoron. For Watt (1968: 120 – 123), the totalistic character of Islam requires a totalitarian state that is hostile to the emergence of a functioning civil society. According to John Hall (1985: 89), Islam as a religion is essentially "monotheism with a tribal face" that blocks the development of a true civil society and democracy. Crone (1986) argues that Islamic civilization refuses to legitimize political authority. Islam, according to this

own, but when your needs, income or space available augment, you can buy another bit. It will fit in with the one acquired previously, and the whole thing will still have a coherence, aesthetically and technically. You can combine and recombine the bits at will."

perspective, discourages the formation of groups that might resist despotism since “Islamic law knows no corporate legal persons; Islamic history shows no councils or communes, no synods or parliaments, nor any other kind of elective or representative assembly” (Lewis 1994: 45-46). As a consequence, Springborg (1975: 87) argues, social associations in Muslim societies are “informal, personalistic, and relatively inefficient as a means of winning support and extracting resources from the populace”. Mobilizing the indispensability of civil society for democratization argument, some analysts have argued that Islam is inherently incompatible with democracy (Sorensen 1993; Huntington 1993; Tibi 1998). Kramer (2001), for instance, insists that an Islamic civil society can only be a breeding ground for Islamic radicalism and jihadists rather than democratic institutions and modern citizenship.

An increasing number of voices have started to raise their criticisms in 1990s (Hann and Dunn 1996; Norton 1995), in response to the proponents of the incompatibility argument. One strand of scholarship refers to the historical precedents of civil society in the Muslim world. Pointing to the civil nature of institutions such as guilds, bazaars, trusts, and foundations in Islamic history (Esposito and Burgat 2003), these scholars argue that these institutions are the possible equivalents of civil society in pre-modern Arab and Middle Eastern cities. In their perspective, despite the absence of bureaucratic organizational models and individual autonomy, these institutions provided a counterbalance to the power of the state (Ibrahim 1998; Zubaida 1992) and enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy from the state (Kamali 2001).

Another strand of literature that studies contemporary civil action in Muslim societies suggests that informal sectors of social networks and personal ties serve as functional civil societies in these contexts. These analyses consider spheres that are typically left out of civil society discussions within the boundaries of politics. Civic activism, according to this view, should not only be sought in the formal political structures of political parties, legal institutions, bureaucratic NGOs, but primarily in the politics of daily life (Bayat 2002). Tribal forms of collective responsibility and mutual aid in Yemen (Carapico 1997), familial ties and support networks in Cairo (Singerman 1995), daily struggles of squatters, the unemployed and street-vendors in Tehran (Bayat 1998) serve as viable civil societies in the repressive political climates of most Muslim states.

Alongside the vivid informal networks, the Muslim societies of the Middle East and North Africa have also “witnessed an explosion of associational activity” since 1980s (Yom 2005: 16). The brisk revival of numerous membership-based professional groups, non-governmental organizations, public interest associations, and think tanks across the region demonstrate a vibrant civil society sector.

The mushrooming of NGOs in Muslim countries, specifically in the Middle East, is derivative of the political and economic dynamics in the region. First, the implementation of structural adjustment policies and neoliberal economic programs resulted in massive migration to urban centers, which were not equipped to serve the unprecedented needs of such populations. The social effects of industrialization, migration and urbanization remained unaddressed by states. Local and national governments’ inability to provide services such as housing, healthcare, and food

subsidies led NGOs to fill the vacuum (Talhami 2001). The second, political, dynamic is directly related to the rise of Islamic activism in the region. As the secular states permeated all segments of the religious sphere, moderate Islamist groups started to establish institutions alternative to those of the state. Although these NGOs are similar to early Islamic charities, they are collective grassroots efforts rather than philanthropic endowments. (Clark 2004: 5-9). Islamic medical clinics in Egypt are one of the most successful examples of Islamic grassroots social-welfare activities. Located in or beside mosques throughout the city of Cairo, these clinics provide millions of people with “an intermediate form of healthcare between the expensive private hospitals and the government’s often inadequate services” (Clark 1995: 11). In countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Sudan, where states are absent or in crisis, NGOs provide almost all social services. In Gaza Strip and West Bank, for instance, Islamic institutions provide “anywhere from 10-40 percent” of all social services (Roy 2000). These institutions not only do relief and charity work but also provide up to 60 percent of primary health care services, nearly 50 percent of hospital care, 100 percent of disability care, 100 percent of all agricultural extension, training and research, and 30 percent of educational services (Bayat 2002: 16).

Another triggering factor behind the civic revival, particularly in Arab countries, is the Western academic and policy-making consensus that a dynamic civil society is the essential precondition for democratic regime change. Western “political donors, bilateral aid agencies, and multilateral financial institutions in the democracy promotion industry” (Yom 2005: 16) have extended substantial diplomatic and financial support to Arab civil society with the conviction that increasing pressure

from civil society organizations will force the authoritarian governments to accept liberal reforms.

While the proliferation of nongovernmental organizations and voluntary associations has resulted in a vibrant civil society in Arab countries, many scholars started to question whether this vibrancy is necessarily an indication of diminished state power and democratic consolidation (Anderson 1998; Wiktorowicz 2000; Albrecht and Shlumberger 2004). The insufficient signals towards steady democratic change in 1990s and 2000s brought the role of state back into the discussion. Criticizing the false dichotomy between the state and civil society, scholars echo institutionalist perspectives that highlight the centrality of states as potent actors that structure the dynamics of civil society and socio-economic change (Skocpol 1985). In this view, states' "continuous administrative, legal, bureaucratic and coercive systems" (Skocpol 1985: 7) shape the quality of grassroots activity and associational life. Civic engagement and the associational sector mirror the structure of government (Skocpol, Ganz, and Munson 2000).

Accordingly, the explosion of civil society in the Middle East and North Africa region, particularly in the authoritarian states, has met with considerable skepticism. Nuanced analyses of the state/civil society dynamics (Abdelrahman 2007; Heydemann 2007; Jamal 2007; Wiktorowicz 2000) demonstrate that there is a complex relationship between civil society and democratic change. While the associational forms, such as non-governmental organizations and voluntary associations, have mushroomed in the Arab World in the last three decades, the authoritarian regimes in these countries aptly adopted cooptation strategies to control

dissenting voices in their civil societies (Abdelrahman 2007). For instance, Wiktorowicz (2000) points to the administrative and regulative practices that constrain civic organizations across the region. Civil society organizations, Wiktorowicz (2004: 13) argues, are “embedded in a web of bureaucratic practices and legal codes which allows those in power to monitor and regulate collective activities.” As a result, these organizations are bogged down in a system of social control and do not facilitate collective empowerment. Furthermore, states repress organizations that threaten their authority, intimidate leading political activists, control the media, and pass counterterrorism legislations in order to restrict the reach of civil society organizations (Heydemann 2007: 4-10).

Authoritarian states’ preferential treatment of civic associations result in state/civil society relationships that are characterized by clientelism and patronage. The civil society organizations and associations that enjoy such benefits are those that “support the status quo, advocate conservative reforms, or are simply apolitical” (Hawthorne 2004: 3). In that sense, even the advocacy organizations may not necessarily constitute political opposition. As Langhour (2004) argues, non-governmental actors whose mere presence is bound by the availability of funds and political opportunities, “advocate the interests of a specific group or the importance of a particular principle.” Therefore, in non-democratic contexts, civil society does not necessarily facilitate democratic consolidation but may reproduce non-democratic norms, values and practices (Jamal 2007).

SECTION II: UNIW AND CIVIL SOCIETY

As repeated throughout the dissertation, the primary aim of the Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World (UNIW) is to unite the Muslim peoples of the world, ensure global religious solidarity, and to help serve Umma's (global Islamic community) revival, welfare and future. Nonetheless, UNIW leaders do not define the coalition as an Islamic solidarity alliance but insist on its civil society character. UNIW's executives and members frequently refer to the organization as "the first global Islamic civil society coalition"⁷⁸ or "the representative of global Islamic civil society"⁷⁹.

UNIW's identity and objectives might be poles apart from those of the liberal and secular non-state actors. Still, both camps converge in perceiving civil society as the cure-all remedy to their pressing problems. UNIW is concerned about the widespread poverty, illiteracy, hunger, disease, and human misery in Muslim majority countries. It is concerned about the spread of violence and war. It is concerned about the ways in which 'the imperialistic West' subjugates and exploits the Muslim world, propagates its materialistic values and mass culture, and destabilizes Islam. It is concerned about the rise of Islamophobia, religious discrimination and intolerance. It is concerned about the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Kashmir, East Turkistan and Myanmar. It is concerned about the dissolution of Islamic values and the dispersion of Umma.

For UNIW and its members, the only solution to such wide-range problems is to unite Muslim populations, pool their material resources, solidify its human capital,

⁷⁸ Interviewee 4, (UNIW Executive Committee Member), personal interview by author, June 12, 2008.

⁷⁹ Necmi Sadikoglu, (UNIW Secretary General), International Union of Muslim Scholars General Council Press Conference, 2010, Istanbul.

and act as an undivided and powerful global actor. They are disillusioned with Muslim majority states' previous attempts at building global alliances. Thus, they believe that only civil society has the capacity to materialize this goal. Only civil society can revive Islamic values, and provide a shared platform to consolidate an influential Muslim voice. Only civil society can restore peace and stability in conflict areas. Only civil society can uplift Muslim countries' struggling economies. Only civil society can stand tall against Western imperialism and exploitation. In other words, UNIW and its members attribute civil society an *ipso facto* positivity and perceive it as the panacea to Umma's each and every problem.

Similar to the ambiguous conceptualization of civil society in Western literature, UNIW employs an eclectic discourse as well. In order to evaluate the ways in which UNIW utilizes the concept to attain its larger political and cultural goals, one has to identify the particulars of its civil society vision. What kind of civil society does UNIW refer to? How does UNIW's understanding of civil society compare and contrast with the assumptions of the mainstream civil society discussions? In the next sections, I examine the elements of UNIW's civil society discourse. I particularly focus on the ways in which UNIW negotiates the compatibility of Islam and civil society debate; the authoritative state/civil society tension; and the question of whether humanitarian work can be understood as political action.

6.3 UNIW's Conceptualization of Civil Society

Above all, UNIW's leaders reject the Western scholarship's claims that Islam and civil society are incompatible. Mentioning the autonomous institutions of pre-modern Islamic societies, UNIW's leaders as well as its member NGOs' spokespeople echo the optimist camp's arguments about the central role of non-state actors in Islam. Saad Eddin Ibrahim expounds the most articulate expression of this argument. Ibrahim (1995) cites 'resilient traditional Arab formations' such as guilds, associations, bazaars, religious scholars (*ulama*), trusts and foundations (*awqaf*), and Sufi orders as the equivalents of civil society in pre-modern Islamic history. Esposito (2003) puts forward a similar argument. He states that these autonomous institutions were largely independent from state control and that they played an important role in the economic and social life of Muslim cities. Moreover, he argues, the leaders of these autonomous institutions acted as mediators between families, tribes and rulers.

Among all the autonomous institutions of Islamic history, *awqaf* (religious endowments) are considered the precursors of modern faith-based civil society organizations. *Awqaf* (singular: *waqf*) were pious foundations established for a designated social service. Often dedicated to the relief of the poor, *awqaf* supported charitable works as small as building a local fountain or as large as establishing schools, universities, hostels, and hospitals (Zubaida 1997). UNIW's leaders draw parallels between *awqaf* and contemporary social service organizations in terms of social responsibility and autonomy. Posed the question of compatibility between civil society and Islam, numerous interviewees romantically invoke *waqf* tradition of the 'harmonious Muslim societies of the past':

Islamic society is by nature civil society. Today, the West wants to appropriate the culture of civil society under the name of NGOs. But when we look at Islamic history, we see awqaf everywhere dedicated even to the most improbable causes: soup kitchens, schools, libraries, mosques... Several awqaf were established to pay for the funerals of the poor, to distribute ice-cold water during the summer, even to feed birds in the winter. Everyone, rich or poor, sought to do his or her part.⁸⁰

UNIW's founders set out to help Umma solve its problems in early 2000s and concluded that consolidating Umma's civil societies was crucial. At the same time, they were not certain about the capacity of Umma's civil societies. The existence and conditions of strong and vigorous civil societies in Muslim countries is not a puzzling phenomenon for Western scholarship only. The Turkish founders of UNIW found themselves asking the same question in 2003: Is there even a Muslim civil society to unite? UNIW's Deputy Secretary General explains:

At the beginning, the picture of civil society in the Islamic World was a blurry one for us. Is it there? Is it not there? In what capacity? We know that the majority of the Islamic World restricts individual rights and freedoms, democratic institutions, voluntary associations. What's more, the state hegemony is very dominant. Of course we did have concerns about the capacity of civil society in the Muslim World at the time.⁸¹

During the three years prior to its launch in 2005, UNIW's founders built networks with the organizations that they were already in contact. They had established connections with numerous NGOs throughout the Islamic world by the time they organized the international conference on Islamophobia and invited over two hundred organizations, academics and journalists. In this process, their initial

⁸⁰ Interviewee 1, (UNIW General Coordinator), personal interview by author, June 4, 2008.

⁸¹ Interviewee 7, (UNIW Deputy Secretary General), personal interview by author, September 4, 2009.

concerns about state scrutiny and civil society capacity in Muslim majority countries had subsided:

We realized that in countries with strong leader authority, civil initiatives could not do overt cultural and political work. But they have brought together a civil base around social aid. There are myriads of orphan care networks, poverty alleviation groups. And the states did not object since these are basically service organizations. Throughout, they have simultaneously built solidarity networks, and produced an intellectual awakening.⁸²

UNIW's spokespeople's description of the civil initiatives around the Muslim world sheds a light into their perception of what civil society can achieve. Their view of civil society's normative functions and the actual capacity demonstrate wide similarities with the de Tocquevillian approach to civil society. In that, civil society is championed for its socialization function. Individual involvement in the local community and its voluntary associations teaches the "habits of the heart"⁸³ of social behavior. By working together in civil associations, individuals cultivate citizenship skills and social capital, which is "a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu 1986: 248). Social capital generated in these faith-based social aid/humanitarian organizations, a UNIW executive explains:

[...] built an intellectual base, produced mechanisms. They got to know each other and built covert solidarity networks. They cultivated cadres, intellectual

⁸² Interviewee 7, (UNIW Deputy Secretary General), personal interview by author, September 4, 2009.

⁸³ Tocqueville (1969 [1835]: 264) uses the phrase 'habits of the heart' to describe his definition of 'mores': "I mean it to apply not only the 'moeurs' in the strict sense, which might be called the habits of the heart, but also the different notions possessed by men, the various opinions current among them, and the sum of ideas that shape mental habits". According to Tocqueville, Americans' habits of the heart were historically embedded in republicanism and they emphasized virtuous associational activity that contributed to the vitality of American civil society. Institutions such as townships, schools, religions, and occupations formed "the 'character of mind' and 'habits of the heart' a democratic republic requires. Whatever their more particular purposes, these agencies of civic education inculcate the habit of attending to public things. And yet given their multiplicity, they prevent public life from dissolving into an undifferentiated whole" (Sandel 1996: 321).

circles, and an in-group spirit. These circles are not only composed of the orphans and the poor. But more importantly, of those who share the same values, belief systems, political aspirations. They are the ones who got together under the pretense of service work but cultivated a political base.⁸⁴

UNIW's task, according to its spokespeople and its member NGOs, is to propagate the social capital internationally in order to build a sense of communal responsibility, solidarity, effective cooperation, and collective action:

When journalists ask us about our purpose, we respond: Our purpose is the *Union itself*. Because this is a structure that brings us together, cement our shared values, and ensures solidarity. After all these years, now we know each other. We have connected the human capital of Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon... We are not the helpless, powerless, voiceless Umma anymore.⁸⁵

The key aim of civil society then, according to UNIW's founders, is to strengthen self-organization, horizontal associations, and solidarity to promote collective action for the common good. Its position vis-à-vis the state is secondary. In other words, for UNIW, civil society does not have to be an antithetical actor against the state:

What is *civil* society? It does not have to clash with the official ideology. It might oppose at times, it might support at others. What's important is that it organizes itself, it voices its concerns, cultivates a position, alongside the state or despite the state.

Along the same lines, according to UNIW executives, overt political action is not the *sine qua non* of civil society either. Service work, in the form of social aid and humanitarian action, can substitute overt politics. The critical underlying reason is the strictness of political regimes in most Muslim majority countries. In the larger part of the Muslim geography, social aid and politics have a more intertwined relationship,

⁸⁴ Interviewee 9, (UNIW Executive Committee Member), personal interview by author, September 13, 2009.

⁸⁵ Interviewee 7, (UNIW Deputy Secretary General), personal interview by author, September 4, 2009.

which stems from the specific political conditions of many Islamic states, especially in the Gulf region. Although some researchers call attention to the political transition that Arab countries have been undergoing,⁸⁶ paths to free debate and dissent remains blocked in many. As a result of strict state surveillance and legal restrictions, most Muslim organizations assert that they do not have a political agenda or purpose. Limiting their activities to ‘harmless’ areas such as human relief, health care or religious education, these organizations claim to be apolitical. Some researchers argue that these seemingly apolitical organizations provide civic education and enhance individual activism that are lacking in most Muslim states (Ibrahim 1995). Although many students of Islam and civil society deem such arguments, which herald a path to democratization in Islamic countries, unrealistic, the leaders of Muslim NGOs see mobilization around these activities as a conduit to further organized activism in the future. One Syrian NGO leader disclosed in a private interview:

Given the political restrictions on what people can and cannot do on political grounds, our hands are tied. We are limited to humanitarian work, social aid, charity, mosque repairs or Qur’an education at best. But in the process, we are pulling together a number of intellectuals and activists who are ill at ease with the current state of politics. If and when the political conditions evolve, we are going to have a qualified human potential to take on more substantial roles in political action.⁸⁷

Correspondingly, the political conditions of the Muslim geography affect the ways in which civil society organizations can pool resources and work in partnerships. Humanitarian and/or social aid organizations find that the path to

⁸⁶ Kubba (2000: 86) explains: “Laws in most countries in the Muslim world restrict nongovernmental organization, the closure of association and newspapers, continuing human rights violations, and the enactment of emergency laws, civil society activity and demands for liberal reforms are on the increase. Civil society groups are breaking new ground and finding loopholes in current legislation that enable them to operate and develop despite the restrictions.”

⁸⁷ Interviewee 10, (Syrian NGO spokesperson), personal interview by author, September 13, 2009.

cooperation is more open to them than advocacy organizations. With the amplified pressure exerted on Islamic NGOs since 9/11, many large national or international Islamic NGOs have been banned from working in some countries on the grounds that they are connected with international terrorist networks, and put in designation lists. Under the conditions of the post-9/11 world, the ‘space’ for most Islamic NGOs has shrunk even more. As a consequence, the seemingly ‘apolitical’ work of the humanitarian and/or social aid field has more opportunities for global cooperation than the ‘political’ Muslim civil society.

6.4 The Cachet of Civil Society

As repeated throughout the dissertation, UNIW’s adoption of the civil society identity, discourse and organizational structure is a strategic decision. UNIW’s leaders and members frame themselves as civil society actors since they perceive the civil society discourse and identity as a key opportunity structure which provides UNIW additional channels of power and access.

