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PhD Dissertation

**The Caliphate as Homeland:  
Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain**

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction: Hizb ut-Tahrir Set in Denmark and Britain

This dissertation studies the Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain.<sup>i</sup> Based on interviews with members and former members of the group in these two Western European countries, it explores the ways in which Hizb ut-Tahrir members delineate their community positionalities within the de facto transnational, diasporic spatial setting that Muslims occupy in Europe. My specific focus is on the ways in which the members of the group negotiate understandings of “home,” “homeland” and “belonging” within the parameters of the Hizb ut-Tahrir politico-religious ideology. The core question of this dissertation is as follows: How can one understand the relationship between transnational elements in Hizb ut-Tahrir’s activities and ideology and members’ notion of home? The concept of the *caliphate* which refers to a system of rule introduced after the death of the Prophet Mohammad in 632 becomes central to such processes. Hizb ut-Tahrir members think of the caliphate as the ideal future state and their future home, and while working for the re-establishment of the caliphate they alienate themselves from their European homelands. By comparing the two branches of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain, this study argues that analysis of personal relations and rationales and members’ notions of belonging and home brings knowledge about Islamist organisations beyond discussions of transnationality and radicalisation. Such insights contribute knowledge not only about internal dynamics in Islamist organisations but also knowledge about how these organisations are influenced and shaped by contemporary Western societies.

Since its emergence in the Middle East in the 1950s, Hizb ut-Tahrir has demonstrated remarkable ideological and organisational strength and resilience. Hizb ut-Tahrir rejects democracy and understands Islam as a political ideology aiming at establishing an Islamic caliphate at the expense of existing states in the Middle East. The group's perception of politics and religion represents a critical voice questioning the organisational structures of societies, power relations in and between states as well as

norms and values broadly accepted in Western Europe. As a result, Hizb ut-Tahrir receives a lot of attention from the general public, the media, politicians and researchers and is often discussed as the “Other” *par excellence*; as a phenomenon utterly and completely incompatible with life in the West; an amount of attention which is in stark contrast to the actual size of the organisation.

There are three strands of academic studies addressing Islamism in Europe and Hizb ut-Tahrir more specifically. The majority of work on Hizb ut-Tahrir consists of policy-related analyses and discussions of radicalisation tendencies, security threats and failed integration of Muslims in the West. Because of its policy orientation, this body of work aims at solving societal problems, rather than exploring epistemological gains through analyses of contemporary phenomena. Other work has studied relations between modernity, globalisation, political Islam and Islamism and builds on both modernity and migration theories. Such work produces context oriented analyses and grand narratives but seldom analyses of dynamics within specific organisations. The third body comprises work focusing precisely on dynamics within individual movements and organisations. In my work, I seek to combine the two latter approaches, what could be called a historical-hermeneutical and a sociological approach. By combining the two, I aim at a context-oriented and group-specific analyses of Hizb ut-Tahrir, with a specific attention to notions of and place and practice (Tuan 1977, Cresswell 2002 and 2004, Massey 2005, Winther 2006).

Due to its presence in over 40 countries, its early appearance on the internet and its consistent work towards the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate and the unification of all the world’s Muslims in this caliphate, Hizb ut-Tahrir is often used to exemplify a modern, Islamist and transnational organisation. However, my preliminary studies of the Danish and British branches demonstrated that there was very little contact between these two neighbouring branches and that both members and former members were still oriented towards the homelands of their parents and grandparents. The differences between the Danish and British branches suggested that the main differences came down to issues of ethnicity, national origin, and local

politics. In Denmark, the majority of the members were of Arab origin; in Britain, they were of South Asian – mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi – origin, and this determined their political activities and rhetoric. In Denmark, there was a strong focus on the Arab world, and especially issues related to Palestine and Israel; in Britain, the focus was mostly on Pakistan and Kashmir. The different foci serve to address different audiences with specific interests. However, this commonsense realisation would appear to negate the understanding of Hizb ut-Tahrir members as belonging to a transnational organisation that seeks to unite all Muslims in a caliphate. The questions that need to be posed, then, are as follows: how do observers come to understand the organisation as transnational if the majority of activities are limited to one specific national context? How do the national and the transnational elements of the ideology and the activities interact? How do members make sense of themselves and their activities in an organisation that ignores all national and ethnic differences in their aim to unite all Muslims when their party activities are so clearly shaped by their local and national context? Do members think of the future caliphate as “home” or are they at home in Denmark or Britain? This study seeks to address those questions. My approach springs from a general interest in radical Muslim diaspora environments in Europe, Hizb ut-Tahrir serving as an example. My hope is to generate new insight into the ways in which members of Hizb ut-Tahrir relate to place and through such knowledge, shed light on how members relate to notions of network, belonging and home.