Discursive opportunity structures, as explained in Chapter 2, are the “institutional and cultural access points that actors can seize upon” when engaging strategic framing (Ferree et al. 2002: 62). Actors employ the symbolic, cultural and ideational resources that exist in a given environment to affect the strategy and success of their actions. These resources determine the message’s chances of diffusion in the public sphere (Koopmans and Olzak 2004). At the same time, discursive opportunities, similar to any type of political opportunity structure, are not objective and self-evident structural factors. Activists need to perceive these opportunities as available

and compare the costs and benefits of each. UNIW's decisive use of the civil society identity and discourse can be understood in this light. While UNIW is effectively a religious solidarity network, its leaders perceive the benefits of civil society as an opportunity structure. One UNIW executive committee member explains:

Civil society is the rising currency today. If we are to be taken seriously, if the voice of the Muslim world is going to be heard in international platforms, we have to be civil society organizations and networks. Who listens to community leaders, let alone religious figures at the UN anymore?⁸⁸

UNIW is a norm-oriented non-state network that is motivated by ideational factors, particularly religious values and beliefs. However, UNIW's leaders and members are not free standing moral agents driven simply by individual conscience, but rather as Adamson (2005: 547) argues "...actors who are deeply embedded within particular ideological and geopolitical configuration in world politics." The world-culture (Meyer, Boli et al. 1997; Boli and Thomas 1999) that UNIW operates in is configured by the "liberal political ideas about the sanctity and autonomy of the individual and about democracy as the most desirable and just form of government" (Barnett and Finnemore 2004: 166). This liberal democratic configuration prioritizes the voluntary societal associations above the individual and below the state as actors that complement the states-system and ensure good governance (Falk 1998). In other words, civil society is now considered an essential actor, both in domestic and international contexts.

As UNIW leaders infer, the cachet of the civil society title in contemporary world politics cannot be underestimated. Intergovernmental organizations such as the World Bank and governmental agencies such as the USAID exclusively work with

⁸⁸ Interviewee 7, (UNIW Deputy Secretary General), personal interview by author, September 4, 2009.

organizations that fit into the associational forms of civil society. Access to states and governmental agencies, as well as media organs are more open to particular forms of civil society; namely non-government and non-profit organizations. Country regimes, which claim to have legitimate governance in the international politics, are eager to announce that they have strong and vibrant civil societies.

The spokesperson of a Sunni NGO in Iran provides a telling illustration of how civil society has become one of the essential factors for state legitimacy. Sunnis constitute approximately 9 percent of the population in Iran and retain a strong presence among Kurds, Turkmen, Afghans, and Baluchis. Since Sunni Islam is not recognized under the Shi'a regime (Halliday 1986: 94), Sunnis have experienced economic and social discrimination. They have been excluded from high office, banned from public displays of a Sunni religion and culture, and are not allowed to build mosques in the capital city (Keddie and Richard 2006: 332). Although Sunni NGOs are not officially recognized, the Shi'a regime turns a blind eye to the service work undertaken by local Sunni organizations and flaunts the country's ostensibly vibrant Sunni civil society in international platforms:

They want us to be and they don't want us to be at the same time. They don't recognize us officially, but they don't ban us. Because now the world knows that we exist. If they ban us, the entire Islamic world will be against it. So they want us to be – at least to show the world that 'We can tolerate Sunnis, we have this many Sunnis in the country living in peace, without problems, they have their own rights and everything'. This is a big propaganda item and advertising for foreign policy."⁸⁹

The civil society discourse can carry an indisputable cachet mainly because the boundaries of its definition are so ambiguous. The civil society discourse is

⁸⁹ Interviewee 49 (Jamiyat al-Islah spokesperson), personal interview by author, May 16, 2010.

conveniently employed across the political spectrum because every actor can bend the definition and adopt the concept. In the Arab world for instance, Bellin (1995: 121) explains, civil society concept has become so central that:

State officials use it to promote their projects of mobilization and ‘modernization’; Islamists use it to angle for a legal share of public space; and independent activists and intellectuals use it to expand the boundaries of individual liberty.

Similar to the tendency in most analyses on civil society in the literature, UNIW’s discourse of civil society is an ambiguous one. As Adamson (2005: 554) states, discursive structures “do not provide a consistent script for actors, but rather a normative toolbox and ideational pool that can be deployed in pursuit of political objective.” Correspondingly, UNIW’s civil society discourse is not coherent or consistent. UNIW’s leaders and members pick and choose from the ideational toolbox of civil society as they see fit. They simultaneously draw from the communitarian and liberal interpretations of civil society, and refer to its associational definitions as much as its reactionary characteristics.

As discussed above, UNIW’s leaders and members are cognizant of the opportunity structures of civil society identity and employ the discourse to garner its benefits. What are the actual benefits of the civil society discourse? In the next section, I identify the advantages of civil society identity and discourse. The emergent literature on discursive civil society provides insights. Leading research in this field (Ferree et al. 2002; Fuchs 2011; Koopmans and Olzak 2004; Koopmans and Statham 1999) organizes the components of discursive opportunity structures in three strands: sociocultural, political, and mass media (Gamson 2004: 249). In light of their

arguments, I analyze the ways in which UNIW benefits from the contemporary discursive opportunity structures that place particular emphasis on civil society. I specifically discuss the reach of UNIW's organizational identity and message in terms of legitimacy, resonance, and public visibility.

6.5 Transnational Discursive Opportunities of the Civil Society Framework

UNIW is an umbrella organization that brings together Islamic humanitarian and social aid organizations. UNIW's primary aim is to establish religious solidarity across the globe. However, it does not label itself as an Islamic coalition or a religious solidarity initiative. Instead, it chooses to use the civil society label. I explain this conscious choice by the discursive opportunity structure framework. I argue that UNIW's leaders adopt the discourse of civil society because it opens up additional channels of power to the coalition itself and its member NGOs.

Discursive opportunity structure is a fairly recent idea in the social movement literature. The field is not fully developed yet and the existing research is mostly effective in explaining the dimension of opportunities and constraints on a *national* level. For instance, Koopmans and Olzak (2004) forcefully examine the discourse of extreme right wing movements through the ethnic-cultural framing of national identity against the idea of the nation as a political or civic community in Germany. Ferree et al. (2002) analyze the frames of the abortion discourse in their comparative study in Germany and the US. Again, Koopmans and Statham (1999) illustrate how discursive opportunity structures can affect frame resonance in their study on immigrants' claims for citizenship rights in Britain and Germany. While these works are successful in analyzing the discursive opportunities of nation-level frames, they

are insufficient in analyzing the discursive dimension of *transnational activism's opportunities and constraints* (Olesen 2011). A satisfactory analysis of discursive opportunity structures that are available to UNIW needs to be conducted on a transnational level. As a transnational non-state actor, UNIW positions itself alongside other transnational NGO coalitions and advocacy networks, international organizations. Similarly, for its leaders, the recipient of UNIW's message is the international public. Therefore, UNIW frames its identity and message to gain visibility in the international media, achieve legitimacy in the international public discourse, and resonate with the claims of other transnational non-state actors.

6.5.1 Legitimacy

Discursive structures are critical determinants of which collective actors and claims are more likely to achieve legitimacy in the public discourse (Koopmans and Statham 1999). By framing itself as a civil society initiative, UNIW seizes a type of legitimacy that would not be available to informal Islamic networks. The legitimacy of civil society identity is especially evident in transnational politics of the post-9/11 world. Islamic charities and social service organizations have always met with suspicion and been exposed to extraordinary levels of scrutiny in much of the non-Muslim world (Benthall 2007). They have been often deemed to be funding fronts for terrorism and jihad in the public mind (Kroessin 2007). These accusations have only intensified and gained more political clout since 9/11. Severe anti-terror legislations in Europe and the United States designated numerous transnational charitable organizations and their country offices terrorist entities. Many Saudi Arabian and

Gulf charities, businesses and NGOs were indicted, suspended or shut down altogether.⁹⁰

These anti-terror legislations have hit the organizations' funding sources the most. Governments have frozen the bank accounts of many Islamic charities and service NGOs. Legislations in Europe and the US have also shut down Islamic organizations' fundraising activities. For example, the Saudi government, which is the second-largest donor to the developing world, yielded to the US pressure and barred all NGOs from sending funds abroad in July 2003 (Kroessin 2007). These legislations and multilateral measures not only disrupted the organizations' operations but also created a sense of distrust among donors. As a result, many Islamic charities and service organizations experienced sizable drops in their fundraising (Ghazali 2008).

In sum, Islamic organizations and networks of any type and size have been under greater scrutiny since September 11. The atmosphere of distrust created around Islamic collective associations of any kind makes it difficult for Islamic NGOs and networks to claim legitimacy about their missions and actions. UNIW's leaders are aware of the constraints of the current political climate. While UNIW's core aim is to establish global Islamic solidarity, its founders and executives are cautious about accepting membership applications from organizations that could be construed as extremists, and in turn could jeopardize UNIW's legitimacy in the international

⁹⁰ It is important to note that there are discrepancies across European and US treatment of Islamic charities. Benthall (2007) explains this discrepancy by the observer bias. While virtually all major Islamic charities in the United States have been closed down, many charities operate successfully under the regulation of the Charity Commission in Britain. For example, Interpal, which is a British Islamic charity set up to bring aid to Palestinians is a highly regarded organization in Britain and twice cleared of wrongdoing by the Charity Commission, it has been designated as a terrorist entity by the U.S. government (Benthall 2007: 6).

public. During the formative years, UNIW's leaders were careful about "avoiding organizations that had radical leanings"⁹¹.

UNIW leaders are also vigilant about the companies to which they choose to align the organization. In order to claim legitimacy as a serious actor, UNIW's executives have applied for accreditation from the European Union, United Nations, Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. UNIW's leaders' attitudes about the identity of the organization are unmistakable as demonstrated by the fiery debate at the council meeting in Malaysia. In a closed session on the first day of the 9th council meeting in 2009, two UNIW members proposed to form an international association of *ulama*⁹² association alongside UNIW. Members argued that an association that brought together ulamas and acted as an advisory body to UNIW's actions would provide legitimacy to UNIW among its constituents in the international Muslim public. The ulama association, members argued, would evaluate UNIW's conduct of affairs from a *fiqhi* (jurisprudence) point of view, issue *fatwas* (juristic ruling concerning Islamic law) about the proposed solutions to Muslim world's pressing problems, and support UNIW's position as the representative of the Muslim world. Although the meeting's presiders opened the floor to opinions from the rest of the participants, UNIW's executive committee members were quick to shut down the debate stating that UNIW's place is "in the United Nations, not alongside the ulama".⁹³

⁹¹ Interviewee 7, (UNIW Deputy Secretary General), personal interview by author, September 4, 2009.

⁹² Ulama (sing. alim) are a powerful and respected body of scholars, jurists, and teachers learned in the Islamic sciences (Keddie 1972: 2). Trained in Islam and Islamic law, ulama interpret Islam's sciences, doctrines and laws.

⁹³ UNIW executive committee member (Kuwait), 9th Council Meeting, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, May 16th, 2010.

NGO member I (Turkey): I would like to make a suggestion about finding solutions to the Islamic World's problems. We talked about recognition, prestige, and respectability. I believe that Umma's prestige depends on its Ulama. I believe that we cannot solve the Islamic World's problems without the Ulama. I propose that we form an international association of Ulama and get them to support UNIW as a civil society coalition. They can issue fatwas to endorse UNIW and its actions.

NGO member II (Burkina Faso): I second this proposition. A prestigious Ulama association can support our identity and mission. Our lawful authority cannot be the United Nations. UN has its own agenda, its own politics. Our place is alongside the Ulama.

UNIW executive member I (Turkey): I hear your suggestion about getting fatwas from Ulama, but we need to think about it *very* carefully. Framing the problems of the Muslim World as Ulama's concerns will take us back about a hundred years. Ulama are concerned with the past, civil society is concerned with the future [italics added].

UNIW executive member II (Kuwait): I agree. Our place is of course within the UN. We are already in cooperation with the International Union for Muslim Scholars, which is directed by Yusuf al-Qaradawi. But we will shoot ourselves in the foot if we lean on Ulama for recognition in the international public.

The debate above perfectly illustrates UNIW's strategic positioning within the civil society discourse to achieve legitimacy in transnational politics. UNIW's leaders are adamant in drawing the organization's legitimacy from the civil society discourse rather than religion. They are convinced that in the current climate of transnational politics, only the civil society identity and discourse can allow UNIW a prestigious position as a serious actor in the international arena. In other words, according to UNIW's leaders the opportunity structure of the civil society discourse is stronger than a religious solidarity one.

6.5.2 Resonance

Gaining legitimacy and public visibility is a necessary condition for UNIW's impact. In order to achieve legitimacy and visibility, UNIW's message has to resonate with the international public domain. In Koopmans' (2005: 164) terms, "the career of a discursive message is likely to remain stillborn" if it does not succeed in eliciting response from interested parties. UNIW addresses two interested parties: First, Muslim NGOs that UNIW aims to unite under its umbrella. Religion and Islamic solidarity are powerful codes to mobilize potential Muslim NGOs to join UNIW. However, these codes do not generate interest and response from the second interested party: international media, transnational non-state actors, intergovernmental organizations, as well as states and governments in the West. In order to elicit interest from the broader political habitus, UNIW has to frame its message and identity in norms that resonate with those of transnational non-state politics. Civil society master frame, which draws upon the transnational political environment's widely accepted discursive resources such as active citizenship, participatory politics, and voluntarism, allows UNIW to extend its message's resonance.

Therefore, while UNIW is a religious network that promotes conservative norms, it draws from the ideational resources of the civil society toolbox and employs liberal norms in order to obtain resonance with the claims of secular transnational non-state actors. UNIW simultaneously employs liberal norms such as human rights, anti-discrimination, and freedom of speech alongside conservative norms such as communitarian duty, family loyalty, traditional gender roles and heteronormativity.

For example, at UNIW's 9th Council Meeting the spokesperson of the Women, Family and Youth Commission (WFYC) referred to the achievements of women's rights movements around the world in her speech and urged UNIW to devote more interest and resources to projects that involve women. The WFYC spokesperson drew attention to the dissolution of families under the threat of globalization and Western cultural imperialism. She particularly focused on the pressures on women to carelessly seek careers and social life to the detriment of their responsibilities towards their families. Emphasizing that mother's role is crucial in raising virtuous and morally grounded children, the WFYC spokesperson pointed towards the devalued role of motherhood in capitalist societies.

In the same speech, she also proposed a title change for the commission: a reorganization of the title's keywords to *Family, Women, and Youth Commission*, in order to emphasize members' priorities. The debate following the proposal is indicative of the way in which UNIW selectively employs the ideational resources of the liberal civil society discourse alongside conservative values.

WFYC spokesperson: Globalization process is already destroying the family unit. Its consumerist ideology and cultural imperialism are disintegrating the members of the family. It sets women and children apart from their nuclear families. Our title, *Women, Family and Youth* is a borrowed one and it does not reflect our concerns. We should not endorse women's position in contradiction to the wellbeing of the family unit and its values.

UNIW member: It is true, but as we have been discussing since this morning, women face severe pressure in many countries. Like our East Turkistan member demonstrated in the previous session, young girls in China, as well as in other countries, are subject to assimilationist policies. They cannot don the veil, they cannot pray, they are forced to work outside their homes and villages. We have to pay attention to women's problems. Like you said, we should not overlook women's rights movement's achievements on this issue.

WFYC spokesperson: Exactly. But again, this is a family values issue. The reason why we are proposing a title change is that the current title prioritizes women over families. This is a feminist discourse and it is not suitable. Instead of espousing a feminist perspective on this issue, we should prioritize the well being of families.

As this debate demonstrates, UNIW members' primary concern here is promoting women's primary role as the essential building block of the Islamic family unit (Kadioglu 1994). They support women's responsibility to keep marriages and families intact, and guard the family unit's moral order against the threats from capitalist globalization and *westoxification*. At the same time, they employ liberal norms such as women's autonomy and self-determination in order to salvage the stability of the family unit and women's role as mothers. Similarly, UNIW members use the freedom of expression norm to voice their grievances about Muslim minorities' educational rights in Europe; anti-discrimination and human rights norms to raise international awareness about the rise of Islamophobia; individual self-determination norm to oppose Muslim orphan children's adoption by Western families and resulting cultural assimilation.

6.5.3 Public visibility

The legitimacy provided to UNIW by its civil society character increases its chances of gaining visibility in the international arena. UNIW aims to influence the international public by drawing attention to the Muslim World's issues. However, in addition to the distrust surrounding Muslim groups' causes, UNIW is also bound by the inadequate access to communicative channels. The space available to groups "who aim to get their message across in the public discourse" is an uneven field (Koopmans 2005: 163). Within the competitive space for public visibility, advocacy

movements are already in a disadvantaged position compared to legitimate capital of states (Beck 2006: 105-6). Among these advocacy movements, claim makers that appear as legitimate, organized bodies are bestowed with more credibility. In the pecking order of transnational public visibility, informal religious groups and networks face further isolation and alienation. In that sense, as its leaders are convinced, if UNIW wants to publicize its claims and be a participating actor in Muslim World's affairs, it has to assume the civil society identity. The legitimacy of the civil society character is imperative not only to gain access to international media, but also to gain access to policy makers. The most illustrating example is UNIW's work against Islamophobia.

Increasing awareness about the rise of Islamophobia around the world after 9/11 is one of the most prominent of UNIW's pursuits in the sphere of political advocacy. Following the events of September 11, 2001, Muslim groups consistently reported increased hostility and discrimination, especially in North America and most EU countries. Stereotypical and sensationalist depictions of Muslims in mass media, negative images of Muslims promoted by the news sources and political leaders, religiously motivated abuse experienced by Muslim groups, and exclusory political practices are addressed by UNIW's member NGOs in assembly meetings and internal summits.

UNIW lists "fighting Islamophobia around the world" as its leading mission. It works to organize and mobilize public opinion to raise awareness in the international community of the dangers of Islamophobia, and calls to develop mechanisms against defamation of religions and discrimination against Muslims. With the use of its

supposed mandate as the “voice of Muslim civil society,” UNIW officially responds to activities that insult, discriminate, or violate the human rights of Muslims because of their faith.

In order to expose Islamophobia in the international community and media, UNIW holds international conferences with the participation of political leaders, academics, media personalities, international organizations and representatives of its member NGOs. In December 2007, UNIW organized a high profile international conference on Islamophobia in Istanbul, Turkey. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan opened the conference and the OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu gave the keynote speech. The Final Communiqué announced the launch of a Monitoring Center Committee to inform international decision-making mechanisms, press organs and the international community with periodical reports. Since the establishment of the committee, the UNIW General Secretariat has issued statements; met the political leadership of numerous European countries, the leaders of international organizations and think-tanks; addressed letters to the United Nations and the European Union; organized workshops and symposiums; and made démarches to the Danish embassy following the caricature controversy, and to the Dutch embassy regarding the release of the film *Fitna* by a Dutch parliamentarian.

Combating Islamophobia and raising awareness about the conditions of Muslim minorities are not newfangled efforts for Muslim community leaders or solidarity groups. Neither problem has a short history. In fact, UNIW’s leaders and the officers of many of UNIW’s member had been active in mobilizing their immediate communities around these issues before they established formal organizations.