### **1.1 Existing Research Gaps**

In academic work with a point of departure in modernity and migration theory, Hizb ut-Tahrir is predominantly described as transnational and as facilitating the deterritorialisation of Muslim practice in minority settings in Europe. Concepts and metaphors touching on territory and belonging play a central role in recent academic studies of Hizb ut-Tahrir. This is partly explained by the fact that Hizb ut-Tahrir as an Islamist organisation is preoccupied with questions concerning state building, the re-establishment of the Islamic caliphate, but more importantly, it can be explained by

the fact that the majority of research in Islamism in Europe builds on globalisation and modernity theory (for instance Appadurai 1990 and 1996), as well as studies of migration and Muslim diasporas in Europe<sup>ii</sup> (for instance Lewis 1994 and 2007, Vogt 1995, Eickelman and Piscatory 1996, Heitmeyer et al. 1997, Faist 2000, Mandaville 2001 and 2007, Werbner 2002, Bowen 2004, Roy 2004a and 2004b, Kepel 2004) all of which are centred around questions of mobility, communication, network, identity and belonging.

In *Muslim Politics* (1996), Eickelman and Piscatori analyse the changes in Muslim political geography and use Appadurai's work (Appadurai 1990) as a point of departure for their discussion of Muslim transnational connections in saying that territory is no longer the root of any identity, rather the tendency is that ethnic and religious activism is becoming detached from territory – it is becoming deterritorialised (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996: 136). They point to three areas influenced by transnational links, areas generating a growing identification between Muslims: non-state actors (for example Sufi networks and the Saudi Muslim World League), Muslim minorities in general and in the West especially and finally, growing awareness with “Muslim issues” (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 146). The examples given are Afghanistan, Palestine, the Rushdie affair, and Bosnia (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 146), and today one might add Iraq and the Danish cartoon controversy. Although Hizb ut-Tahrir is rightly characterised as Pan-Islamic in this study, (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996: 139), the organisation could just as easily be seen as an actor within the three areas mentioned – Hizb ut-Tahrir is a successful non-state actor, an independent network, and it uses both the conditions for Muslims in the West and Muslim issues globally as a rhetorical platform for further recruitment and for developing and maintaining a political profile.

Deterritorialisation is also central in Olivier Roy's latest work (Roy 2004a and 2004b). Roy discusses Islam in European minority settings as becoming increasingly transnational, deterritorialised and deculturalised in that the connection with specific Muslim majority states and national cultures and practices is becoming increasingly weak (Roy 2004a and 2004b). What is described is a change of religious practice,



opening up new types of engagement and ways of expressing religious attitudes, all of which undermine the importance of national or local context. Furthermore, Roy describes Hizb ut-Tahrir members as follows: “The Hizb ut-Tahrir speaks of Caliphate or Khilafah without any historical nor [sic] geographical consideration, as if the Caliphate was some sort of dream. The cyber-Muslims set their minds in another world.” (Roy 2004a:288)

Thus Roy suggests that Hizb ut-Tahrir members in seeking to re-establish an Islamic caliphate are focusing on a dream world rather than reality. While there is little doubt that Roy is correct in describing Hizb ut-Tahrir’s political goal, the establishment of an Islamic caliphate, as something taken out of historical and geographical context, this is not necessarily to say that members live in a dream world and focus on cyber-activities rather than their concrete place and context. My argument is the contrary: Hizb ut-Tahrir’s notion of the caliphate disregards historical facts and is utopian, however, this does not mean that members of Hizb ut-Tahrir have their minds set in another world. Their activities and the organisation as a whole are very much determined by place and context and thus very much set in this world.

As opposed to Roy’s theoretical undermining of place and context, recent work by Gilles Kepel attempts to place Europe’s young Muslims in a battle for territory and expansion of ideology between different Muslim schools of thought (Kepel 2004). This battle is defined by Kepel as young Muslims’ fight for the right to self-definition. He enlists two possible outcomes of this battle: the optimistic scenario has the young European Muslims as bridge builders between modern, democratic Europe and the Muslims worlds of their parents and grandparents outside Europe – bridges that overcome geographic, generational and cultural/religious/political gaps between Europe and Muslim majority countries. In this scenario, Europe’s young Muslims will facilitate a peaceful fusion between modern democratic practice and traditional Muslim lifestyle. The pessimistic scenario focuses on the increase in numbers of Islamist groups showing opposition to the Western way of life either as violent attacks or as a deliberate withdrawal from the secular public sphere – a segment of the

European young Muslims burning not only cars in Parisian suburbs but also metaphorical bridges. Hizb ut-Tahrir members could definitely be seen as part of the pessimistic scenario, distancing themselves rhetorically from the West in outbursts about moral and cultural decadence, corruption, greed and hate towards Muslims, according to Hizb ut-Tahrir presently best expressed in on-going war engagements in Muslim majority countries.