However, they find that their voices are heard more loudly since they transformed their informal religiously motivated communities into formal organizations and established transnational networks. They receive more attention in the international media, they get easier access to intergovernmental organizations and national government agencies, and they present their positing in a more organized and efficient way by centralizing the message. By claiming the legitimacy of their civil society character, by framing their grievances in ways that resonate with the norms of the international public, and by ‘speaking as one voice’, they increase the public visibility of their message.

6. 6 Conclusion

Why are the previously informal Islamist networks transforming into formal NGOs? More specifically, why does UNIW, effectively a religious solidarity alliance, adopt the discourse of civil society? What are the additional benefits of the civil society language? In this chapter, I employ the discursive opportunity structure framework to answer these questions. I argue that UNIW’s strategic decision to frame itself as a civil society initiative allows it to claim legitimacy as a serious actor in transnational politics and therefore pursue its global Islamic solidarity objective more forcefully. The coalition shapes its organizational identity and ideological message in ways that garner attention in international platforms, that facilitate international visibility, and that bestow credibility to its stated goals.

UNIW’s leaders choose to position the coalition within the transnational non-state actor, particularly the civil society, sphere because they perceive the benefits of civil society as an opportunity structure. UNIW’s leaders and member NGOs, similar to

any norm-motivated actor, are embedded within the particular ideological configuration of world politics. The contemporary world-culture, in which UNIW is embedded, asserts that civil society is the sine qua non of good governance, participatory democracy, public deliberation, rule of law, material welfare, individual rights and freedoms, and state legitimacy. In other words, civil society carries the cachet of a cure-all remedy in transnational politics today. A multiplicity of actors, ranging from state officials, intergovernmental organizations, supragovernmental aid agencies to intellectuals, journalists, independent activists, extol the promises of civil society.

Any political actor can employ the civil society concept in any argument so effortlessly because the boundaries of its definition are very ambiguous. Civil society discussions in the academic literature make as much reference to the concept's communitarian interpretations as to its liberal ones. They draw from civil society's associational definitions as much as its reactionary characteristics. In transnational non-state politics, civil society has become a normative toolbox and an ideational pool from which actors can pick and choose in pursuit of their particular political objectives, rather than a coherent and consistent concept. UNIW employs a similar rhetoric of civil society. UNIW leaders' and member NGOs' references to the purposes and promises of civil society draw as much from the liberal toolbox as the conservative value set. In fact, UNIW makes its conservative claims using the liberal discursive opportunities of civil society, such as human rights, freedom of religious expression, anti-discrimination.

This finding points to an oversight in constructivist scholarship on transnational non-state actors. Constructivist scholars have been prolific in analyzing secular international NGOs, transnational advocacy networks, and NGO coalitions that promote liberal norms. It has been mostly silent about non-liberal networks, particularly those that espouse political Islam. However, religious networks that promote conservative norms constitute a large section of civil society. The underlying reason is the assumption that Islamist and liberal discourses are competing normative claims in world politics. However, as UNIW's hybrid civil society discourse demonstrates that there are spheres of intersection between these seemingly contradictory discursive frameworks. Therefore, I argue that the study of transnational non-state actors should move beyond the instrumental/ideational as well as liberal/conservative divide and explore the convergences.

In the next chapter, I analyze how the civil society discourse and organizational identity allows UNIW to engage in mutually beneficial relationships with the Turkish state and government agencies. By exploring the geopolitical opportunity structures that are made available to UNIW by Turkey's pro-Islamic government since 2002, I argue states and transnational non-state actors have an interdependent relationship.

CHAPTER 7

“THE EPICENTER OF GLOBAL ISLAM”:

GEOPOLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES

This chapter analyzes the geopolitical opportunity structures that enable UNIW to extend its membership base, build widespread networks and act as a global political actor in the international arena. These geopolitical opportunity structures are rooted in the main tenets of Turkish foreign policy strategy. Turkey’s foreign policy strategy has gone through a significant transformation with the pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party’s (AKP) rise to power in 2002. Throughout the three terms of its rule, AKP aimed to position Turkey as a regional leader and a global power. According to the policy’s architects, this leadership role requires Turkey to establish economic and cultural ties with its interconnected regions. The use of *soft power* as a means to form cultural ties in these regions is a main tenet of this foreign policy strategy. To that end, the government prioritized cultivating stronger relationships with the countries in the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia and Balkans. In this process, the AKP government has extended substantial support to UNIW as the organization’s mission, which is to consolidate Muslim civil societies across the globe and act as a representative to the Muslim world in general, complements the government’s geopolitical goals.

In this chapter I trace UNIW’s trajectory in conjunction with AKP’s rise to power and discuss the ways in which its interests intersect with the government’s foreign policy vision. I argue that UNIW, as a global Muslim NGO coalition led by Turkish pro-Islamic organizations, act as a soft-power instrument to the AKP government’s

foreign policy vision of positioning Turkey as a strategic leader. In the last section of the chapter, in two case studies I discuss UNIW as a catalyst in cultivating relations with Africa through humanitarian aid, and in incorporating Turkey as an actor in the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

The empirical analysis in this chapter challenges the assumptions of constructivist scholarship on state/transnational non-state actor relationship. In contradiction to constructivist literature's unbalanced emphasis on the power of transnational non-state actors *over* states, the findings of this chapter demonstrate that states and non-state actors have a more complex and interdependent character. On the one hand the Turkish government and its agencies facilitate the development and performance of UNIW. On the other hand, UNIW complements the state's geopolitical goals by furthering Turkey's interests in the international arena. In other words, the material/security interests of the state and the ideational concerns of the transnational non-state actor dovetail in mutually beneficial ways.

7.1 Engagements with the Government

As a transnational non-state actor, UNIW is a *civil* coalition: its leaders are not state officials, its executive committee is composed of urban, educated, middle-class professionals; and its member NGOs are not dependent on state for personnel, funding, or management (Shieh & Schwartz 2009). Therefore, at the outset UNIW is not a state-dependent or government-operated organization. However, its history and operations cannot be understood independently from the politics of the Turkish state. To the contrary, UNIW is rooted in the decades long mobilization of political Islam in Turkey.

The Turkish state took over all religious affairs and institutions during the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic in 1924. Between 1924 and 1960s, the disenfranchised religious brotherhoods transformed from loosely organized local communities to legally operating foundations and associations. Particularly between 1980s and 1990s, these foundations and associations gained prominence and increased in number thanks to the donations of pious businessmen. In its first term in the early 2000s, the pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP) granted these organizations the “public service associations” status that allowed foundations and associations financial autonomy and tax exemption. A wide range of Islamist foundations, service provision organizations and conservative businessmen’s associations were among the organizations that enjoyed the benefits of this special status. These conservative, right-wing and nationalist organizations generated a strong pro-Islamic civil society in Turkey by running social, educational, cultural and humanitarian programs among the urban poor; by advocating issues of religious freedom; and by representing the economic interests of small and medium-size Islamist enterprises (Onis 1997).

UNIW as an umbrella organization is an offshoot of this pro-Islamic civil society mobilization in Turkey. During 1990s, over a hundred pro-Islamic associations and foundations consolidated under the Foundation of Volunteer Organizations of Turkey (TGTV). For the first ten years of its formation, TGTV worked on the issues of the Islamic community in the country’s restraining secular political environment. It mainly organized conferences and meetings to negotiate religious rights and freedoms with the secular ideology. Until AKP government’s rule, these meetings were largely

domestic in scope and attendance. With the political and financial support of the conservative ruling party and its government agencies, TGTV found unprecedented opportunities to broaden the agendas and reach of these meetings to an international level, particularly to the Muslim-majority geographies. As described in detail in Chapter 5, UNIW was established in one of these international meetings held in this period. The meeting, “The International Conference of Non-Governmental organizations of the Islamic World: Searching for a New Vision in a Changing World” was held in 2005 with the attendance of over three hundred non-governmental organizations, academics and journalists from forty countries. The ruling government’s support for this meeting was not simply limited to logistic assistance. Not only numerous members of the Parliament were present in the meeting, the Chairman of the Parliament and the Foreign Minister of the government gave the opening speeches on the first day. TGTV’s Board of Directors and the conference attendees voted to establish The Union of the Non-Governmental Organizations of the Islamic World (UNIW) in the last session.

UNIW’s speedy growth cannot be fully understood without taking the political opportunity structures available to the organization during AKP government’s rule. UNIW’s opportunity structures are not only limited to domestic political factors such as the availability of elite allies and institutional access.⁹⁴ Equally, if not more

⁹⁴ The availability of elite alliances within the state system and institutional access are undoubtedly important for UNIW’s performance. While UNIW’s leaders and its member NGOs frequently emphasize that they are civil society initiatives that work independent of any government or state authority, they still acknowledge organic affiliations with the members of the ruling government. One UNIW executive explains: “Obviously, TGTV’s composition produced state officials over time. Today, there are ministers in the government who moved up of our ranks. Our friends *are* the government today. But it should be clear: this is not a stepping-stone. We are in it to serve the Muslim world, not for upward mobility.” Interviewee 7 (UNIW executive committee member), personal interview by author, September 4, 2009.

important, are the *geopolitical* opportunity structures that became available to UNIW with the AKP government's drastic redirection of Turkish foreign policy strategy. In the next section, I provide a brief background of AKP's rise of power and the main tenets of its foreign policy vision.

7.2 Turkish Foreign Policy and Neo-Ottomanism

The Islamic political parties of Turkey have always clashed with the strictly secular political ideology of the Republic. Particularly the political parties that grew out of the National Outlook (*Milli Görüş*) movement, which espoused that Islamic identity should be represented in the Parliament, have shared the same fate. The movement's ventures into party politics have been banned several times on the grounds of exploiting religion for political purposes (Gulalp 2001). The first two parties, namely the National Order party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*) and the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*) were banned following the military coups in 1971 and 1980s respectively. The Turkish constitutional Court banned the two successor parties: Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*) in 1998 and the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*) in 2001. Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*) quickly replaced Virtue Party in the same year but the movement experienced a generational and ideological rift in the meantime. Disillusioned by the Felicity Party's loss of credibility and its undemocratic, centralized and nontransparent structure, a modernist faction of younger Islamic activists, led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Abdullah Gul broke away and formed the AKP (Ozbudun 2006).

The leaders of the AKP defined the party's political and economic stance so as to appeal to a broader electorate rather than the former National Outlook parties' voter

base. The leaders frequently repeated that AKP was not a successor of the National Outlook movement and that the party was located at the center of Turkish political spectrum. AKP also branded itself as *conservative democrat* rather than *Islamist* or *Muslim democrat* (Keyman 2010). Drawing parallels with Christian democracy and Western conservatism, AKP offered a discourse of economic liberalism, upward social mobility, and economic growth merged with conservative values of religion, family, tradition and past grandeur (Kalaycioglu 2007).

AKP's discourse struck a chord with Turkish voters' expectations and the party won the 2002 general elections by a landslide, only 14 months after its establishment. It attracted over a third of the vote and came to power as the first single party government after a decade of consecutive coalition governments. AKP also won the July 2007 general elections by increasing its vote share to 47% and taking out 340 out of 550 seats in the Grand National Assembly to form a single-party government for a second term. It won a third term in the 2011 parliamentary elections by winning just a shade under 50 percent of the popular vote.

Turkish Foreign Policy

Throughout the three terms of the AKP government, Turkish foreign policy underwent a paradigm shift. With the Republican goal of making Turkey a full, equal member of the Western European community of nations, Kemalist foreign policy had pursued an exclusively Western oriented path and distanced itself from the Middle East. The main tenets of Turkish foreign policy for the most of the republican history emphasized avoiding interference in the domestic affairs of the Middle East countries and in inter-country relations in the region. During the Cold War period, Turkey

decidedly steered clear of regional problems such as the Arab-Israeli, inter-Arab, and Iran-Iraq conflicts (Karaosmanoglu 1983).

With the end of the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy moved from unidimensionality and isolationism to a diversified and multidimensional alliance pattern (Ataman 2002). Under the leadership of Turgut Ozal between 1989 and 1993, Turkey established more salient relationships in the Caucasus, initiated bilateral cooperation with Turkic Republics, improved commercial and economic collaborations, and started joint projects in industrial, agricultural, energy and service sectors. Turkey also developed an interest in the Balkans by participating in peacekeeping and stabilization operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, and by initiating closer political, economic and military ties with Albania, Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria (Karaosmanoglu 2000; Uzgel 2001).

AKP's foreign policy vision is an extension of this post-Cold War approach which prioritizes "maintaining its geo-strategic importance in global politics, ensuring regional stability, preventing ethnic conflicts from spilling over into its territory and gaining new markets to fuel its strategy of export-based growth" (Sayari 2000: 180). Unlike the foreign policy visions of the previous Turkish governments, however, AKP's strategy involves building stronger relationships with the Middle East and the broader Muslim geography. In other words, AKP government's geostrategic vision builds on the post Cold-War approach but stands out as a more ambitious and proactive project in what is often called neo-Ottomanism.

Neo-Ottomanism

Neo-Ottomanism was first evoked during the Turgut Ozal era of the early 1990s as a solution to the aggravated ethnic conflict between the Kurdish separatists and the Turkish state. Highlighting the cultural plurality of the Ottoman Empire, Ozal era's neo-Ottomanism favored a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural composition that accommodated multiple identities, including the Kurdish identity (Yavuz 1998). During AKP government's tenure, the contours of neo-Ottomanism were crystallized which over the years shaped Turkey's foreign policy vision.

At the crux of the neo-Ottomanist vision is the argument that as the successor of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey holds a particular responsibility to the formerly Ottoman geographies. Inspired by Ottoman Empire's centuries long rule of multiple regions, AKP's top policymakers regard Turkey as a morally responsible "leader of Muslim and Turkic worlds and a central power in Eurasia" (Murinson 2006: 947). Therefore, AKP's vision transcends the Ottoman territories and suggests cultivating relations with Africa, Asia as well as the West.

AKP's neo-Ottomanist geo-strategy is indebted to Ahmet Davutoglu, who was a professor of international relations before moving to politics. Davutoglu initially served as the chief foreign policy advisor, and was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2009. In his book "Strategic Depth", Davutoglu (2001) articulates his strategic vision, which came to shape Turkey's foreign policy since 2002. According to Davutoglu, a country's strategic depth depends on its historical and geographical depth. He defines historical depth as being 'at the epicenter of historic events', a characteristic shared by eight former empires:

During the transit from the 19th to the 20th century; there were eight multi-national empires across Eurasia: Britain, Russia, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, China, Japan and Turkey. Now these countries are experiencing very similar problems with their prospective regions. As these countries possess historical depth, they form spheres of influence. If they fail to do this, they then experience various problems.⁹⁵

For Davutoglu, Turkey's strategic depth is reinforced also by its unique geographical depth. Davutoglu argues that Turkey should act simultaneously at multiple levels:

“Turkey is not just any old Mediterranean country. One important characteristic that distinguishes Turkey from, say Romania and Greece is that Turkey is at the same time a Middle Eastern and Caucasian country ... Indeed, Turkey is as much a Black Sea country as it is a Mediterranean one. This geographical depth places Turkey right at the epicenter of many geopolitical areas of influence”.⁹⁶

The “strategic depth’ doctrine suggests that Turkey’s key historical and geographical position calls for a more “central” role. Rather than its Cold-War era position at the peripheries of the European Union, NATO, or Asia, Turkey should be located at the core of Afro-Eurasia (Onis and Yilmaz 2009: 9). By forming simultaneous alliances in its immediate geopolitical neighborhood, Turkey should claim a global strategic role. In other words, Turkey should seek active engagements in the Middle East, Central Asia and Balkans to counterbalance its unidimensional dependency on the European Union and the United States. In this framework, in addition to continuing deep engagements with the European Union and the United States, Turkey should also cultivate stronger relationships with Middle Eastern states,

⁹⁵ 'The “Strategic Depth” that Turkey Needs', An Interview with Ahmet Davutoglu, *The Turkish Daily News*, 15 September 2001.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

as well as non-state actors, in order to resolve its regional disputes in its immediate neighborhood.

In that respect, “zero problems with neighbors” lay at the core of Davutoglu’s vision. To that effect, the AKP government took major steps in cultivating deeper relationships in the region. In this period, Turkey reestablished economic and political cooperations with Syria and attempted to play the role of an intermediary between Syria and Israel to reopen peace talks. Turkey also mediated between Syria and Egypt during the recent Gazan crisis.⁹⁷ Also in the Middle East, the AKP government took steps to stabilize relations with Iran, and facilitated dialogue with the international community over nuclear issues, signed an agreement about the transportation of Iranian and Turkmen gas through Turkey to European markets. Turkey improved relations with Georgia specifically through the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline projects; signed free customs agreements with Jordan, Lebanon and Syria; secured nuclear and natural energy deals with Russia; recognized the Kurdistan Regional Government, negotiated between Sunni and Shiite factions in Iraq, and strengthened cooperation with the Iraqi federal government; sent troops to the NATO mission in Afghanistan; took active part in the UN’s Alliance of

⁹⁷ Turkey’s strategic depth policy was put to test during the Arab revolutions of 2011. Turkey’s reaction to Arab Spring has revealed the inconsistencies of Turkish foreign policy. For example, the Turkish government supported democracy unequivocally in Tunisia and Egypt. Turkey’s reaction to the uprisings in Syria and Libya, on the other hand, was not as straightforward. Tocci (2011: 3) explains the difference in attitudes by state interests: “In Egypt, the implicit strategic rivalry between Turkey and the Egyptian regime and the absence of large Turkish investments all pushed Turkey into supporting the Tahrir revolution. By contrast, in Libya, the \$15 billion worth of Turkish investments and the 250,000 Turkish citizens to be repatriated contributed to Turkey’s caution. In Syria, the fear of instability along the 877 kilometer Turkish-Syrian border and of the sectarian ramifications of the Syrian uprising (particularly as regards the Kurdish question) led Turkey to adopt a pro-status quo and wait-and-see approach”. In other words, the discord between normative and *realpolitik* dimensions of the foreign policy strategies came to light during the Arab Spring. Turkey was in support of democracy when norms matched the interests.

Civilizations initiative and the Organization of the Arabic Union, and a leadership position in the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

7.3 UNIW: Soft Power Instrument to Turkish Foreign Policy

A main tenet of the strategic depth doctrine is the use of *soft power*. Soft power, according to the architects of the Turkish foreign policy, is “the political, economic, diplomatic and cultural influence in formerly Ottoman territories as well as other regions where Turkey has strategic and national interests” (Taspinar 2008: 15). The strategic depth policy is not merely geopolitical power; Turkey has to strengthen its economic ties with its interconnected regions, and makes use of its identity card if it is to be a regional leader and a global power. In other words, global leadership requires strong trade and cultural relationships.