In *Transnational Muslim Politics* (Mandaville 2001), Mandaville argues that the concepts of the transnational and the translocal emphasise the importance of practice and locality. With the use of translocal rather than “transnational” he undermines the importance of nations, states and the national and points at ideas or activities tying people in different localities together. However, the prefix “trans-“ in both “transnational” and “translocal” emphasises that something is crossing something else, be it national borders or localities, with the result that the perspective of place is weakened and the objects of the study – Islamists in this case – are lifted out of place. Although Mandaville states the necessity of focusing on practice and locality he is in actual fact more occupied with diminishing the role of states and nationality than emphasising the importance of place.

Another approach is sociological and applies Social Movement Theory to the study of specific Islamist groups (for instance Wiktorowicz 2004a and 2005). Here the analytical lens is focusing on group dynamics and the individual member as a rational actor. This type of research discusses persuasion and framing as central factors with regard to recruitment and establishing and expanding networks and thus analyses elements and actors in the process of the individual member accepting and embracing an Islamist ideology. The focus in this approach is on the group and interaction between ideology, leader, group and members. In the present dissertation I am also drawing on other sociological work. Among others, I use Maffesoli’s analysis of people coming together in groups because of a basic desire towards belonging to a community in connection with a discussion of group dynamics and individual rationales in Hizb ut-Tahrir.<sup>iii</sup>

Today, we have several good accounts of the history and ideology of different Islamist groups. We know which groups appeal to which audiences and there is a growing awareness of important differences in terms of means and methods. But apart from a few studies of specific groups we still know very little about member socialisation and personal relations and rationales in organisations with international representation and ideologies that are global in scope. Thus, in this dissertation I investigate Hizb ut-Tahrir members' party related activities and discuss transnational elements and notions of home based on empirical studies of Hizb ut-Tahrir's branches in Denmark and Britain. The dissertation does not attempt to solve the conflation between the fields of modernity and globalisation on the one hand and migration, diaspora and the emergence of Islamism in Europe on the other but rather, inspired by a combination of the historical-hermeneutical and the sociological approaches, it stresses the importance of historical context, place and practice. Neither does this dissertation claim to deliver verification of new theories on the basis of hitherto unknown empirical data. Rather it argues that some of the very commonly used concepts in existing studies of Islamist organisations fail to grasp the complexity of the relationship between transnational and national aspects concerning practice and belonging and illustrates this argument with empirical examples from the study of Hizb ut-Tahrir. In focusing on place and practice this comparative empirical study of Hizb ut-Tahrir points at promising ways of overcoming gaps in future research in Islamist organisations in Western Europe.

## **1.2 Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain**

The object of this study is Hizb ut-Tahrir because of its global presence and because of its resilience and success in setting political agendas in Western Europe. Time and again Hizb ut-Tahrir is used to illustrate integration gone wrong, the expansion of global Islamist networks and potential security and terror risks in Europe. But one of the keys to Hizb ut-Tahrir's success in recruiting and setting the agenda is that they communicate using any given national language and always relate to local and national

issues. Consequently, Hizb ut-Tahrir illustrates the complex relationship between local, national, international and/or transnational. Furthermore, comparing activities in two neighbouring European branches serves to emphasise the mentioned similarities (for instance ideology and organisational structure) and differences (for instance language, political focus, members' ethnicity). The Danish and British branches can be compared without too many reservations in that the differences between the two branches are not insurmountable. For instance, the use of the German branch would have proved difficult in terms of data collection and comparison of general "work environment" for activists due to the ban in 2003. But there are further reasons behind the choice of Denmark and Britain. Britain was the second European branch of the organisation and is to this day by far the most successful in terms of numbers and outreach.<sup>iv</sup> To give an example, the British branch is responsible for editing and distributing all English language material sent out to English speaking branches which places the branch in the engine room of Hizb ut-Tahrir (interview with Respondent B, 2009). Today, in effect, English is the main language of Islam as it is the only language connecting Muslims worldwide. Moreover, the British branch has played key roles in setting up new branches in Europe and South Asia. Considering the relatively small number of Muslims in Denmark, the latest prognosis says 4,0% of a population of approximately 5,5 million (approximately 220.000 individuals)<sup>v</sup>, the Danish branch is doing remarkably well and attracted around 1000 individuals to its latest conference<sup>vi</sup>. The Danish branch was established in the middle of the 1990s, approximately 10 years later than the British, and it is still 10 years behind in terms of organisation and outreach, but the Copenhagen leadership committee has gained recognition for its efforts and has been promoted head of regional affairs as reflected in the current signature: "Hizb ut-Tahrir Scandinavia". In comparing these two branches, one gains insight into structural developments comparing the oldest branch in Europe with a newer branch, but one also gains insight into two very different neighbouring countries and societies. Britain's colonial history is not matched by Denmark's few colonies and up until the 1960s and 1970s Denmark hardly knew of Muslim immigration. According to a census in 1880, there were only eight Muslims in the country (Nielsen 2009: 97).

Moreover, due to British colonial history the vast majority of Muslims stem from South Asia, whereas Denmark's first Muslim immigrants were invited guest workers from Turkey, Morocco, former Yugoslavia and Pakistan. Since the 1970s, Denmark has received refugees from Arab conflicts primarily (Lebanon and Iraq) but also from Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan according to UN agreements. According to statistics from 2009, there were 58,191 individuals of Turkish origin in Denmark, 28,917 Iraqis and 23,563 Lebanese.<sup>vii</sup> Out of a total of 1,591,000 Muslims in Britain in 2001 (growing to approximately 3% of the British population in 2008), 43% were migrants or descendents from migrants from Pakistan (Nielsen, 2009: 364).

In the two countries, the different historical experiences of immigration have resulted in the development of different political and legal approaches to the treatment of minorities. Based on the Race Relation Acts from the 1960s and 1970s and the Blair government's addition in 1997 ("A Vision for Multicultural Britain" in which it is an explicit aim to promote Britain as a "Community of communities")<sup>viii</sup> British political and legal practices have promoted a multiculturalist approach, whereas the Danish approach has been to balance between on the one side the French idea of *laïcité*, secularism, and on the other side the British protection of ethnical groups' rights. The Danish strategy is referred to as "integration" – a concept which covers both strategy and vision but is vague enough to have survived changing governments.<sup>ix</sup> The British approach has been affected severely by recent historical events such as the terror bombing of London's transport system on 7 July 2005 and changes in legal practice and policy are reflected in Hizb ut-Tahrir's public relations strategies.

To sum up, the choice was made to compare the Danish and British branches of Hizb ut-Tahrir because the mixture of similarities and differences with regard to success, international recognition, relative freedom to work (the organisation is not banned in either country) and member activities and moreover wider historical and political contexts facilitating comparative insights. Put differently, the two national branches are similar enough to be compared but different enough to illustrate how Hizb ut-Tahrir branches are shaped by their national contexts.

### 1.3 Hypothesis and Research Method

Against this background, the hypothesis is that Hizb ut-Tahrir is a transnational organisation on an ideological, organisational, practical and media related level. However, the empirical findings show very little evidence of transnational activities, and hence, it is necessary to distinguish between physical and sentimental transnationalism, between practice and ideology.

Concerning the transnational aspects: Hizb ut-Tahrir has branches in 43 countries worldwide, its members work together and exchange ideas across borders; it is actively and widely represented online, and it has an international leadership that follows every development in every branch closely and all of these transnational elements are tied together by strict adherence to an ideology that has remained unchanged since the foundation of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the early 1950s. As a result of the ideological influence, there is in the organisation a strong sense of belonging to a transnational community of believers, the *ummah*, just as there is a strong belief in the possibility of achieving the political goal, the establishment of a caliphate.<sup>x</sup> Through rhetorical finesse and emotional mobilisation – highly politicised analyses of Muslims as victims of oppression worldwide and ahistorical presentations of the caliphate – Hizb ut-Tahrir establishes the caliphate as an ideal state that will, once implemented, form an ideal homeland for all Muslims.

The empirical data shows that the contact between Hizb ut-Tahrir branches is minimal and the web pages have only become suitable for interactive communication recently. The empirical findings also show that national contexts continue to shape the individual branches and that members are equally influenced by their national and local contexts. Former members explain that as members they thought they would not have a homeland until the caliphate was re-established, but as former members they realise, that home was always their European homeland; Denmark or Britain. Subsequently, I argue that Hizb ut-Tahrir constitutes the caliphate as an emotional category that has nothing to do with geography, states or borders. Members are taught to think of themselves as homeless or uprooted in their European contexts but

their everyday practices show that they create homes where they live like everybody else. Their affiliation with Hizb ut-Tahrir and their interaction with other members are based on personal relationships and sentimental bonds which explain the national differences between branches and moreover why membership numbers, despite successful recruitment, are limited. The point concerning limited membership numbers is another interesting aspect of the use of “transnational” in descriptions of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Emphasis of transnational activities and network and a high level of online activities imply a certain size and worldwide influence. However, as numbers are relatively small, perhaps the characterisation of Hizb ut-Tahrir as transnational is playing to the Islamist agenda?