Turkey’s leadership ideal in the formerly Ottoman geographies finds its best ally in UNIW. The ideologues of UNIW repeatedly allude to Turkey’s imperial legacy in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia. As mentioned before, UNIW’s leaders frequently express their concerns about the state of dispersion and desperation these regions find themselves today. As a coalition of Muslim civil societies, the borders of UNIW’s ambitions are drawn around the regions and societies in which Muslims live as a majority. For the leaders of the UNIW, the dispersed and poverty stricken Muslim world needs a strong leader to help consolidate and prosper as a united block. Turkey, according to the Turkish founders of UNIW, stands out as *the natural leader*:

Turkey is in a different position compared to the rest of the Muslim world. The idea that Istanbul is the capital of Islam today is a historical fact. It has its roots in the Ottoman Empire. We were in a leadership position at the time and the geography we abandoned houses about fifty states now. They have embraced our

leadership for centuries, but we got scattered in the wind. But today, on every criterion, be it cultural, economic, or political, Turkey comes forward as the natural leader of the Muslim geography.⁹⁸

Similar to the AKP government's stance on Turkey's position in world politics, UNIW leaders argue that Turkey has the geopolitical capacity to assume a leadership position. However, Turkey's geopolitical position is only part of this rationale. For UNIW's leaders, what is equally, if not more, important is Turkey's *moral responsibility* towards the Muslim world. As discussed at length in Chapter 5, assistance to fellow Muslims and service to humanity are framed in terms of the duty-oriented language of religion. Therefore, for UNIW's Turkish leaders, Turkey is not only the best candidate for Muslim leadership, but it is morally obligated to assume the position:

Turkey looms as a "rising star" in protecting the Muslim World's rights, transferring its messages to the global public, and helping it struggle with the political and diplomatic hardships after 9/11. Such a course saddles Turkey with a historic responsibility.⁹⁹

UNIW's spokespeople frequently allude to the imperial past as a cultural link among the former Ottoman geopolitical sphere. At the same time, they are emphatic about its symbolic value. UNIW's leaders echo Davutoglu as they separate neo-Ottomanist ideology from restoring an actual imperial order in the Middle East and the Balkans. In their perspective, "the age of empires has long gone and it is nonsensical to suggest an imperial political order".¹⁰⁰ Yet, they argue, Turkey can

⁹⁸ Interviewee 40 (TGTV spokesperson), personal interview by author, February 11, 2010.

⁹⁹ Interviewee 31 (IMH spokesperson), personal interview by author, January 12, 2010.

¹⁰⁰ Interviewee 7 (UNIW executive committee member), personal interview by author, September 4, 2009.

lead the way to form a united front, a political bloc composed of the Muslim countries and populations via its soft power:

States can only go so far. The Turkish state can build roads, wells, hospitals, schools in these countries but how is it going to bond with those people in a profound way? You need civil society, real people, to establish personal, cultural ties.¹⁰¹

In that respect, civil society organizations constitute a unique power base. UNIW itself serves as an invaluable soft power instrument to Turkish government's foreign policy vision. In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the ways in which UNIW's ideational interests and the AKP government's instrumental interests coincide. I discuss this point by analyzing two specific case studies: 1) UNIW's role in cultivating relations with African nations through humanitarian aid, and 2) UNIW's Turkish member NGOs' directly political role in incorporating Turkey as an interested party in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

7.3.1 Case Study 1: Tying Africa to Turkey through Humanitarian Work

Turkey's increasing interest in cultivating relations with countries beyond its immediate geography found its ideal collaborator in the Turkish Muslim NGOs that work in the humanitarian aid system, specifically in Africa. The AKP government's aspirations about forming bonds with African countries and establishing new export markets coincide with Turkish Muslim NGOs' endeavor of recreating the links with the Muslim communities in Africa. For the NGOs that have been struggling to reach Muslim communities beyond the Middle East and the Balkans, helping Muslims in

¹⁰¹ Interviewee 40 (TGTV spokesperson), personal interview by author, February 11, 2010.

Africa is simply fulfilling a duty that has been dropped since the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire:

We were made to forget Africa; we have to remember it once again. Africa is very close to us, deeply close. We have a lot of history there, we have legacy, we have relatives. In the remotest places of Ethiopia we met people who call themselves Turkish. *They* want to call themselves Turkish. They recall and cherish our bond, why don't we?¹⁰²

In that respect, the AKP government, small and medium scale businessmen backed by Ankara, and the faith-based humanitarian organizations work in tandem to develop strong political, economic, and cultural ties with Africa. The commencement of interest in Africa did not start during AKP's term in government. The first steps towards developing closer ties with African countries were taken in 1998, by the then Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz. The "Opening Up to Africa" policy of the Yilmaz government espoused cultivating diplomatic, economic, political and cultural relations. However, it was the AKP government that put the policy into action (Ozkan 2008: 22).

The government announced 2005 "the Year of Africa" during which Prime Minister Erdogan visited Ethiopia and South Africa, Turkey obtained "observer status" in the African Union, and accredited its ambassador in Ethiopia as its official representative to the pan-African organization. The African Union has declared Turkey a "strategic partner" at its January 2008 meeting. In August 2008, the first Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit was held in Istanbul with the attendance of fifty countries. The resulting "Istanbul Declaration on Africa - Turkey Partnership" outlined priorities for cooperation on trade and investment, agriculture and water

¹⁰² Interviewee 6 (IHH spokesperson), personal interview by author, July 3, 2008.

resources management, health, peace and security, infrastructure and energy, culture and education, media and communications, and environmental concerns. In October 2008, Turkey was elected to one of the non-permanent seats on the UN Security Council with the support of African countries, which voted *en bloc* in favor of Turkey's candidacy. In 2010, Abdullah Gul paid the first presidential level visit to Cameroon and Congo, with an entourage of 140 businessmen and NGO leaders.

The collaboration between the AKP government, the small and medium scale Anatolian businesses and the faith-based Turkish NGOs pave the way for increasing investment in and trade with African countries. Turkish exports to Africa have leapt from \$1.5 billion in 2001 to over \$10 billion in 2009. The AKP government has stated its trade volume with Africa to reach \$30 billion by 2010.¹⁰³

Turkish investment in Africa is coupled with development assistance backed by state agencies. The Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) handle a considerable amount of developmental help from Turkey to Africa. Turgut Ozal founded TIKA in 1992 as a state agency, similar to USAID, "to assist in the development of the newly independent states [of the post-Soviet Asia] by furthering cooperation in economic, commercial, technological, social, cultural and education exchanges" (Cohen 2005: 103).

Although TIKA was established to build relationships with the former communist states of Central Asia and Eastern Europe, in recent years it expanded its scope to a larger portion of the developing world. In 2009, for example, TIKA implemented 45% of its projects in Central Asia and the Caucuses, 27% in the Balkans and East

¹⁰³ http://www.thisisafricaonline.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/106/Turkey_92s_change_of_direction.htm
1

Europe, and 25% in the Middle East and Africa.¹⁰⁴ Of these regions, the greatest increase in project density was in Africa. From its regional offices in Addis Ababa, Khartoum, and Dakar, TIKA runs development projects in thirty-seven African countries through technical assistance and expert personnel support in education, health and agriculture, as well as infrastructure.

UNIW's member NGOs deliver the majority of social aid from Turkey to Africa independently. They collaborate with TIKA in projects that require infrastructure, such as developmental aid and health services. UNIW's Turkish executives have been collaborating with TIKA in implementing agricultural projects in Africa since 2008. TIKA itself has been running agricultural development projects in thirteen African countries. In addition to running agricultural projects in Africa, TIKA trains African agricultural engineers in Turkey, hosts high level officials of agricultural sector from East and West African countries¹⁰⁵ to give briefings about general agricultural policy, the structure of the Ministry of Agriculture and agricultural activities of the Turkish government, and to demonstrate implementations on the field. Through TIKA's African Agricultural Development program, UNIW executives team up with Turkish agricultural engineers and run agricultural productivity studies in Sudan.¹⁰⁶

TIKA and Turkish NGOs work in cooperation in extending health services to Africa due to the required technology and human capacity to run effective health projects overseas. TIKA collaborates with various Turkish NGOs to manage the flow of volunteer medical professionals from Turkey to Africa; build health facilities, set

¹⁰⁴ TIKA 2009 Annual Report, http://www.tika.gov.tr/yukle/dosyalar/Faaliyet_Raporu

¹⁰⁵ The participant countries to TIKA's Agricultural Cooperation and Training Program are Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Union of Comoros, Madagascar, Mali, Senegal, and Tanzania. For more information on the program, see: <http://www.tika.gov.tr/EN/Icerik.ASP?ID=354>.

¹⁰⁶ Interviewee 6 (IHH spokesperson), personal interview by author, July 3, 2008.

up mobile clinics, medical buses, permanent hospitals, temporary tent hospitals; deliver medication and medical equipment aid; undertake health screenings; and perform surgeries.

The most systematized and publicized health project in Africa is the “Cataract Project”, undertaken by TIKA and IHH since 2005. Cataract is the leading cause of blindness in Africa. More than 6 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa are blind (Resnikoff et al. 2002). Due to the exigency of HIV AIDS and malaria treatments and child care services, eye care and cataract prevention programs face a lack of commitment from African governments. Therefore, NGOs provide more extensive eye care services in Africa than state-run institutions (Etya’ale 2004). IHH has been running the cataract project since 2005 with the slogan: “If you see them, they will see the world”.¹⁰⁷ Sudan is selected as the location base of the project. IHH has opened two permanent eye clinics in Khartoum, and established mobile clinics and eye camps in the rural areas of Sudan away from the capital city. The campaign aims to fix vision problems of 100,000 Africans, and as of September 2010, the foundation has operated cataract surgeries on 43,381 people and delivered eye examinations to 156,524 people in Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Chad, Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo and Nigeria.¹⁰⁸

Independent of TIKA, UNIW’s Turkish member NGOs deliver social aid; distribute educational materials; run orphan care and vocational training programs; and drill wells and canals in water shortage areas. For UNIW’s Turkish NGOs, the conditions of African Muslims are more complex than mere poverty. According to

¹⁰⁷ IHH Project Reports: <http://www.ihh.org.tr/mazlum-bakislarin-riyasiz-tesekkurleri-icin-e2-80-a6/en/>

¹⁰⁸ IHH Annual Project Reports, <http://www.ihh.org.tr/rapor-ve-belgeler/>

the IHH officials, poverty is coupled with discrimination against Muslim minorities in countries ruled by Christian governments. For instance, IHH draws attention to the resource allocation based on minority size in Malawi. In the 1998 census, the Muslim minority is recorded as comprising 12% of the population, which is not considered large enough to allocate funds for religious education in schools of Muslim communities. In 2007, IHH extended support to the Muslim activists in Malawi to register a larger number of Muslim populations at the 2008 census.

In addition to the extreme poverty the population is subject to, IHH is concerned about the missionary activities in Malawi as well as in the rest of the African continent. IHH's fieldworkers argue that African Muslims have "associated the white man with the Christian colonizer and the missionaries"¹⁰⁹. Thus they maintain that it is critical to convey to African Muslims that there are "white Muslims" in the rest of the world whom they can trust. Highly critical of the food-for-faith programs of Christian missionaries in the continent, IHH officials contend that Muslims all over the world have an obligation to help African Muslims in establishing their religious identity. One solution, IHH suggests, is to build mosques in Muslim villages. In the 2007 Qur'ban report, IHH calls for donations to build mosques in Malawi:

The existence of a mosque is very important in this geography because a mosque endorses the Islamic character of a community. Missionaries hesitate in going into villages that have mosques. A Muslim community that has a mosque can hold its head up high there.¹¹⁰

In addition to promoting humanitarian NGOs in their individual work and opening up channels to cooperate with state agencies, the Turkish government supplements its

¹⁰⁹ Interviewee 6 (IHH spokesperson), personal interview by author, July 3, 2008.

¹¹⁰ IHH Annual Project Reports, <http://www.ihh.org.tr/rapor-ve-belgeler/>

Africa policy by sustaining religious connections through the Department of Religious Affairs. In November 2006, the Directorate of Religious Affairs hosted the Summit for Religious Leaders of Muslim Countries and Communities of Africa. The overarching theme of the conference was the historical bonds between the African continent and Turkey dating back to the Ottoman era.¹¹¹ The Turkish Religious Affairs Directorate Head Ali Bardakoglu called for the mobilization of Turkish public opinion and civil initiative to extend assistance to Africa in health, infrastructure and religious education.¹¹² Frequently alluding to the Ottoman legacy in Africa¹¹³, African leaders expressed their interests in having more Turkish schools to compensate for the lack of religious education in Africa¹¹⁴ and building Turkish style mosques in African countries.¹¹⁵ Following the summit, Turkey offered religious education scholarships to African students in Turkish Imam-Hatip Schools (vocational religious high schools). In 2007/2008 academic year, Kayseri Imam Hatip schools hosted 263 African students who received courses in Turkish language, tafsir, hadith, Islamic Law and Islamic Theology¹¹⁶.

¹¹¹ Department of Religious Affairs: <http://diyanet8.diyanet.gov.tr/turkish/dy/Diyanet-Isleri-Baskanligi-Duyuru-339.aspx>

¹¹² Zaman, Turkish daily newspaper: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-37948-diyanet-says-turkish-ngos-should-help-africa.html>

¹¹³ Zaman, Turkish daily newspaper, "African Islamic Convention Calls for Cooperation to Resolve Problems": <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-37894-african-islamic-convention-calls-for-cooperation-to-resolve-problems.html>

¹¹⁴ Zaman, Turkish daily newspaper, "African Leaders Ask for More Turkish Schools": <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-37916-african-aqua-aqualeaders-ask-for-more-turkish-schools.html>

¹¹⁵ Zaman, Turkish daily newspaper, "African Islamic Convention Calls for Cooperation": <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-37894-african-islamic-convention-calls-for-cooperation-to-resolve-problems.html>

¹¹⁶ Department of Religious Affairs: http://www.diyanet.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=199:hdv-ube-yoeneticileri-semineri-rotterdamda-yapld&catid=29:haber-ve-duyurular&Itemid=53

The emphasis of the AKP government's foreign policy vision on finding new export markets, positioning Turkey as a leading actor in its immediate region, and recreating its connections with Africa's predominantly Muslim countries offer a key role to Turkish faith-based NGOs. As Davutoglu states above, this venture requires soft power elements over and above economic and political vigor. The social and cultural bonds reinstated by the achievements of humanitarian and social aid organizations lay the groundwork for further economic and political engagement between Turkey and African countries. For the Turkish faith-based NGOs of UNIW, the presumed moral responsibility emanating from 'imperial legacy' converges with the religious duty of serving fellow Muslims. Drawing upon religious solidarity and the Ottoman legacy, Turkish organizations form social and cultural ties with African nations. In that respect, Turkish faith-based organizations function as agents of soft power to the AKP government's economic and political influence in Africa.

7.3.2 Case Study 2: Politics of Soft Power: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

On the direct political front, Turkish faith-based organizations take up a more pivotal role, particularly in crisis regions of Turkey's immediate geography. The recent crises with Israel over Turkey's involvement in the Palestinian conflict are significant in illustrating the close engagements between civil society organizations and the government. The AKP government has repeatedly declared its intention and ability to be the mediator in Israeli-Palestinian conflict during its tenure and, indeed, made grand gestures on the international stage. Although most interested parties of the conflict, including the Arabs themselves, voice wariness about Erdogan's populist outbursts and are skeptical about the material results of Turkey's activism on this

issue, the AKP government was successful in raising the profile of the Palestine problem in the domestic scene.

Although AKP government's overtures about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are interpreted as a major shift in Turkey's stance about the issue, Turkish-Israeli relations have always been highly fluctuating. Turkey has always been sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and its relationship with Israel took hits after the 1967 Israeli-Arab War and in 1980, when Israel declared Jerusalem its capital. Tensions also rose during the first and second Palestinian intifadas¹¹⁷ (Crisis Report 2010: 3). On the other hand, Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize the State of Israel in 1949 and diplomats were exchanged in 1952. During 1990s, the two countries signed lucrative business, tourism and military partnership deals. After the start of the Madrid and Oslo Arab-Israeli talks, Turkey upgraded its diplomatic envoy to ambassadorial level in 1992. Two years later, Israel and Turkey signed the Secret Security agreement for the exchange of intelligence and a joint initiative against terrorism. Throughout the 1990s, Turkey signed numerous military contracts with Israel. AKP government's military and economic relationships with Israel were no different. Cooperation in military and intelligence-sharing remained intact, and in 2008 the trade volume between Turkey and Israel reached to \$3.3 billion dollars.

Turkey-Israel relations took a downturn after Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections in January 2006. In the aftermath of Hamas' victory, AKP government received its leader, Khalid Mashal, and provided Hamas with a high profile endorsement (Onis and Yilmaz 2009: 19). The relations took another hit

¹¹⁷ During Israeli occupations of West Bank towns in April 2002, the then prime minister Bülent Ecevit described the act as "committing genocide before the eyes of the world". *Turkish Daily News, Daily Newspaper*, 13 April 2002.

during Israel's Lebanon campaign in 2006 and Gaza campaign in 2008. They reached a lower point when Prime Minister Erdogan stormed off the stage at the 2009 World Economic Forum in Davos after a heated debate on Gaza with Shimon Perez. The tumultuous relationship between Turkey and Israel aggravated even more after the May 2010 Flotilla crisis.

Assuming a mediator role in Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the AKP government first took action to consult the Ottoman archives to settle the land ownership disputes. In his book, *Strategic Depth*, Davutoglu (2001: 333) states that "no political problem in the region can be resolved without utilizing Ottoman archives" and argues that Turkey should be an actor in the Middle East peace process on account of its Ottoman legacy in the geography. Davutoglu's suggestion to consult the Ottoman archives in order to resolve the dispute over land ownership in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip through 1916 was later taken up by the then Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gul, in 2006. In response to the domestic and international criticism about intervening in Palestine affairs, Gul stated:

Who is more [entitled] to be involved in Palestine than I? The [land] registrations, the archives of Palestine, Israel, Jerusalem, all this geographic area, are in my possession. Last year we handed the documents related to the land registrations of all this area to the Palestinians as a gift. The archives, land registry, maps are all in our possession. We have all the truths; how can I be not involved?¹¹⁸

The potential of utilizing Ottoman land registry archives in the land ownership dispute is later resumed by the UNIW. In the 9th Council Meeting in Malaysia, the Palestine Platform, a subgroup of civil society organizations, proposed a three-year study of the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul. The project is going to be conducted by a

¹¹⁸ *Vatan*, Daily Newspaper, March 1, 2006.

committee of twenty-five academics. According to the project proposal, Ottoman Treasury Archives, which keep records of titles and privileges, trusts, gifts, charitable and religious foundations, court documents, land deeds, applicable laws, historical demographics, tax and crops information, will provide the required evidence to settle land ownership disputes in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Both the Palestine Platform committee and the UNIW board perceive the project as a matter of duty towards the former Ottoman geographies:

This project will restore our cultural and civilizational legacy. By extending our help in this matter, we will be able to fulfill our mission to the people of Palestine and materialize their expectations as the descendants of this region's sovereign power for centuries.¹¹⁹

On other occasions, the government parceled out strategic roles to the civil society organizations in its position towards the major players of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The AKP government has pronounced its sympathies to Hamas as a legitimate actor in the Middle East on occasion. Inviting Khaled Mashal to Turkey was indeed an attempt at mediating between Hamas leadership and Israel. However, this move was harshly criticized by Western governments, which considered Abbas Mahmud of Fatah as the sole actor and led to a crisis in Turkish-Israeli relations. Consequently, the AKP government chose to downplay its relations with Hamas on a state level, yet opened the way to the likeminded civil society organizations to bring Hamas to the table.