The methodological approach has been a combination of theoretical studies and empirical data collection. Firstly, I have studied Hizb ut-Tahrir’s ideological text corpus as well as all written material accessible from the web pages in English, Danish, German and French. Secondly, I have analysed Hizb ut-Tahrir’s patterns of activities in Denmark and Britain since 2003 where I conducted my first interviews with members in Denmark and Britain in connection with my MA thesis and the publication of the book *Hizb ut-Tahrir i Danmark. Farlig fundamentalisme eller uskyldigt ungdomsoprør?* (Sinclair et al 2003) (in English: *Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark: Dangerous Fundamentalism or Innocent Youth Rebellion?*), I have interviewed members about ideological notions of the caliphate in Hizb ut-Tahrir compared to personal ideas of home and belonging and I have asked former members in the two countries about possible changes in their personal ideas of home and belonging after leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir. Statements about home, homeland and the caliphate from members and former members have inspired me to seek ways of explaining notions of belonging outside the commonly read literature about modernity and migration, Islamism and radicalisation. Hence, reflections of the usefulness of a term like “transnational” are superseded by reflections of the necessity to differentiate between ideological home and physical home. This differentiation is also highly relevant in terms of members’ meaning construction between ideology and practice.

## **1.4 The structure of the Dissertation**

After the present introductory chapter one, the body of the dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first to follow, chapter two, provides the context and background for the study. Here, the reader will find a critical assessment of literature on Hizb ut-Tahrir and literature dealing with the broader topics of Islamism in Europe in a diaspora perspective. The chapter stresses the importance of Suha Taji-Farouki's context-oriented analysis of Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and organisational structure, adding valuable contributions from social movement theory and cultural geography. Furthermore, the chapter comprises methodological considerations and explanations regarding data acquisition.

Chapter three discusses transnational and national aspects of Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and activities. Based on examples of transnational elements and national differences on four levels – ideological, organisational, practical and media related – I argue that the transnational and national aspects are present simultaneously. All activities reflect a dialectic use of the transnational and the national, and while both the Danish and British branches maintain the official party agenda with its many transnational connotations, they also develop specific references to national interests. The latter has been prevalent the past five years, so much so that it is possible to talk about nationalisation tendencies in the Danish and British branches. These tendencies are documented through analysis of a strategy document from the international leadership committee to the British national leadership committee from 2005 as well as through analyses of web pages. The chapter argues on the one hand that the instructions from the international leadership are followed closely and on the other hand that the Danish and the British branches demonstrate a remarkably strong sense of how best to approach the Muslim communities in their respective countries once they are allowed to operate more independently.

Chapter four deals with Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological understanding of home and homeland. In the chapter, I question Hizb ut-Tahrir's official explanation concerning members developing a rational affiliation with the caliphate. Such rational affiliations



form an opposition to the emotional affiliations one would have with a homeland according to Hizb ut-Tahrir. This explanation and understanding is compared to statements by former members concerning how home is practiced by members and former members. For this purpose, I draw on concepts from cultural geography in analysing how members “do place” and “practice home” (Cresswell 2002 and Winther 2006). I discuss how the ideological connotations of caliphate can exist side by side with everyday homing practices. My argument is that Hizb ut-Tahrir members combine their ideology with their daily activities as party members. They identify with their political goal, the establishment of the caliphate, to the extent that they feel they are practicing the caliphate when they are engaging in party activities.

In chapter five, we take a closer look at the interaction between the ideological, organisational framework of Hizb ut-Tahrir and members’ personal experiences. The chapter investigates what the incentives are for joining and, later on, for leaving and what are the dynamics at play in Hizb ut-Tahrir communities are. It discusses Hizb ut-Tahrir as a hybrid between a cadre party, a social movement and a “tribe”. The latter is a concept borrowed from Maffesoli. The aim is to look for positive emotions and member rationales rather than explain membership by way of grievances and deficiencies. Accounts from former members indicate that while it is the organisational and ideological framework that attracts many new recruits, these do not explain why people stay in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Rather, it turns out that Hizb ut-Tahrir uses templates for emotions and self-understandings which members fill with content and meaning themselves. The religious content, for instance, is added by members according to their perception of salvation and reward in the hereafter. Thus, Hizb ut-Tahrir is due to its holistic ideology both politics and religion. The political content may be most apparent at first, but seen from a member perspective, it is the self-added religious content that makes it difficult to leave Hizb ut-Tahrir again.