Three days after the government attempted to play the mediator role between Shimon Perez and Mahmud Abbas in Ankara and right before the Annapolis Meetings in the United States in November 2007, the UNIW, Palestinian Solidarity

¹¹⁹ UNIW Palestine Platform Committee, Ottoman Archives Report, May 2009.

Association of Turkey and TGTV organized a high profile al-Quds International Forum Meeting in Istanbul with the help of the government's logistical and organizational resources. The meeting brought together 5000 participants and dominated by Hamas and Hezbollah. Among the attendees were Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, president of the International Union for Muslim Union; Sheikh Raed Salah, the head of Al-Aqsa foundation; Jerusalem's Mufti Ikrima Sabri; Jerusalem Bishop Attallah Hanna; Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the Turkish Sec. Gen. of OIC, George Galloway, British Parliamentarian, and the former Prime Minister of Egypt, Aziz Sidqi. In the Istanbul Declaration issued at the end of the three-day meeting, the message was clear: Israel and Fatah cannot achieve peace without Hamas' involvement.

While holding a pro-Hamas meeting in Turkey created distress for the Turkish government in domestic and international platforms, it was overshadowed by the high-profile Annapolis Meetings that took place merely ten days later. The Flotilla Crisis, on the other hand, was not as easy to mitigate and caused as much a crisis between the government and the NGOs that organized it, as it did between Israel and Turkey.

In May 2010, the Free Gaza Movement and the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) organized a six-ship flotilla to "make a deliberately attention-grabbing effort" to deliver 10,000 tons of humanitarian aid to 1.5 millions Palestinians in Gaza and to break Israel's blockade of the territory. In recent years, humanitarian aid groups have sent supply ships and activists to Gaza. The Free Gaza Movement itself has organized at least five voyages since 2007. The flotillas carry aid and activists from a wide

range of countries. While the earlier ones were allowed to reach Gaza, others were directed and landed at the port of Ashdod by Israel before delivery to Gaza.

On May 22, 2010, a six-ship flotilla including *Mavi Marmara*, owned by IHH, sailed to Gaza. 700 activists from 38 countries participated in the mission. On May 31st, 130 km from the Israeli coast in international waters, Israeli navy demanded the convoy to reroute to Ashdod. When the convoy refused to reroute, it was raided by Israeli commandos. The confrontation resulted in eight Turks and one Turkish-American killed, more than 20 passengers and 10 commandos injured. The incident sparked an unprecedented crisis in Turkey-Israeli relations. Turkey recalled its ambassador to Israel, cancelled joint military exercises with Israel, scaled back previously extensive intelligence cooperation and banned Israeli military flights over its airspace (Crisis Report 2010: 8). Turkey demanded an Israeli apology, compensation for the victims, return of the ships and an international investigation. Israel publicly blamed the incident on IHH, yet put the blame on the Turkish government in private. (Crisis Report 2010: 8).

Prime Minister Erdogan has long supported IHH's central aim to end the Gaza blockade. Although IHH primarily leans towards the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*), it has organic links to the National Action Party and the AKP. Several officials of AKP sit on IHH's advisory board or are otherwise close to it. (Crisis Report 2010: 5). Several AKP deputies joined in a controversial January 2009 land convoy to bring aid to Gaza through Egypt.

In the midst of the international crisis, the Turkish government stated that it had initial concerns about the *Mavi Marmara* mission. AKP officials declared that they

could not stop *Mavi Marmara* from sailing because it was reflagged from Turkey to Comoros Islands and that the government lacked the legal jurisdiction over the mission. Instead, the government stopped its parliamentarians and officials from joining. Senior government officials affirmed that they “communicated extensively with IHH before the *Mavi Marmara* left port. Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu called IHH leader Bülent Yıldırım to try to persuade him not to go directly to Gaza” (Crisis Report 2010: 6).

Although the political aftershocks are still being felt in the international relations realm, IHH and several UNIW members consider the operation successful considering its ramifications. The net result of the political scandal and human casualties was the heightened attention to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. While the AKP government, led by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s outbursts on the subject in diplomatic settings, has drawn attention to the Palestinian crisis in the international arena, a political undertaking of this magnitude is too controversial on a state level. Delegating, albeit covertly, civil society initiatives to maneuver in the blurry waters of political humanitarian action instead serves the government’s goal of bringing the issue under the spotlight. In that respect, the *Mavi Marmara* affair proved that civil society groups make potent political actors for the government’s foreign policy strategies.

7.4 Conclusion

What kinds of benefits do the discursive framework and the organizational format of civil society provide to UNIW and its member NGOs? Why does UNIW unwaveringly emphasize its civil society characteristic? In this chapter I approach these questions from a state/non-state actor relationship perspective. Constructivist and sociological institutionalist literatures cast non-state actors the role of altruistic groups that are driven by principled beliefs, values, and ideologies. Much of the scholarship in this area disproportionately focuses on transnational non-state actors' clout over states. Numerous empirical studies on transnational networks and alliances that advocate human rights, environmental protection and social justice pose the question: "How powerful are transnational non-state actors against states?"

I argue in this chapter that this is a skewed question. States and transnational non-state actors have a more complex and interdependent relationship. Not only do states enable as much as constrain the actions of transnational non-state actors, occasionally they have dovetailing interests. Therefore, the ideational/materialist taxonomy that the constructivist literature places states and non-state actors does not fully present the actual relationships between the two.

UNIW's relationship with the Turkish state is a case in point. There have been several attempts at forming transnational alliances among Muslim countries and establishing coalitions among Muslim NGOs. However, until recently such networks, coalitions, and umbrella organizations remained largely regional, short-lived and issue based. Despite its short history, UNIW has demonstrated considerable success in recruiting members, mobilizing social capital from diverse parts of the globe, and

rapidly becoming one of the largest NGO coalitions in the Muslim world. The findings of this chapter demonstrate that one of the key explanatory factors of its growth is its interdependent relationship with the Turkish government.

I analyze this relationship by using the geopolitical opportunity structures framework. Since 2002, Turkey's pro-Islamic AKP government has been promoting a foreign policy strategy that matches UNIW's particular interests. This foreign policy vision aims to transform Turkey from a peripheral actor into a central one. The AKP government casts Turkey a regional, if not global role, by locating the country at the core of Afro-Eurasia rather than restricting its position at the peripheries of the European Union, NATO, or Asia. The architects of this policy maintain that Turkey should claim a global strategic role by forming simultaneous alliances in its immediate geopolitical neighborhood. Therefore, they seek active engagements in the Middle East and Central Asia in particular, and the larger Islamic World in general. One critical component of this strategy is the use of soft power in addition to cultivating economic and political relationships. Turkey's foreign policy directors emphasize the importance of establishing social and cultural ties with these regions. In that respect, *civil society organizations* emerge as invaluable soft power instruments. The AKP government provides UNIW and its influential Turkish NGOs exceptional support. Government agencies extend material assistance, broker international connections, and in some cases covertly delegate these NGOs political roles.

Turkish government's interest in employing UNIW as a soft power instrument to its foreign policy strategy is advantageous for the latter in ideational ways as well.

Turkey's attempt at leadership in the Islamic World remedies UNIW's concerns about the disintegrated and dispersed state of the Umma. According to UNIW's leaders, it is imperative for the Muslim World to consolidate and attain global solidarity. The government's geopolitical interests as demonstrated by its foreign policy strategy and UNIW's normative interests interlock in mutually beneficial ways. This finding leads me to argue that the academic scholarship should direct its focus to the interdependencies between states and transnational non-state actors.

In the next chapter, I track the instrumental dimensions of UNIW's organization and performance by analyzing its intra-organizational dynamics. UNIW is primarily a norm-driven network. It recruits and mobilizes members from all over the world due to its value-based motivations. All of UNIW's members agree that the Islamic World should join forces and operate as a united actor. On the other hand, shared values and ideational concerns are not sufficient to ensure the continuation and efficiency of the coalition. By using the institutional opportunity structures framework, I analyze the power of interests within norm-motivated networks.

CHAPTER 8

STAKEHOLDERS AND SHAREHOLDERS:

INSTITUTIONAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES

Constructivist literature disproportionately focuses on the ideational motivations of transnational non-state actors and overlooks the instrumental dimensions of networks. While UNIW is a norm-motivated transnational NGO coalition because it is mobilized by the shared religious identities, values and goals, it is also sustained by the interest-based intra-organizational dynamics. This chapter analyzes UNIW's institutional opportunity structures in order to explain the interest-based motivations within the organization.

Kriesi (2004) conceptualizes institutional opportunity structures as the institutional arrangements that either constrain or facilitate non-state actors' success. His model maps out the conditions of institutional opportunities at a domestic level. Institutional opportunities, according to Kriesi, are determined by two key factors: the openness of the political system, and the exclusive or integrative strategies adopted by authorities vis-à-vis non-state actors. If these institutional opportunities are unfavorable at a domestic level, non-state actors exit the national level and turn to institutional opportunities at the international level (Adamson 2005). Transnational advocacy networks, international NGOs, and transnational NGO coalitions enable non-state actors to make their claims beyond the constraints of the domestic institutional arrangements. They can form alliances with transnational NGO coalitions, such as UNIW, to gain visibility and credibility for their cause and to mobilize the collective power to pressure their national governments from outside (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Forming partnerships with transnational organizations also provides them access to information, resources, organizational expertise, management skills, and further contacts to help them with their cause.

Therefore, in the contemporary multi-systems of political advocacy, domestic non-state actors can utilize the institutional and discursive resources of transnational networks and alliances. However this relationship has two implications. First one is related to the competitive world of transnational non-state politics. In the marketplace of transnational politics, some local movements garner more attention in the international sphere while others remain isolated (Bob 2005). In order to attract interest from transnational allies, domestic non-state actors have to frame their messages and structure their organizational models to fit the ideological and organizational identities of potential supporters. In other words, if domestic political entrepreneurs choose to form alliances with transnational coalitions, they have to compromise and frame their message to match the ideological position of the transnational coalition.

The second implication is related to the instrumental dynamics within these transnational NGO coalitions. Cooperative relationships such as coalitions and multimember organizations require more member involvement than loose informal networks. This causes a collective action problem. For an individual NGO, membership in the coalition entails the investment of time, staff and resources. In order to ensure deeper commitment from all its members, the coalition has to offer sufficient benefits to outweigh the costs. What the member 'receives back from its participation' directly influences its level of engagement with the network. In that

respect, UNIW's members are simultaneously stake-holders and share-holders: "They are stake-holders, insofar as they have in common a number of general principles and values that refer to concrete stakes in the struggle of global politics. But they are also share-holders, inasmuch as they bargain the degree of their engagement according to the degree of the satisfaction of their specific interest" (Marchetti & Pianta 2006: 5).

Normative goals and ideas are fundamental to the formation of any form of transnational civil society network. Transnational networks and coalitions are motivated by shared values, worldviews and ideological commitments. UNIW is, then, a typical norm based network in that shared religious identity is fundamental to the formation and reproduction of network ties. Yet, the sustainability of long-term and effective networks has an instrumental aspect. In that sense, UNIW serves the reciprocity norm of social networks (Putnam 2000: 19). Member NGOs enhance UNIW's social capital by increasing its representative power. UNIW enhances the members' social capital by facilitating coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit, and creating added value for all involved.

In this chapter, I undertake an instrumental reading of UNIW by analyzing the institutional opportunity structures it provides to its members. I focus on the expectations of member NGOs in entering the network and the benefits they reap from their involvement. I specifically focus on the notions of credibility, legitimacy, boomerang effect, and information sharing. Next, I discuss the ways in which member NGOs shape their ideological positions and organizational structures to match UNIW's expectations in order to receive support. I use the NGOs that are involved in the East Turkistan independence movement as the case study. By

analyzing how East Turkistan members frame their message to fit UNIW's ideological stance, I demonstrate the weight of interests in norm-based networks.

8.1 Leverage, Legitimacy and the Boomerang Effect

The advantages of being in active partnership with UNIW are far more significant for the small, grassroots organizations with miniscule funds and organizational power. Member NGOs benefit from and meet their individual needs by participating in a large-scale alliance that shares resources, information and expertise, which decrease costs as a result of group specialization. First, the combined strength of the coalition provides the least powerful organizations channels of institutional access they would otherwise be unable to obtain. Small organizations gain access to material resources, new information and strategies, which they utilize to increase their standing and reputation in the domestic arena (Tarrow 2005: 3). External links to more powerful transnational actors and networks allows the weak groups to increase their credibility and legitimacy. The added-value of their partnership in a transnational coalition presents the small organizations better leverage to amplify the visibility of their issues and to influence state practices directly, resulting in what Keck and Sikkink (1998) call the “boomerang effect”.

The instrumental benefits of transnational networks and coalitions are not restricted to weaker organizations. While small and resource poor organizations benefit from being in partnership with transnational NGO coalitions, the coalition itself increases its legitimacy and representative power by increasing its size (Price 2003: 595). In fact, UNIW's claim to be the spokesperson of the Islamic World is primarily based on the size of its membership base. The size of the coalition allows UNIW

representatives to claim more credibility to speak on behalf of countless Muslim groups in an official capacity. UNIW's Secretary General introduces the UNIW delegation as the representatives of the largest Islamic civil society coalition in the world when visiting the local and national governments of foreign countries.

A noteworthy example of this pattern is the case of the Cambodian Muslim Intellectual Alliance (CMIA) – a member of UNIW from Cambodia. CMIA is a fairly small organization that works on poverty alleviation through fundraising for building schools, health care centers, mosques, orphanages and the promotion of Islamic education systems within the Muslim minority in Cambodia, which makes up 8% of the population. The funds, organizational capacity, infrastructure, thus the outreach of CMIA is so limited that it mostly relies on the financial and organizational support of larger neighbor organizations in Malaysia to carry out its projects. The organization has inadequate connections with the local government and virtually none with the national government to receive support for its projects. CMIA's limited resources lead to insufficient integration to and effectiveness within the Muslim community to a large extent.

UNIW's council meetings are held in a different country each time and a select delegation from the meeting travels to a neighboring country to visit members and provide support. In the following days of the 9th council meeting in Malaysia, a UNIW delegation of 30 member NGOs, traveled to Cambodia to visit CMIA, meet with the local Muslim population and pay official visits to the Cambodian government “on behalf of the global Muslim civil society”¹²⁰.

¹²⁰ Necmi Sadikoglu, UNIW Secretary General, Meeting with the Cambodian Secretary of State, May 2010.

On the first day of the visit in Phnom Penh, the UNIW delegation along with Mr. Mohd Farid Hosen, the executive director of CMIA, met with Bun Uy, the Secretary of State of the Office of the Council of Ministers in the Cambodian Parliament. During the three hour meeting, the UNIW delegation discussed the situation of the Muslim minority in Cambodia, expressed their interest in assisting Muslim communities in Cambodia, agreed on funding two school projects and a local radio station in Phnom Penh, and sponsoring high school education of select Muslim students abroad. The UNIW delegation recommended CMIA to be the intermediary to the relations with the Cambodian government and to the supervision of the agreed upon projects. The executive director of CMIA and the Secretary of the State made an appointment for a private meeting in the following week to discuss further projects regarding Muslim communities in Cambodia.

On the second day of the visit, CMIA hosted the UNIW delegation in a Muslim village 50 km out of Phnom Penh. Various member NGOs of UNIW collaborate with CMIA in extending social aid since 2007, yet this was the first official visit by UNIW or any foreign NGOs to the village. During the visit, UNIW representatives met with the Muslim community; and distributed social aid, booklets and Qur'an in Khmer. In their address, UNIW representatives praised CMIA, highlighted the organization's significance for the coalition and described CMIA "as a vital bridge between the Umma and the Muslim minority in Cambodia"¹²¹.

The almost overnight success of CMIA in raising its profile confirms what Necmi Sadikoglu, the Secretary General of UNIW, expressed as to the reason why the UNIW delegation visits a fairly small member organization: "We want to

¹²¹Necmi Sadikoglu, UNIW Secretary General, Address to the Muslim village, May 25, 2010.

demonstrate our support for our member, to reassure them that they are not alone, make sure that Muslims are not abandoned in this remote part of the world.”¹²² Endorsing CMIA to the national government and the community it works with provided the organization a newfound legitimacy and political leverage. CMIA also extended its networks and obtained a key role in overseeing the progress of multiple projects with international collaborators.

8.2 Information Sharing

Information sharing is at the core of transnational networks and coalitions. One of the key features that set contemporary transnational NGO coalitions such as UNIW apart from their predecessors is their capacity to use new communication technologies to facilitate information flow. While consistent personal contact is fundamental to form a collective identity and to facilitate collaborations among members, communication technologies prove to be very important in disseminating information and maintaining partnerships. A thorough and well-run website is a given for most Western NGOs and coalitions but it is still a distinctive merit for many small organizations in the Muslim World. Although most member NGOs of UNIW have websites, they are largely limited to providing basic contact information, mission statements, a small number of pictures from their fieldwork and mostly out-of-date news. Only a few of UNIW's members, such as the Islamic Relief and IHH, are well funded and well staffed to keep updated and efficient websites. UNIW as the umbrella organization, on the other hand, keeps a well designed and efficient website to inform its members of its up-to-date activities, logistic information on future

¹²²Necmi Sadikoglu, UNIW Secretary General, personal interview with author, May 21, 2010.

summits and conferences, meeting minutes, press releases. The secretary general's speeches and analyses of particular events around the Muslim World are published on the website almost daily. While the coalition does not expect its members to fully commit to its views, detailed opinion pieces stating the position of UNIW's executive branch on each issue set the political agenda for the members around the world. Due to the sheer size of its membership, UNIW has the capacity to bring a local crisis situation or a human rights violation to the attention of 193 NGOs in 46 countries and their own networks around the world.

The production, exchange and strategic use of information in a consistent and structured manner is key to the success of UNIW for two reasons: harnessing expertise through pooling resources and framing.

The first is related to the instrumental dimension of coalition building and participation. Gathering information, creating solutions and developing action plans about specific issues are costly for most NGOs. Organizations decrease research and development costs by pooling information about common issue areas, and by exchanging projects specifically devised for similar problems. In addition to sharing experience about projects, member organizations also benefit from exchanging organizational know-how, management skill, and contacts. Especially smaller organizations with scarce material resources and insufficient personnel obtain organizational knowledge by interacting with the more established ones.

UNIW's commissions, which group member organizations with similar interests and issue areas, operate as training platforms for smaller organizations. The commissions serve two leading purposes. First, they bring together organizations with

skills, knowledge and expertise about specific issue areas in order to mobilize their collective resources towards UNIW's overarching concerns such as Islamophobia, crisis regions and religious revival. Each commission brainstorms and develops action plans about aspects of these broad topics in pertinence to their specific expertise. Second, members of commissions convene to exchange information and experience about their common issue areas. All members of the commission benefit from the experience and research capacities of larger organizations. For example, members of one of the most active commissions -Women, Families and Youth Commission- convene periodically and discuss the similar issues they face in their home countries and exchange notes on the individual programs they have developed on problems such as the dissolution of family, increasing drug use, rising divorce rate, domestic violence, family planning and children's socialization. The commission has organized five international meetings since 2006 in Turkey, Morocco and Indonesia. In line with UNIW's distrust in the Western family model, which they consider impersonal and prone to degeneration, the organizations endorse the Muslim family model that is deeply rooted in the communitarian ideal.¹²³ The projects and activities of the member organizations promote extended families and women's role as the nurturing mother of the family unit and discourage abortion and birth control methods intended for family planning. Organizations pool their resources and expertise in developing projects counter to the family planning programs mostly introduced by Western transnational organizations that operate in their countries.