After chapter five follows the conclusion in which the research questions are discussed based on the empirical findings in chapters three, four and five. Here, I state the dissertation’s three main contributions to the study of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the broader

field of Islamism in Europe to be: 1) the combination of theoretical and empirical analysis. Failure to compare an organisation's self-presentation online and in ideological material with practical activities may result in misleading conclusions, or, in the case of Hizb ut-Tahrir, in researchers reproducing the party's Islamist narrative; 2) the combination of the historical-hermeneutical and sociological approaches in a comparative study of an Islamist organisation. Due to this combination, the comparative study is both context-oriented and group-specific and it provides knowledge about the interaction between ideology and members' practise within an organisation; 3) based on empirical findings, this study emphasises the importance of positive gains and religious rationales in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Depending on what level of analysis is chosen, Hizb ut-Tahrir can be defined as both a political and a religious organisation. However, the present dissertation shows that individual rationales connected to religion and the positive experience of belonging to a community should not be underestimated in future studies of Islamists in Western Europe.

## Chapter 2

### Studying a Transnational Islamist Organisation in Europe

The predominant tendency in academic studies of Islamist organisations in Europe and specifically studies of Hizb ut-Tahrir is to view the phenomena from a historical-hermeneutic perspective. To a lesser extent, the phenomena are analysed from a sociological perspective based on Social Movement Theory (SMT). In this chapter, I discuss the literature relevant for this study with emphasis on the historical-hermeneutic perspective. As representative for this approach, I have chosen work by Kepel, Roy, Eickelman and Piscatori, Mandaville and finally, the most Hizb ut-Tahrir specific, Taji-Farouki. Naturally, the work of many other scholars could have been taken into account but as the object of interest is a particular Islamist organisation in Europe, I have singled out scholars who draw on theories concerning modernity, globalisation, migration and diaspora in analyses of the presence of Islamist organisations in Europe.

The work by Taji-Farouki is used to give an account of the ideology of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the history behind the foundation. Taji-Farouki's analyses show that the founder, al-Nabhani, was combining knowledge of Islam based on a traditional religious scholarly background with elements from a modern ideology and critique of events taking place in Palestine at the time when he formed his organisation. Thus, Taji-Farouki's work emphasises the importance of drawing on context, time, place and contemporary thinking when analysing an Islamist organisation. Gilles Kepel's work is included because of two important elements in his analysis: one is his understanding of modernity, the other is his emphasis on the role of states in understanding Islamism. Kepel claims that modernity is a condition shared by Westerners and non-Westerners alike and that Islamist organisations in the Middle East can be understood and analysed on the basis of the same parameters as Islamist organisations in Europe. Without ever giving a specific definition, Kepel understands Islamism as resistance to states and governments, and he sees Islamist developments in and outside Europe as

related. Taji-Farouki and Kepel both demonstrate what is gained by drawing on context and state logics in an analysis of Islamism. In contrast to this, Roy and Mandaville understand Islamists organisations in the West as deterritorialised and transnational and consequently the importance of states as diminishing. Although I disagree regarding the weakening of state influences, it does bring new aspects to the analysis of Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities to highlight cross-border relations and identification. In his monographs from 2001 and 2007, Mandaville aims at broadening the concepts of the political to include social interaction and cultural practices through analysis of transnationality and translocality. In doing so, he introduces the perspective of practice to the historical-hermeneutical analysis of Islamism which is central to the present study.

I also draw on Eickelman and Piscatori's *Muslim Politics* from (1996) because here the argument is made that it is necessary to combine a focus on local and global circumstances and influences when analysing Muslim politics. This I find to be a very sensible approach which, unfortunately, recent publications by other scholars have lacked. In the chapter I also highlight aspects from SMT relevant to my study. In doing so, I single out work by Quintan Wiktorowicz who has published among other things a very thorough and relevant study of al-Muhajiroun in Britain.<sup>xi</sup> With this study, Wiktorowicz demonstrates how an Islamist organisation functions socially, which has inspired my analysis of Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities and members. Wiktorowicz's work sheds light on group dynamics, the role of the charismatic leader and interaction between members, leader, group and ideology. Although SMT is by no means a coherent or stringent theory or school, it is a useful approach in the study of practice in Islamist organisations in that it fuses a conceptual framework from political science with anthropological methods such as field observations, participation and different kinds of qualitative interviews. Due to this combination of theory and method, SMT highlights the organisational (meso) and individual (micro) levels in the study of movements through which interaction between all levels, macro (societal), meso (movement) and micro (individual), become more apparent.

I do not include the bulk of security and policy oriented studies of Hizb ut-Tahrir in this research overview – of which the work by Zeyno Baran and Michael Whine is most widely read – simply because the politicised agenda is not the concern of the present study.<sup>xii</sup> However, after the discussion of the historical-hermeneutical and the sociological approaches, I bring a short overview of the recent academic literature published on Hizb ut-Tahrir. At the end of the chapter, I bring methodological reflections as well as an account of my empirical data.

## **2.1 The Historical-Hermeneutical Approach to the Study of Islamists in Europe**

### **Taji-Farouki: Hizb ut-Tahrir as the Fusion of Modernity and Religious Knowledge**

First and foremost, Taji-Farouki's work on Hizb ut-Tahrir is discussed in this research overview because it is the most thorough work on Hizb ut-Tahrir's early history, the background of the founder and the foundation and the ideology. I wish to emphasise Taji-Farouki's analysis of Western and modern elements in Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology, because the fact that this influence is so strong is also a reason for arguing that Hizb ut-Tahrir is and has always been a product of its time.

Fourteen years after its publication, Taji-Farouki's book *A Fundamental Quest. Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate* (1996), based on her dissertation (1993) remains the most complete, consistent work on Hizb ut-Tahrir's early history, the ideology behind the party and also an assessment of the motivation behind the establishment based on bibliographical analysis of the founder of the party, Taqi Uddin al-Nabhani.<sup>xiii</sup> The book is supplemented by articles containing analyses of the founder's readings of the Islamic textual sources (Taji-Farouki 1994) and comparisons between Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and other Islamist organisations' ideologies (Taji-Farouki 2000). Overall, Taji-Farouki combines a study and critical reading of textual party sources with interviews with people involved at the time of the founding and also her contemporaries with special insight into Hizb ut-Tahrir. Taji-Farouki

interviewed amongst others the then leader of Hizb ut-Tahrir, Zalloom, in Amman in the middle of the 1990s. Taji-Farouki's focus on the founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Palestinian Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani (1909-1977)<sup>xiv</sup> is combined with a focus on the specific context for these events. She analyses the founder's personal background and finds different aspects that could have motivated him, and also looks to the surroundings in search of sources of inspiration and possible opposition that might have shaped al-Nabhani as an individual and hence shaped his political project.

By the end of the First World War, two events of great significance took place in the Middle East: the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the division of parts of the Middle Eastern region into British and French mandates. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire had a profound effect on the region, the most significant being, according to Hizb ut-Tahrir, the replacement of the Ottoman Islamic Caliphate by the modern Turkish state created in the image of a Western nation state. After the end of the Second World War, another event of major significance took place in the Middle East. To al-Nabhani and like-minded individuals, the birth of the state of Israel signified the culmination of Neo-Imperialistic tendencies in the region.<sup>xv</sup>

According to Taji-Farouki, al-Nabhani's launch of a new political party in the early 1950s should be seen in the light of events in 1924, the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate, and 1948, the creation of the state of Israel, but also in the context of his own personal and educational background (Taji-Farouki 1994 and 1996). Al-Nabhani was born in 1909 into a family with a strong tradition for scholarship in Islamic sciences, his maternal grandfather had been influential in the Ottoman administration, and he himself graduated from al-Azhar in Cairo in 1932. After graduating, he taught Islamic legal studies in high schools in Haifa and elsewhere and later, in 1938, he changed his career path to the Islamic law courts. He was appointed judge in Ramallah in 1945. In 1948, after the Arab defeat, he fled to Syria, only to return to Jerusalem and resume his work as a judge. From 1948 to 1950 he worked as a judge in the Court of Appeals, but resigned in 1950 and devoted his time to the political project of Hizb ut-Tahrir (Taji-Farouki, 1994:368, 1996:2-3).