¹²³ Necmi Sadikoglu, UNIW Secretary General , International Family Conference, Indonesia, May 2011

The latter *-framing* – is related to the meaning-making dimension of transnational coalitions. Social movement literature has been prolific in offering the conceptual tools to understand the ways in which activists and organizations shape issues at stake and devise tactics and strategies to result in change. Social movement theories assert, however, that effective framing is possible when the participants are homogenous and have consistent interaction. It is difficult for transnational coalitions with heterogeneous membership to create joint issue and identity frames. In that regard, UNIW's periodic council meetings are invaluable in providing discursive processes for the members to share their observations, experiences and "realities" to articulate common frames (Benford and Snow 2000: 623).

UNIW facilitates communication, interaction and information flow among its members through its periodical council meetings. Held every three months, Council meetings bring together large numbers of member organizations for two to four days. So far, UNIW has organized eleven council meetings in different locations. Predictably, not all 187 of UNIW's members have the financial resources or dedicated staff to attend council meetings around the world. Therefore, each council meeting is held in a different country each time in order to facilitate the participation of resource poor organizations in neighboring countries. For example, the council meeting in Kosovo has received larger participation from members in the Balkans and Europe. Similarly, the meeting in Indonesia was mostly participated by the organizations in Southeast Asia. This system is also beneficial for the organizations that live and work in the same geography which are subject to similar social, cultural and political conditions. In the duration of the council meetings, organizations from

the same region find the opportunity to meet, establish relationships and develop collaborations.

8.3 Increasing Visibility and Awareness

The first step for any local movement organization towards attaining goals is to raise awareness about its issues. While they strive to change their situation domestically, an increasing number of movements seek international allies when they cannot find access to domestic channels of participation. Local movements reach outside their states for support when “channels between domestic groups and their governments are blocked or hampered or where such channels are ineffective for resolving a conflict” (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 12). External support can increase recognition for the local movement in the international arena, add legitimacy to the local group and their cause, facilitate policy change, and pressure repressive governments. Local movements seek external support through “targeted lobbying of prospective supporters” and “raising international awareness through media” (Bob 2005: 23-4). The first involves direct personal contact in venues like international conferences to forge global linkages. The second involves international media and other channels of communication to generate awareness about the movement’s causes and activities.

UNIW serves as an ideal platform for local movements to boost recognition among international audiences. UNIW, by self-definition, works to publicize the humanitarian condition of Muslim populations in the international arena. The UNIW body works most efficiently in raising awareness about the issues of Muslim populations around the world, monitoring crisis regions in the Islamic world and

putting the most pressing ones on the agenda in order mobilize its members towards solutions. In the words of UNIW's Secretary General:

We have to think about our brothers under persecution and constraint we have to pray for them and above all we have to work harder in unity and solidarity for them. We should not forget the Palestinian Issue is not the Palestinians' problem alone. The bloodshed in Iraq is not Iraq's pain alone. The unending injustice and lawlessness in Kashmir is not a problem to be resolved by Kashmir alone. Similarly, the tragedies taking place Eastern Turkistan, Cyprus, Karabakh, Caucasus, Kosovo, Darfur, Philippines, Burma and Thailand are all our problems. We should consider them so by order of our faith. That is to say our objective is to raise awareness of this. Reviving means resisting. It means waking and awakening.¹²⁴

Accordingly, UNIW works efficiently in putting these issues in the international spotlight. It organizes international conferences and symposiums, contact intergovernmental organizations and supranational unions in Muslim minorities' behalf, endorse local NGOs in their own countries, and releases declarations to the international media organs.

8.4 The Marketplace of Transnational Advocacy: Who Deserves the Spotlight?

Despite UNIW's stated interest in helping and raising awareness about the conditions of Muslim populations everywhere, not all movements receive the same level of attention. The world of transnational advocacy or solidarity networks is more of a marketplace than an equal opportunity environment for local movements (Bob 2005). Whereas some movements successfully tap into the agenda of transnational publics, draw attention and obtain name recognition, others remain isolated and are doomed to obscurity. For instance, while the movements in Tibet, East Timor, and

¹²⁴ Necmi Sadikoglu, UNIW Secretary General, Address to the 5th Council meeting, Kuwait, August 2008.

Sudan have been under transnational public's spotlight, similar movements in East Turkistan, Indonesian Aceh and West Papua remain isolated (Bob 2005: 2).

UNIW is not different than any other transnational platform in that it has limited attention and resources to bestow the same importance to every crisis situation in the Muslim world. The secretary general repeats in his every speech, press release and opinion piece that they are “concerned about the troubles of Muslim populations wherever they are”¹²⁵. Even then, some issues take precedence over others. In the last session of the two-day council meeting in Malaysia, which was dominated by the review of current and proposed projects about the Palestinian situation, the representative of the Moro Muslims group from South Philippines took the stage for the first time. In the mere ten minutes allocated, he introduced the ongoing dispute between Moro Muslims and the Republic of Philippines government; explained the complex composition of the liberation movement; the frictions between the combatant Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the insurgent Moro National Liberation Front, multiple Moro civil society initiatives; and indicated their struggle to draw the attention of the international Islamic community to the humanitarian and social crises of the Moro people. Pointing at the attention given to the Palestinian conflict by UNIW as well as other international platforms, he complained:

“I know you are better informed about what is going on in Palestine. Even my kids are better informed about the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. Our people, on the other hand, are suffering more without the knowledge of the international community.”¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Necmi Sadikoglu, (UNIW Secretary General), Pakistan Consultation Meeting, 2010, Istanbul.

¹²⁶ Zekeriya Abdullah, spokesperson for the Moro Muslims in UNIW, May 2010, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

In order to get on the radar of the international community and transnational political platforms, local movements have to “market” themselves to the transnational public by framing their causes to match the goals, tactics, ethics, culture and organizational needs of the potential supporters. Their message and views have to be compatible with the groups from whom they seek ideological and material assistance. That means the competitive marketing for the local groups that seek UNIW’s attention is:

[...] a matter of maneuver rather than position; of observing and responding to one’s audience rather than blindly making one’s case; of stress and form as much as content; of seizing opportunities and capitalizing on accidents as much as preplanning. (Bob 2005: 28).

Local movements or organizations that do not fully conform to UNIW’s organizational identity find it more difficult to get backing. UNIW is highly vigilant about maintaining its credibility as a representative of the transnational Muslim civil society. Thus, the leaders of the organization avoid controversy and are cautious about taking up direct confrontation with national governments. In order to secure the organization’s legitimacy as a respectable actor in global politics, the leaders are guarded against equating UNIW’s name with terrorism or any kind of violence. A key reason, therefore, that the Moro Muslims remain on the periphery of UNIW’s agenda is the armed insurgency tactics that the factions of the movement use intermittently. East Turkistan problem, on the other hand, fits the bill perfectly. In the next section I discuss the East Turkistan case in detail. I start with a brief overview of the historical conflict between Muslim Uyghurs and Chinese regimes. Next, I move on to introduce Uyghur Muslims’ grievances and their transnational political advocacy efforts. In the

last section, I discuss how the Uyghur groups in UNIW frame their grievances in order to match UNIW's primary concerns, such as religious persecution, freedom of religious expression and Islamophobia.

8.4.1 Case Study: East Turkistan Conflict

Muslim Uyghurs are an ethnic minority in Xinjiang, the most western province of China. While the Chinese authority calls the region the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Uyghur nationalists call it East Turkistan or Uyghuristan. China conquered and integrated the region in the 1750s and declared it a province in 1884. After the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, Uyghurs enjoyed two brief periods of independence; first in 1931 -1933 and second in 1944 - 1949. Following the communist victory in 1949, Xinjiang was capitulated to the People's Republic of China. However, since the region was considered more as a strategic buffer zone against its neighbors than a fully integrated province, the state did not colonize or settle Xinjiang initially (Magid 1998).

The Great Leap Forward (1958 – 1961) and the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1976), constructed by Mao as vehicles for China's modernization, pursued policies of integrating and assimilating the minority nationalities (Clarke 2011: 70). According to the centralist program of modernization, Islam was seen one of the "backward customs" and ethnicity was considered an "obstacle to progress" (Bovingdon 2004b: 123). All over China, anything perceived as different was considered counterrevolutionary and attacked. As in Tibet and other non-Han regions, traditional minority beliefs and customs were banned in Xinjiang. Religious practices and regalia were forbidden; mosques were destroyed and Muslim population were forced to eat

pork or raise pigs. Intellectuals, elites and religious leaders were either killed or sent to labor camps. To ensure complete cultural homogenization, the party banned local languages in favor of Chinese (Bovingdon 2004b).

The party's cultural policies towards non-Han minorities improved after Mao's death, yet the economic and political subjugation continued. As ethnic separatist ideologies gained strength thanks to the ethnic discrimination in memory, the party took steps in improving the economic conditions of minorities. However, the investment in economic policies in minority regions produced a converse effect. The new employment opportunities created by the economic programs resulted in a larger flow of Han-Chinese to Xinjiang (Qiang and Xin 2003). As a result, Uyghurs have gradually become outnumbered in the region.

The CCP mandated migration flows have changed the demographic composition of the Xinjiang region drastically increasing the Han population from roughly 5% in 1949 to over 40% in 1978. The influx of migrants has aggravated the preexisting conflicts between the Han Chinese and the Uyghurs over their religious, cultural, and social differences (Gladney 2004c: 220). As the migrants settled and claimed land, led to over-cultivation of land and over-use of water resources in the area. Preferential recruitment policies forced Uyghurs to compete with Han Chinese over limited jobs. Uyghur resentment exacerbated as they found themselves having to compete with Han Chinese over financial and natural resources (Rudelson 1997: 36-8).

In 1999, the CCP introduced the Western Development Project, more popularly known as the Open Up the West Project, to alleviate the economic disparity between the Eastern and Western provinces (Loughlin and Pannell 2001). It was assumed that

boosting economic development and ameliorating the living standards, which housed the non-Han ethnicities, would decrease the rising ethnic nationalism in these provinces (Goodman 2004). However, the outcome of these economic policies produced the contrary outcome.

The economic development policy increased Han migration from rural areas to Xinjiang (Bachman 2004). The preferential treatment of Han Chinese in job recruitment and the stratification of the labor market blocked Uyghurs' integration into the economic and social system (Pannell and Schmidt 2006). Han Chinese were in an advantageous position in not only the private sector jobs but also, and more importantly, in state-sectors jobs partly due to Uyghurs' low levels of education and lack of Mandarin skills. The economic inequality professed itself in residential segregation, unequal opportunities in education and health care, which led to further marginalization and alienation for Uyghurs (Amnesty International 1999). The increase in inequality between Hans and Uyghurs added to the disillusionment and separatist ideologies. The economic and political marginalization of Uyghurs bolstered the idea of an Eastern Turkistan.

The discovery of large reserves of oil and natural gas added environmental conflict to the long list of disputes between the Uyghurs and the Chinese government. Mining and export of Xinjiang's oil and gas to outside the province, and resulting habitat loss, fueled the resentment in Uyghurs that their natural resources are exploited at their expense (Bovingdon 2004d: 47). The conflict originated over the Uyghur people's desire for political and religious independence from the Han Chinese. With this desire for independence, came the struggle for natural resources and local economic

sustainability. The exploitation of local oil reserves exacerbated ethnic differences and helped fuel the conflict. As the construction of the oil pipeline between Kazakhstan and Western China started in early 2005, the separatist groups strengthened their own campaign, sometimes resorting to violence (Dreyer 2005: 74). The government, in the meantime, tightened the grip on the disgruntled ethnic group. Specifically the September 11 attacks gave the justification to the Chinese government to apply more pressure on the separatist groups and frame the ethnic conflict as just one more front on the global war on terror (Chung 2002).

Transnational Advocacy Networks of Uyghurs

Uyghurs have been seeking international allies to help with their case for decades. Soon after independence Uyghurs established formal political organizations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Until 1970s, Uyghur refugee and migrant communities sustained the East Turkistan ideal in the diaspora and supported the movement in Xinjiang through underground publications and other media. Yet, the limited resource available in exile blocked the activists' capacity to raise international awareness about their cause. Moreover, they did not have enough access to and support from other governments to apply pressure on the CCP (Petersen 2006: 65).

By 1980s and 1990s, Uyghur independence activism took on a more transnational advocacy character. With the advent of global communication technologies, Uyghur activist groups began to coalesce more efficiently across geographies and began to promote their plea to the international community (Gladney 2004a). In 1990s, Uyghur nationalist groups started to establish international organizations in Turkey, Germany, Australia and the United States (Petersen 2006: 65). In 2004, the East Turkistan

National Congress and the World Uyghur Youth Congress, two of the largest international diaspora organizations, merged and created an umbrella organization to unite all Uyghur nationalist groups: the World Uyghur Congress (WUC). The WUC lobbies international organizations and governments “to promote the right of the Uyghur people to use peaceful, nonviolent, and democratic means to determine the political future of East Turkistan”.¹²⁷ Transnational activists appealed to multiple international agencies and foreign governments. For instance, The U.S. based East Turkistan National Freedom Center met with President Clinton on June 4, 1999 to press for fuller support for the Uyghur cause (Bovingdon 2002). Rabiye Kadeer, the leader of the Uyghur international human rights and democracy movement and the chairperson of the World Uyghur Congress, met with President George Bush in 2007, testified before the European Parliament’s Subcommittee on Human Rights in 2009 and 2011. Representatives from the World Uyghur Congress have testified before the UN Forum on Minority Issues in 2010.¹²⁸ Numerous Uyghur support organizations based in the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, UK, Russia, Canada and Turkey pressure their governments to take action on the issue (Gladney 2004c: 239).

The Uyghur movement is not a unified one. There are secular fractions among the movement as well as religious ones. Similarly, there are fractions that promote separatism and fractions that support coexistence granted China softens its treatment of minorities. The issue itself is as complex and multifaceted as the actors that

¹²⁷ World Uyghur Congress mission statement. <http://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/?cat=148>. Accessed May 25, 2011.

¹²⁸ World Uyghur Congress, “Conference on Kashgar City Closes with Pledge for Urgency Resolution: MEPs Promise to Place Kashgar Firmly on the European Parliament’s Agenda” <http://www.uyghurcongress.org>. Accessed May 25, 2011.

populate the movement. Uyghurs' grievances cannot be reduced to religious persecution only. The East Turkistan conflict is "a complex mix of history, ethnicity, and religion, fueled by poverty, unemployment, social disparities, and political grievances" (Davis 2008: 2). Therefore, the fractions among the movement have different concerns and priorities. As a result, the movement "segments the international market directing their appeals to potential supporters whose identity and goals approximate their own" (Bob 2005: 30) and each group frames their grievances according to their particular interests. The secular groups among the movement take their pleas to the UN and frame their cause as one of human rights and minority survival. The religious groups, on the other hand, are not as well received by Western audiences due to the conflicted views on political Islam (Vergani and Zuev 2011: 228). Therefore, religious fractions among Uyghur activists find more support among transnational Muslim organizations. UNIW is an ideal platform for the religious groups in the East Turkistan movement for two reasons. First, the size of the organizations allows the Uyghur groups to address a substantial number of Muslim organizations around the world at once. Second reason is related to the assumed lineage between Uyghur and Turkish people. In addition to the ethnic ties, there is a large Uyghur exile population and many solidarity organizations in Turkey. The significant influence of Turkish organizations within the coalition's membership and executive board makes it easier for the Uyghur groups to attract UNIW's attention to their situation.

Framing the Message to fit UNIW

The diverse cultural and political composition of UNIW makes it difficult for members to decide on a shared position, much less to devise common action plans, on each of the many crises in the Muslim World. Yet the East Turkistan conflict is one of the uncontested issues along with Chechnya, Indonesian Aceh, Palestine and Kashmir. These conflicts perfectly match UNIW's interest in mobilizing global Islamic solidarity in defense of oppressed Muslim populations. Since UNIW's key consideration is persecution towards Muslims, local movements frame their message to match UNIW's interests.

While the Uyghur-China controversy is larger than religious concerns, Uyghur groups that appeal to UNIW skillfully frame their message around religious persecution and Islamophobia. The complex nature of the conflict is simplified to one of an isolated Muslim community against the intransigent Goliath which aims to destroy the community's culture and religion, to attack prized institutions like the Muslim family, women and the mosque. In this discursive frame, the ever-authoritative Communist state employs the discourse of Islamic terrorism to increase its coercion on the forsaken Muslim minority. The way an Uyghur spokesperson frames their predicament in a UNIW council meeting hits all the marks of UNIW's sensitivities:

Uyghur Muslims have been struggling against cultural assimilation, genocide, second-class treatment, applications of abortion by force, and persecution policies by Chinese authorities. I will list four – five serious problems here. First one is the assimilation of Muslim identity and cultural values. Chinese government started to transfer Uyghur Muslim girls from the age of 15-20 to inner China; 5000-6000 km away from their homeland. They are forced to work in factories, hotels, bars, and nightclubs. According to the Chinese official records, more than 1 million

girls are transferred to inland China. This is very serious. Second, is forced abortions as a policy of family planning in the region. Two children are allowed to Uyghur Muslims but it's not true. Because the Chinese government has a system to control it. Abortions are implemented at the sixth and seventh months of pregnancy. Mothers die as well because of late abortions. Third one is Chinese settlement. East Turkistan has a population of 35 million and Chinese are more than 60% population not in East Turkistan. You cannot find Uyghurs in inner cities. There are 15 more settlements in the region. Fourth is the religious bans against rights to prayer. Mosques are closed to youth under 18 and women. So a Muslim cannot go to a mosque from one town to the other. Religious teachings are banned. Even I cannot teach my son at home. It is also a big problem. And last, Chinese authority started systematic attack on Uyghur Muslims since 9/11. They have been arresting innocent people and now this campaign has become a killing campaign. They claim that all Uyghur Muslims are terrorists and that they have links to Al-Qaida to hide their inhuman, cruel treatment of the local population. Chinese authority has begun to use the anti-terror war. So, East Turkistan people are trying to reach the international community. But in fact, they are cut off from the world. We are facing too many problems in reaching the Muslim World, we ask for help and cooperation. I strongly recommend the Union to keep the issue on the agenda to help us.¹²⁹

This rhetoric does not fall on deaf ears. The UNIW body works most efficiently on raising awareness about the conditions of Muslim populations around the world, monitoring crisis regions in the Islamic world and activating its members to contribute to the solutions.¹³⁰ UNIW and the influential Turkish members in its executive board work efficiently to raise awareness about the issue, particularly on account of the ethnic ties between Uyghur Turks and Turkey. The Uyghur refugees in Turkey also impel UNIW to publicize the East Turkistan cause internationally. UNIW and its members organize protests, international conferences, support East Turkistan

¹²⁹ East Turkistan spokesperson, UNIW 9th Council Meeting, Malaysia, May 2010.

¹³⁰ Reactions from the participants confirmed that UNIW leaders' frequent remarks about the lack of intercommunication and awareness among its constituents were not unfounded. The president of the Algerian delegation's comments at a visit to UNIW's headquarters testifies to the 'dispersion of the Umma': "Believe me. We are not really aware of what is happening in East Turkistan and to our Muslim brothers there. It is so, because we do not have sufficient and reliable information about the situation in this occupied Muslim territory. With such symposiums, the awareness level increases among the people who have capability to change this unacceptable brutal situation. I will take this as my topic in Friday lecture at the mosque Insha'Allah [God willing]". Ahmad Ibrahim, President of Al Quds Association, UNIW headquarters, Istanbul, March 23, 2010.

solidarity organizations and pressure governments to take action. Necmi Sadikoglu, the UNIW Secretary General, mentions the conditions of the Uyghur population in his every opening speech and press release. In his address to the Pakistani National Assembly in February 2011, Sadikoglu called the Pakistani public to pay more attention to the conditions of Uyghur refugees in Pakistan and to the minority population in China.¹³¹ The issue is also brought up in every topical conference UNIW organizes. Bulent Yildirim, IHH's director, raised the subject of Uyghur girls at the Fourth International Orphan Meeting held in October 2009:

There are 143 million orphans in the world. 60 million of them go to bed hungry. 2.5 million children are kidnapped and sold every year and most of them are girls. Do you ever ask where the hundred thousand girls kidnapped from East Turkistan are?¹³²

In the Second International Youth Gathering organized by UNIW's Culture and Education Commission in August 2009, two students from East Turkistan gave briefings about the conflict, called attention to the media's lack of interest on the issue, and asked the international group of university students to "share this news with public and spread the word".¹³³

In addition to interjecting the East Turkistan conflict to the agenda of each specific conference and meeting, UNIW held a high profile symposium to raise political awareness on the issue. In March 2010, UNIW co-organized an East Turkistan Symposium in Istanbul and put the situation of Uighur population in China under the spotlight. Bringing together the international chapters of East Turkistan Solidarity Associations, researchers, academics, representatives of asylum seekers in Turkey, as

¹³¹Necmi Sadikoglu, February 2011, Address to the Pakistani National Assembly

¹³²Bulent Yildirim, IHH Director, fourth International Orphan Meeting, October 17 2009

¹³³UNIW, the Second International Youth Gathering, Istanbul, August 2009.

well as political figures, the symposium drew attention to the humanitarian crises and human rights violations in the region. The participants highlighted restrictions on religion, prayer, Uighur language; restrictions on freedom of expression, information and communication; violations against women; and forced labor and migration. The final declaration made statements about the lack of attention from the international community to the situation in East Turkistan and made suggestions for action¹³⁴. In the intergovernmental sphere, UNIW delegation and the NGO leaders accused UN Security Council of being hesitant to display the required sensitivity over the issue due to China's veto power and invited UN's General Assembly to take a position in favor of the people of East Turkistan.¹³⁵ On a country level, some of the suggestions for Islamic countries included reconsidering economic and political relations with China in favor of East Turkistan; and opening consulates, offices of humanitarian organizations and faculties of Islamic universities in East Turkistan. The delegates agreed to run effective lobbying activities through communication devices and propaganda channels to disseminate information; to publish and translate books in the East Turkistan; to prepare exhibitions and short movies to depict the humanitarian situation in the region in order to guide popular opinion.

¹³⁴ Free East Turkistan Symposium, Final Report, March 2010.

¹³⁵ Uyghur activists' disappointment about the international community is not reserved to the UN and the Western governments they have appealed to in the past. They are equally disappointed about the neglect of other large international Muslim organizations. In the words of Ahmet Emin Dag of IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation: "At this point, if the Islamic world moves as a bloc, as the European Union did in joint declarations published in the past, then it is possible to demand an end to human rights violations in East Turkistan and to ensure that the people here are given the right to determine their own fate. However, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which should be one of the most important platforms in this regard, has not made any significant moves to give support in this matter. None of the organizations that have been established by East Turkistan are members or counselors to any platforms of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The first move could be to receive these groups onto Islamic platforms". Ahmet Emin Dag, East Turkistan Symposium, March 2010, Istanbul.

8.5 Conclusion

Why are previously informal religious groups adopting formal NGO formats and the language of civil society, and form transnational coalitions and alliances, such as UNIW? In this chapter, I sought to answer this question by analyzing the instrumental advantages of this transformation. I argued that UNIW presents institutional opportunity structures to small and isolated NGOs at a transnational level. NGOs that have limited funds, staff, resources and organizational power enter into partnership with UNIW to increase their organizational capital. They gain access to resources, organizational expertise, information and skills by interacting and collaborating with the larger, more established organizations within UNIW. Moreover, local political groups that do not have access to the political system in their own countries turn to transnational allies, such as UNIW, in order to increase the visibility and legitimacy of their causes, to gain legitimacy as political entrepreneurs as opposed to ‘insurgents’, and possibly mobilize the transnational allies to pressure their national governments.

As the specific case study in this chapter demonstrate, UNIW’s East Turkistan NGOs face difficulties in accessing state channels in China on the one hand and in finding allies in the liberal transnational non-state politics environment due to their Islamic character on the other. As a result, they seek alliances with transnational actors that have Islamic identities. UNIW, as a Muslim transnational NGO coalition, is the ideal platform for East Turkistan NGOs to voice their grievances and to receive ideological and material assistance. UNIW facilitates East Turkistan NGOs’ struggle by increasing Uyghur Muslims’ public visibility in international settings and by

extending collective support to the cause. However, getting UNIW's backing requires tactical framing on Eastern Turkistan NGOs' part. In order to maintain UNIW's support, East Turkistan NGOs frame their grievances in ways that match UNIW's ideational and organizational interests. Although Uyghur Muslims' issues with the Chinese state are more multifaceted than just religious concerns, UNIW's East Turkistan NGOs frame their grievances as religious persecution, Islamophobia, and restrictions on religious expression.

The findings of this chapter, specifically the case study, points to a shortcoming in the constructivist literature's assumptions about the preeminence of ideational concerns in transnational non-state actor politics. Constructivist scholarship has been prolific in the analyses of transnational non-state actors, such as transnational advocacy networks, international NGOs, and transnational NGO coalitions. The majority of these analyses put an overwhelming emphasis on the role of ideational factors in the formation and sustenance of transnational non-state actors. Constructivism presumes a rigid separation between value-based and interest-based concerns and therefore argues that these emerging non-state actors are motivated by norms as opposed to nation-states that are motivated by interests. However, as this case shows, interest-based concerns are as vital as norm-based ones for the continuation and performance of transnational non-state actors. While UNIW is a religious solidarity network that is directly guided by normative goals, it would be a misstep to overlook the instrumental dimensions of its intra-organizational dimensions. Therefore, I argue that a more prescient approach requires as much attention to the instrumental factors in the analysis of transnational non-state actors.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

9.1 Overview of Findings

Over the last two decades, faith-based civic action has gone through a significant transformation. Previously informal Islamist communities have been reestablishing themselves as formal NGOs at unprecedented rates and forming transnational networks and coalitions. Their overarching goals remain unchanged in this transformation; these faith-based organizations and coalitions aim to ‘help Islam’s revival, well-being, and future’ by consolidating religious solidarity among Muslim populations. However, they pursue this religious solidarity goal in the organizational and discursive framework of liberal civil society models. This trend is contradictory to the assumptions and arguments of the existing transnational civil society literature. An overwhelming majority of the transnational non-state politics literature in constructivist and sociological institutionalist perspectives conceptualize transnational non-state action in secular and liberal terms. In this dissertation, I problematize this conflict and ask: Why are the previously informal Islamist networks adopting the discourse of civil society, transforming into formal NGOs, and establishing transnational coalitions?

I take one of the largest Muslim NGO coalitions – the Union of the NGOs of the Islamic World (UNIW) - as the case study. UNIW is a transnational NGO coalition that aims to consolidate faith-based Muslim NGOs to speak in one voice as a global actor. With its 193 member NGOs from 46 countries, UNIW serves as an umbrella organization. It facilitates communication, interaction, and information flow among

its members; monitors crisis regions in Muslim-majority countries; publicizes the grievances of Muslim minorities around the world; and coordinates its members to find collective solutions to the Muslim World's issues.

The empirical analysis of the study demonstrate that UNIW frames its transnational religious solidarity project as a transnational civil society initiative because the discursive, geopolitical and institutional opportunity structures of the civil society framework provide the coalition and its members additional channels of power. Both UNIW and its member NGOs find opportunities to increase their social and organizational capital; they engage in mutually beneficial relationships with states and governments; and claim legitimacy as serious political actors.

Although both UNIW and its member NGOs frequently emphasize their civil society character, it cannot be argued that religion has a trivial role in their organization, cooperation, and ideological position. All members of UNIW are faith-based organizations that base their identities and missions from Islamic religion and tradition. These organizations are founded by Muslims, their mission statements explicitly identify Islamic doctrine or tradition as the ideological framework, and majority of their projects are rooted in Islamic theology. Moreover, Muslim faith-based NGOs run these projects exclusively in areas that have a strong Islamic presence. UNIW itself explicitly states that it strives to ensure global religious unity. In that, neither UNIW nor its member NGOs is different than former religious solidarity initiatives in terms of their ideational motivations. However, they are strikingly different than their predecessors as they strongly emphasize their self-claimed civil society character. Member organizations argue that they are civil society

organizations rather than religious grassroots movements. UNIW 's leaders insist that the coalition is 'the first *global Islamic civil society coalition*' rather than a global religious solidarity network. Therefore, although religion and global religious solidarity constitute the ideational framework of UNIW and its member organizations, it is not the organizing principle. I argue that the adoption of civil society framework is a strategic choice as the opportunity structures of civil society are more profitable than those of religion. I flesh out this argument by using the analytical tools of the social movement theory. By adopting Adamson's (2005) three type matrices of systemic-level opportunity structures, I analyze the case in terms of discursive, geopolitical, and institutional opportunity structures.

The discursive opportunity structures of civil society allow UNIW to claim legitimacy as a political actor in the current ideological configuration of world politics. As the sociological institutionalist and constructivist literatures suggest, the sprawling world culture imposes a set of isomorphic norms, structures and models of global organizing that shape state and actor interests. In the sphere of politics, this ideological configuration considers civil society as the most legitimate form of collective action. In the prevailing political culture, civil society is celebrated by states, intergovernmental organizations, international media, as well as the non-state actors themselves. UNIW's leaders and member NGOs, as political entrepreneurs who are embedded in this particular political culture, perceive civil society as the most favorable discursive opportunity structure available in transnational politics. They present their mission and ideology within the discursive frames of civil society, which resonate with those of well-received non-state actors in transnational politics.

In return, they attain legitimacy as serious political actors; draw credibility to their message; and increase the visibility of their grievances and claims in the international public.

Credibility and legitimacy gained through civil society identity and discourse allow UNIW to access further channels of power. One of the most significant outcomes of this is gaining access to states and government agencies. As described in detail above, UNIW is not the first attempt by faith-based groups to form transnational alliances and establish global religious solidarity. However, the majority of such networks, coalitions and alliances have remained isolated, short-lived and issue based. Moreover, very few of them have attained UNIW's geographical reach in terms of sheer membership size. I argue in this dissertation that one of the key explanatory factors of UNIW's distinctness is its symbiotic relationship with the Turkish government. Turkey's pro-Islamic AKP government aims to transform from a peripheral actor in regional and world political to a central one. Since 2002, the government has pursued a particular foreign policy strategy that is labeled neo-Ottomanism. This ambitious strategic depth vision diverges from Turkey's previous foreign policy strategies as it prioritizes building stronger relationships with the Middle East, Africa and the broader Muslim geography. AKP government's foreign policy directors maintain that Turkey should claim a leadership role in the Islamic World by cultivating alliances in its immediate geopolitical neighborhood, by taking on a mediator role in regional conflicts, and by strengthening political and economic relationships with its interconnected regions. This strategy is also different than Turkey's previous foreign policy approaches because it prioritizes the use of soft

power alongside geopolitical power. According to the policy's architects, Turkey should reestablish social and cultural ties in the region and with other Muslim-majority countries across the world. In that respect, they hold civil society organizations in high regard. Civil society organizations in their perspective are unique soft power instruments. Therefore, the government extends material and logistical support to UNIW, endorses the coalition in international platforms, and in some cases entrusts UNIW's Turkish member NGOs with covert political missions. The interests of UNIW and the Turkish government coincide not only in material ways but also in ideological ones. UNIW's primary purpose is to consolidate Muslim populations and salvage the Umma from its dispersed and disintegrated state. Therefore, Turkish government's attempt at leadership in the Muslim world dovetails with UNIW's ideational concerns. In that sense, UNIW utilizes the geopolitical opportunity structures created by the Turkish government's particular material interest and form a mutually beneficial relationship with it.

Formal civil society identity is not only meaningful to UNIW as a coalition, but also to its member NGOs from across the world. For UNIW's members, the instrumental benefits of adopting formal NGO identities and structures are manifold. Particularly small NGOs that have limited funds, personnel, and resources benefit from entering into partnership with UNIW. Resource poor NGOs increase their organizational power by gaining access to funds, expertise and organizational skills by collaborating with the more established members of the UNIW. Additionally, they gain international visibility, legitimacy, and leverage in the eyes of their own governments and communities. In some cases, they mobilize UNIW's collective

power to pressure their national governments. Yet, these institutional opportunity structures come with strings. It is difficult for small and isolated local groups to put their causes in the international agenda. In the competitive world of transnational politics, some movements garner more attention than others. In the post-9/11 world of transnational politics, Islamist movements find it particularly challenging to receive support for their causes and form transnational alliances. Therefore, they often turn to Islamic coalitions for support. However, as any other transnational collective network, UNIW has limited attention and resources to extend equal support to every local cause. Therefore, in order to gain UNIW's backing, local NGOs shape their message to match the coalition's ideological position. They frame their grievances and goals in ways that resonate with UNIW's sensitivities and mission. They present their concerns in terms of religious persecution, Islamophobia, discrimination, and restrictions of religious expression.

In sum, in this dissertation I search the reasons why previously informal religious groups are increasingly adopting formal NGO structures, the language of civil society, and establishing transnational coalitions and alliances. I answer this question by analyzing the discursive, geopolitical, and institutional opportunity structures that are made available by the prevalent civil society framework in transnational politics. I argue that the civil society identity and discourse provide these groups additional channels of power by increasing their social and organizational capital, by opening inroads to cooperative relationships with states and governments, and by allowing them to claim legitimacy as political actors.

9.2 Theoretical Contributions and Implications of the Study

The empirical findings of this dissertation have theoretical implications about the study of transnational non-state politics. Both the sociological institutionalist and the constructivist scholarships approach transnational non-state politics in the ideational versus instrumental contraposition. Sociological institutionalists and constructivists challenge the previous state-centric approaches by bringing in the notions of world-cultural conceptions, global scripts, norms and values. They forcefully argue that actors in transnational politics are not solely motivated by their pursuit of interests. These perspectives particularly conceptualize transnational non-state actors, such as transnational advocacy networks, NGO coalitions, international NGOs, as groups that are motivated by principled beliefs, ideational concerns and values as opposed to instrumentalist and interest-based ones. In this dissertation, I do not argue for return to the pure interest-based approaches. Instead, I employ an analytical perspective that moves beyond the ideational/materialist divide, and examine how the ideational motivations of principled non-state actors regularly intersect with instrumental concerns.

The intersection of interests and ideas is nowhere as evident as it is in transnational non-state actors' relationship with states. Majority of constructivist scholarship in this area has focused disproportionately on the power of principled non-state actors over states and international institutions. Numerous empirical research studies emphasized the ways in which transnational non-state actors generate international norms, shape the policies of international institutions, and pressure states to change their policies and practices. I argue in this dissertation that states and transnational non-state actors

have a complex and interdependent relationship than a zero-sum one. States' geopolitical, material and security interests enable or constrain the actions of norm-motivated transnational non-state actors. In other cases where states' material interests and non-state actors' normative interests coincide, they work in tandem. The sphere of transnational politics is populated by a multiplicity of actors that have varying norms, values, interests and priorities. Thus, a well-rounded analysis on these actors' ties requires a perspective that takes interdependencies into account.

Another theoretical consideration of this study is paying equal attention to the workings of power within transnational non-state actors. International NGOs, transnational advocacy networks and NGO coalitions are norm-motivated actors by definition. However shared norms and ideas are not sufficient to sustain their long-term effectiveness. There are undeniable instrumental elements at work. Individual political entrepreneurs within these organizations and networks are shareholders as much as stakeholders. Individual groups' commitment to membership networks and coalitions depend on the network's ability to provide sufficient benefits to outweigh membership costs. In other words, interest-based intra-organizational dynamics are as important as the shared normative motivations. Therefore, I argue, constructivist scholarship's emphasis on the value-based motivations should be balanced by focusing also on the interest-based concerns within organizations.

A third contribution of this project is drawing attention to the non-secular transnational non-state actors that promote conservative norms. Constructivist literature have been prolific in examining secular networks that are motivated by liberal norms. In contrast, it has not taken conservative networks, particularly those

that embrace political Islamist perspectives, into account. At the root of this oversight is the assumption that liberal and Islamist frameworks are competing claims in transnational politics. Similarly, Islam and civil society are considered incompatible. Since civil society is conceptualized as a formation whose prerequisites are derived from Western political and historical conditions, non-Western formations of civil society, specifically those in the Muslim world, are overlooked, if not denied. However, as the specific case of this project illustrates, Islamist movements have been increasingly adopting the discursive frames and organizational structures of the liberal civil society frameworks while retaining their conservative norms and objectives. In fact, they have been negotiating across the conservative/liberal divide and making instrumental use of the liberal civil society discourse's ideational tools towards their conservative goals.

9.3 Emerging Questions for Further Research

There have emerged a few theoretical and empirical areas of further consideration throughout the project. The first one is about the politics of humanitarianism. As discussed above, civil society and Islam are seen as contradictory frameworks. Despite the prevalence of de Tocquevillian interpretations, civil society is still seen as an essentially reactionary political actor. It is considered an autonomous and resistant sphere of action that restrains state power and facilitates transition to democracy. Islam, on the other hand, is conceptualized as a totalistic ideology that does not allow dissidence and autonomous associations. Authoritative regimes that do not allow reactionary politics in many Muslim-majority countries are offered as evidence to this

argument. Accordingly, civic initiatives that work in service provision are dismissed for being non-reactionary, and thus non-political.

This assumption prompts a critical question: Is service work non-political? Correspondingly, is overt politics the only way we can define civil society? I argued in this dissertation that humanitarian action and service provision could be directly political. As a large body of work in humanitarianism studies suggest, humanitarian action has always been a form of politics for which the pretense of being impartial and therefore non-political was essential. In the social aid/charity system, the very decision about which population to help, with what kind of projects, funded by whom, involve ideological reasoning and political strategy for all civil society organizations. In a large number of Muslim-majority countries, humanitarian action and service work are intertwined with politics. The Mavi Marmara case in this dissertation is but one illustration of the ways in which service work and politics intersect. Further research is needed to understand the ways in which seemingly non-political service-work function as political agency, particularly in the Muslim World.

Another implication emerges from UNIW leaders' disinterest in engaging in the compatibility debate. As political actors who are embedded in the prevalent culture of world politics, they are aware of the cachet of civil society. Therefore, they do not question whether their collective efforts fit the scholarly literature's definitions of civil society. Civil society has become such a ubiquitous concept in world politics that every actor employs it in ways that fit their particular interest. In that sense, has civil society become a *norm* in the constructivist sense? If all actors unquestioningly adopt the civil society discourse and identity, can we consider civil society a world-

cultural principle that has diffused and evolved into a global structure that shapes state and actor interests despite local conditions and task demands?

The very malleability of the concept poses another question: If civil society has become a sponge that soaks up virtually every aspect of civic action, has the concept lost its analytical value? Should we abandon the concept altogether? Several scholars (Hardt 1995; Kumar 1993; Tester 1992) have indeed argued that the civil society concept should be discarded as it has become too amorphous to be useful. The empirical outcomes of this study indicate otherwise. Civil society discourse and identity are in fact very useful for groups that face difficulties in finding political allies and claiming legitimacy for their causes in transnational politics. While the concept is beneficial in actual politics, its analytical value as a theoretical tool calls for further consideration.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

Complete List of UNIW's Member NGOs by Country of Origin

	Name	Country
1	Humanitarian Assistance Society (HAS)	Afghanistan
2	The Muslim forum of Albania	Albania
3	Ardhmeria - Future Culture Association	Albania
4	ALSAR - Alternative of Future Foundation	Albania
5	Irshad and Islah Society	Algeria
6	Eurasian International Development Association	Azerbaijan
7	Al Eslah Society	Bahrain
8	The Islamic Association	Bahrain
9	Yardimeli Assocation	Bangladesh
10	Saudi Universities Alumni Association Bangladesh	Bangladesh
11	Social Agency for Welfare and Advancement in Bangladesh	Bangladesh
12	Bangladesh Ideal Teachers forum	Bangladesh
13	Bondhan Welfare Society (BWS)	Bangladesh
14	Islamic Council Feni	Bangladesh
15	Association of Muslim Welfare Agencies in Bangladesh (AMWAB)	Bangladesh
16	Bosniak Radio-Television International	Bosnia- Herzegovina
17	Nahla Centre for Education and Research	Bosnia- Herzegovina
18	Islamic Relief	Britain
19	Al Muntada al Islami Trust	Britain
20	Soulaitine Association for Charitable Activities	Burkina Faso
21	Islamic Solidarity and Brotherhood Union	Burkina Faso
22	Cambodian Muslim Intellectual Alliance (CMIA)	Cambodia
23	Dynamic Islamic Youth Association	Cameron
24	ICNA Relief	Canada
25	Struggle Against Poverty and Development Association (ADLM)	Chad
26	Arab Research Center	Egypt
27	Al-Awn Development and Relief Association	Ethiopia
28	European Muslim Union (EMU)	Germany
29	Wefa - International Humanitarian Relief Organization	Germany
30	Vereniging Islam Dialoog Educatie Emantipatie	Holland
31	Indonesian Humanitarian Commite	Indonesia
32	Lemboga Amil Zakat Infaq & Sadaqah	Indonesia
33	Indonesia Muslim Students Association -HMI	Indonesia

34	Call and Reform Society	Iran
35	Association of Victims of American Occupation Prisons	Iraq
36	Iraqi Students and Youth Union	Iraq
37	Institute of Iraqi Scholars and Academician	Iraq
38	Islamic Kurdish League	Iraq
39	Qabes Strategic Studies Research Center	Iraq
40	The Angels of Rahman Association	Iraq
41	The Grand Council for Imams	Ivory Coast
42	Darul Arkam Foundation	Kazakhstan
43	Spike of Kindness	Kosovo
44	Association for Culture, Education and Learning	Kosovo
45	International Islamic Committee for Human Rights	Kuwait
46	National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS)	Kuwait
47	International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO)	Kuwait
48	Awareness and Consolation Association	Lebanon
49	Tekaful for Child Welfare	Lebanon
50	Humanitarian Relief for Development Society (HRDS)	Lebanon
51	The Welfare Association for Palestinian&Lebanese Families	Lebanon
52	Al Amal for Development Social Care Association	Lebanon
53	Social Association	Lebanon
54	Israa Association for Social Development – IASD	Lebanon
55	Thabit Organization for the Right of Return	Lebanon
56	Human Charity For Relief And Development	Lebanon
57	Islamic Development and Solidarity Society	Lebanon
58	Cultural Humanitarian Organization Marhamat (CHOM)	Macedonia
59	Vizioni M Educational and Cultural Association	Macedonia
60	Ensar Cultural Humanitarian Organization	Macedonia
61	Global Peace Mission (GPM)	Malaysia
62	Takmir Education Foundation	Malaysia
63	National Union of Malaysian Muslim Students	Malaysia
64	Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia	Malaysia
65	Society for The Enlightenment of The Ummah Malaysia	Malaysia
66	Future Global Network Foundation	Malaysia
67	The Community Development Foundation	Malaysia
68	Maldivian United Youth Association	Maldives
69	Mongolia Islamic Union	Mongolia
70	Center for Cross Cultural Understanding (Horizonti)	Montenegro
71	Ong Alkhayr for Development In Mauritania	Mauritania
72	Mehdi Ben Aboud Research, Development and Information Foundation	Morocco
73	Tawheed and Islah Movement	Morocco
74	Al Bisma Social Activities Organization	Morocco

75	Relief and Humanitarian Society	Morocco
76	The Union of Hope for Moroccan Children	Morocco
77	Al Zahra for Woman Forum	Morocco
78	Islamic Culture Association	Morocco
79	Student Revival Association	Morocco
80	Al Hidn National Association	Morocco
81	Islamic Education Teachers Association	Morocco
82	Woman Awareness and Revival Association	Morocco
83	Shafsawin Islamic Dawah Organization	Morocco
84	Al Barra Social, Cultural, Development and Environment Association	Morocco
85	Wiam Arts and Sports Association	Morocco
86	Moroccan Scouts Association	Morocco
87	Khubaib Foundation	Pakistan
88	Help In Need	Pakistan
89	Khidmat Foundation	Pakistan
90	Activists of Patients' Rights Association	Palestine
91	Al-Isra Relief and Development Fund	Palestine
92	The Islamic Society - Jabalia	Palestine
93	Center for Information and Guidance	Republic of Seychelles
94	Solidarnost Charity Fund	Russia
95	World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY)	Saudi Arabia
96	International Islamic Relief Organization (IIROSA)	Saudi Arabia
97	Humanitarian Organization For the Development of Social Welfare	Senegal
98	Dituria Cultural and Humanitarian Association	Serbia
99	International Islamic Youth League	Sierra Leone
100	Zamzam Foundation	Somalia
101	Maiin Foundation	Somalia
102	Care for Aid and Development	Somalia
103	Harqan Society for Education and Development	Somalia
104	Muslim Judicial Council	South Africa
105	All Ceylon Young Men's Muslim Association Conference	Sri Lanka
106	Serendib Foundation for Relief and Development	Sri Lanka
107	Association of Muslim Youth of Sailan	Sri Lanka
108	Invitation Islami Organization	Sudan
109	Maarij Foundation for Peace and Development	Sudan
110	Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA)	Sudan
111	Sudan Council of Voluntary Agencies	Sudan
112	Arab Organization for Freedoms and Good Governance	Switzerland
113	Lawyers Union	Syria
114	Palestinian Solidarity Foundation	Syria

115	The Foundation of Volunteer Organizations of Turkey	Turkey
116	Akabe Culture and Education Foundation	Turkey
117	Anatolian Lions Businessmen Association	Turkey
118	Anatolia Tawhid Foundation	Turkey
119	Research and Culture Foundation	Turkey
120	Besiktas Reconstruction Adornment and Solidarity Foundation	Turkey
121	The Union (Birlik) Foundation	Turkey
122	Diwan Research and Education Association	Turkey
123	Ansar Foundation	Turkey
124	Young Businessmen Foundation	Turkey
125	Youth Marriage and Mahir Foundation	Turkey
126	Khayrat Foundation	Turkey
127	Hilaliye Education Foundation	Turkey
128	Lawyers Association	Turkey
129	Ikhlas Foundation	Turkey
130	Science and Felicity Foundation	Turkey
131	Science Spread Society	Turkey
132	Science Spread Foundation	Turkey
133	The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief	Turkey
134	Human Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation	Turkey
135	The Foundation for Research in Islamic Sciences	Turkey
136	Business World Foundation	Turkey
137	Kardelen Education Culture and Environment Association	Turkey
138	Inter Cultural Research and Friend Foundation	Turkey
139	Ahmad Hulusi Effendi Culture, Education and Health Foundation	Turkey
140	Independent Businessmen's Association	Turkey
141	Ottoman Researches Foundation	Turkey
142	Raif Cilasan Education and Culture Foundation	Turkey
143	Raihan Education Foundation	Turkey
144	Ribat Education Foundation	Turkey
145	Safa Education and Solidarity Foundation	Turkey
146	Health Employees Foundation	Turkey
147	The International Council of Awqaf and Non-Governmental Organizations	Turkey
148	Ankara Education and Culture Foundation	Turkey
149	Turkey Imam and Preacher School Foundation	Turkey
150	Avcılar Science,Culture and Service Foundation	Turkey
151	Entrepreneurial Businessmen and Business Ethic Association	Turkey
152	Elmaskalem Education and Culture Association	Turkey
153	Erdem Education Ethics and Solidarity Association	Turkey
154	Smiling Children and Youth Association	Turkey
155	Social Researches and Intercultural Solidarity Association	Turkey

156	Bogazici University Reunion Association	Turkey
157	Pusula Education and Research Association	Turkey
158	Doctors Union Foundation	Turkey
159	Ahiskalilar Foundation	Turkey
160	World Turkomen Education Foundation	Turkey
161	Bayrampasa Yesil Mosque Serving To Science Foundation	Turkey
162	Justice Defenders Association	Turkey
163	Ihsan Education, Culture and Solidarity Foundation	Turkey
164	Gunisigi Education and Solidarity Association	Turkey
165	Veysel Karani Hirka-I Sherif Mosque Serving Foundation	Turkey
166	Food Safety Movement	Turkey
167	Reading Habit Education Culture and Solidarity Association	Turkey
168	Istanbul Dentists Friendship and Solidarity Association	Turkey
169	Umutlar Sonmesin Social Health Association of Cultural Solidarity	Turkey
170	Serving to Humanity Foundation	Turkey
171	Woman Sanitarians Solidarity Association	Turkey
172	World Ahlul Bayt Foundation	Turkey
173	Life Health and Social Services Foundation	Turkey
174	Palestinian Solidarity Association	Turkey
175	Caucasia Foundation	Turkey
176	Architects and Engineers Group	Turkey
177	Association of Volunteer Educators in Turkey	Turkey
178	Human and Civilization Movement Association	Turkey
179	Solidarity Foundation	Turkey
180	The Eastern Turkistan Education and Solidarity Association	Turkey
181	Consumers Union	Turkey
182	The Food Auditing and Certification Research Association	Turkey
183	Association for Protecting and Maintaining Ottoman Heritage in Adjacency of Quds	Turkey
184	Hikmah Education,Culture and Solidarity Foundation	Turkey
185	International Volunteers Society	Turkey
186	Continuing Education and Solidarity Foundation	Turkey
187	Helping Hand Association	Turkey
188	Darussalam Foundation	Turkey
189	Trade Union of Municipality and Special Provincial Administration Employees Solidarity	Turkey
190	Khoja Ahmad Yasawi Science and Wisdom Foundation	Turkey
191	Gul Foundation	Turkey
192	Darul Hikmah Association for Science, Research and Culture	Turkey
193	Bab-ı Alem International Student Association	Turkey
194	Deniz Feneri Association	Turkey
195	Din-Bir Sen	Turkey

196	Kashmiri American Council	USA
197	National Org for Defending Rights and Freedoms (HOOD)	Yemen
198	Orphans Development Foundation	Yemen

APPENDIX B

UNIW'S COUNCIL MEETINGS (BY LOCATION AND DATE) ¹³⁶

Meeting	Location	Date
1 st Council Meeting	Istanbul/Turkey	March 2006
2 nd Council Meeting	Jakarta/Indonesia	July 2006
3 rd Council Meeting	Khartoum/Sudan	December 2006
4 th Council Meeting	Rotterdam/Netherlands	June 2007
5 th Council Meeting	Kuwait	April 2008
6 th Council Meeting	Casablanca/Morocco	February 2009
7 th Council Meeting	Istanbul/Turkey	June 2009
8 th Council Meeting	Pristina/Kosovo	November 2009
9 th Council Meeting	Kuala Lumpur/Malaysia	May 2010
10 th Council Meeting	Istanbul/Turkey	October 2010
11 th Council Meeting	Islamabad/Pakistan	February 2011
12 th Council Meeting	Bandung/Indonesia	May 2011
13 th Council Meeting	Istanbul/Turkey	November 2011

¹³⁶ This table is built based on the information from UNIW's Council Meeting Reports.

APPENDIX C

ISLAMIC RELIEF ORPHAN WELFARE PROJECTS¹³⁷

COUNTRY	PROJECT TITLE	YEARS ACTIVE	
Afghanistan	Kabul Integrated Family Development Centre	2007	
Albania	Orphans Sponsorship, Orphans Activities, Orphans Educational Programme, Orphans One to One Sponsorship,	1992-2007	
Azerbaijan	Orphans Programme	1993	
Bangladesh	Orphans Sponsorship, Integrated Orphans and Welfare and Livelihoods Programme, Community Based Orphans Development, Bangladesh One to One Sponsorship, Child Scouting & Cultural Forum, Community Based Orphan Redevelopment (CBOR)	1992 2007	-
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Orphans Sponsorship, Summer School, Psychosocial Trauma Therapy for Orphans, One to One Sponsorship, Orphan families' Shelter Program, Orphans Housing Loans	1993 2007	-
Ethiopia	Orphans Sponsorship, One to One Sponsorship	2005 2007	-
India	Orphans Sponsorship, One to One Sponsorship	2000 2007	-
Indonesia	Orphan Sponsorship, One to One Sponsorship, Construction of a residential centre	2007 2008	-
Iraq	Orphans One to One Sponsorship Programme. Orphans & Widow Livelihood Project	2004 2007	-
Jordan	One to One Sponsorship, Orphans Welfare programme	1997 2007	-
Kenya	One to One Sponsorship, Orphan Eidul Fitr Clothes distribution	2007	
Kosova	Orphans Sponsorship, Orphans Housing Loans, Clothes Distribution, Eid Gifts, Food Packets for Orphans, Health care & Educational for Orphans families, Orphans School Stationary, Summer school, Vocational Training for Kosova Orphans, Widows Orphans Welfare WOW-Program	2001 2007	-
Mali	Orphans Sponsorship, Centre of hope, One to One Sponsorship	1997 2007	-
Niger	Child Welfare Programme, Orphans 1-2-1	2006 2007	-
Pakistan	One to One Sponsorship, Bagh Integrated Development Project, Legal Aid for Widows, Orphans Welfare Program	1993 2005	-

¹³⁷ The list is built on the information from Islamic Relief Worldwide's Orphans and Child Welfare Project Reports between 1992 and 2007.

Palestinian territories	Orphans Welfare Programme, Al-Basma Summer Camps, Eid Gift Project, Health Check up, School bags uniforms, Toys and Books Libraries for Disadvantaged Kindergartens,	1999 2007	-
Russian Federation (Chechnya)	One to One Sponsorship, Winterization Project	2005 2007	-
Somalia	One to One Sponsorship	2007	
South Africa	Orphans Sponsorship and Welfare Programme, HIV/AIDS	2004 2006	-
Sri Lanka	Orphan Sponsorship	2006	
Sudan	Mother and Child Health (MCH)	1994	
Yemen	Orphan Sponsorship in Yemen	2006	

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. Overview Information

1. NGO's history
2. NGO's purpose of foundation
3. NGO's projects and activities
4. NGO's process of UNIW membership

B. NGO's UNIW membership

1. What are the main issues that the NGO address?
2. What is the organizational structure of the NGO?
3. How does the NGO mobilize the required resources?
4. What are the major problems that the NGO faces?
5. How effective does the interviewee think the NGO is in executing its projects?
6. Does the NGO contact with other organizations (inside or outside the country) for collaborative projects?
7. If not, what should be done to improve such communication and cooperation?
8. How long has the NGO been a member of the UNIW? Describe the membership process.
9. Has the NGO been involved in any collective projects with other members of the UNIW?
10. Does the NGO's membership provide any advantages in terms of project execution or political advocacy?
11. Has the NGO's membership been useful in communication and collaborating with other NGOs (inside or outside the country)?
12. Does the Muslim world need UNIW?
13. Why should Muslim organizations and populations join forces?
14. In your opinion what issues should UNIW prioritize?

APPENDIX E
CODE CHART

1	Access to state	27	Donations
2	Advocacy	28	Double standard to Muslim minorities
3	AKP's rise to power	29	Drilling wells and canals
4	Beliefs and values	30	Drug use
5	Boomerang effect	31	Education
6	Capitalism	32	Efficiency
7	Children problems	33	Empowerment
8	CS can be an answer to Muslim World's problems	34	Enhancing individual rights and freedoms
9	CS can contribute to public education	35	Extending projects
10	CS in the Muslim World	36	Fast breaking projects
11	CS in Turkey	37	Finances
12	CS is religious duty in Islam	38	Funding
13	CS is the rising value in politics	39	Grievances
14	Collaboration among members	40	Head-scarf issue
15	Colonialism's effects	41	Humanitarian organizations
16	Conflict within UNIW	42	Informal religious communities
17	Conflicts among members	43	Informal religious communities
18	Consolidating economic relations	44	Islamic charities
19	Consolidating social capital	45	Islamic civilization
20	Conventions	46	Islamic education
21	Cooperation with Western NGOs	47	Islamophobia
22	Cultural imperialism	48	Israel-Palestine-US
23	Development	49	Know-how
24	Disintegration of family	50	Lack of dialogue with the West
25	Dispersion of the Umma	51	Leadership issues in the Muslim World
26	Distribution of tasks	52	Legitimacy

53	Local governments	79	Secular politics in Turkey
54	Loss of human dignity	80	September 11
55	Membership process	81	Service work in Africa
56	Minority issues in the Muslim geography	82	Small organizations vs. Big organizations
57	Misinformation about Islam	83	Social engineering
58	MUSIAD	84	Staff/personnel
59	Muslim civil society is not well-organized	85	TGTV
60	Neighborhood organizations	86	Transnational NGO coalitions
61	Neo-Ottomanism	87	Turkey-Israel relations
62	No groups with hidden interests	88	Umma
63	No radical groups	89	Undemocratic politics in Muslim majority countries
64	No state members	90	UNIW's accreditations
65	Orphan programs	91	UNIW's heterogeneity
66	Political stability	92	UNIW's history
67	Politics of humanitarianism	93	UNIW's mission
68	Poverty-inequality	94	UNIW's organizational structure
69	Problems with bureaucracy	95	Volunteerism
70	Professionalism	96	Waaf tradition
71	Project overlaps	97	Western NGOs and missionary work
72	Public visibility	98	Western NGOs are better organized
73	Urbani projects	99	Western NGOs do not have the sufficient social
74	Refugees	100	Western NGOs have abundant resources
75	Relief projects	101	Westoxification
76	Religious discrimination	102	Women's organizations
77	Representing Muslim civil society	103	Youth socialization
78	Resonance		

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