The years in Jerusalem between 1948 and 1950 became very important for his development of a distinct political vision and initiative in that he socialised with a group of Western-educated intellectuals “modern in their thought on political organization and activity” (Taji-Farouki, 1994:369) and who expressed their criticism of the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank in terms reminiscent of the Syrian Ba’th Party. Al-Nabhani was inspired by socialist Ba’thist elements and believed that the only way forward for the Arab world would be “revolutionary change in the Arab world and the unification of all Arab states” (Taji-Farouki, 1994:369). However, al-Nabhani’s vision differed from that of the Ba’th Party due to his understanding of the role of religion, Islam. To al-Nabhani, Islam was not simply one out of many common elements for Arabs – it was *the* common denominator; the essence of Arab unity. Al-Nabhani’s ideology could be characterised as Ba’th inspired pan-Arabism mixed with Islam. Al-Nabhani recognised neither European nor Arab versions of nationalism as ideologies. Apart from Islam, he only recognised two ideologies, Socialism and Capitalism, both of which were rejected as misunderstandings because he perceived them as building on sensual satisfaction and science rather than reason and thus as contradictions of human nature. However, al-Nabhani’s criticism of the two Western ideologies should be seen in the light of the events in 1924 and 1948 and what was perceived as continuing Western interference in Arab and Muslim affairs and continuing Western production of inequality and individual misery. Despite all criticism, he was inspired by elements of socialism and the overall idea of creating a modern political ideology.

Al-Nabhani's understanding was that humans need religion to explain the otherwise inexplicable and thus any ideology must have religion as its core. Hence, capitalism defined as having secularism as an underlying principle and the market as primary driving force was seen as being at variance with human nature due to the downplay of religion. Socialism was perceived as equally problematic due to the materialistic principle and the importance given to the state as central actor. Furthermore, socialism even went as far as to deny the existence of God and, still according to al-Nabhani, had the tendency to replace worship of a God with worship of the ideology

itself and of the main ideologues (Taji-Farouki, 1996:40).<sup>xvi</sup> The argument about the human need for religion has to be understood in connection with al-Nabhani's persistent focus on reason. Al-Nabhani was very critical of what he saw as a Western preoccupation with science and he "faulted both capitalism and socialism for adopting the scientific method of thought as the basis of thought per se" (Taji-Farouki, 1996:44). Contrary to this, al-Nabhani maintained that an ideology consists of *fikra* (idea) and a *tariqa* (method) and that only a rational doctrine can be the point of departure for an ideology. Al-Nabhani was convinced that the correct understanding of the world and the method to change the order of things in the world could only be obtained through careful, rational thinking. However, as the human mind is not perfect, the ultimate and perfect ideology would have to be revealed to humans by a divine force. Thus the perfect ideology, Islam, would be given to humans as a divine revelation but would only be accessible to those capable of reasoning as it was based on a rational doctrine (Taji-Farouki, 1996:38).

In al-Nabhani's understanding of Islam, there was an element of equality most clearly expressed in his reflections on life in the capitalistic West. He concluded that only the financially well-founded had real access to power – that only the rich were free and equal in a capitalistic society. Furthermore, he found that expansion of the capitalist ideology brought with it colonialism which was nothing more than exploitation of "defeated peoples" (Taji-Farouki, 1996: 40). As a contrast to this, he found that in a future Islamic state, equality for all could be a reality only if based on a correct and literal reading of the Qur'an. The core of the idea of equality is inspired by socialist thinking but al-Nabhani's solution to securing equality for all is quite different from any socialist recipe. His argumentation built on an understanding of equality meaning "all are equal before Allah". Thus, the relationship between pious and practicing Muslims and God is central as a guarantee for equality in the future Islamic state (Taji-Farouki, 1996:40). Al-Nabhani's anti-secularist and anti-democratic opinions bid him to pose an alternative society, a third way. This third way, Islam understood as an ideology, was from the outset and is to this day revolutionary and radical but non-violent. The underlying definition of revolutionary is closely linked to al-Nabhani's understanding of



“radical” which again is very close to the Latin *radix* (root). When al-Nabhani launched a revolutionary and radical party, the meaning behind this was to cast away Western influence and build an Islamic society from the root. “Al Nabhani envisaged Hizb al Tahrir as a vanguard that would transform the public way of thinking at its root” (Taji-Farouki, 1994: 371).<sup>xvii</sup> It is the combination of revolution, equality and egalitarianism that has led to al-Nabhani’s ideology being characterised as inspired by socialism – and perhaps especially the Leninist variant due to the cadre party structure.

Most significant among the radical elements in al-Nabhani’s ideology is the belief that Islam is superior to all other thought systems and religions and that, accordingly, every individual human being has the choice between belief and unbelief, between Islam and faithlessness. This implies that those who chose wisely, practising Muslims, have to distance themselves from everything not Muslim or not defined by Islam. In a current European context, the case of taking part in a democratic election is a relevant example and Hizb ut-Tahrir’s stance is simple: because democracy is governance by people rather than governance by God, participation in any way is unacceptable. It should be noted, however, that a rejection of democracy was never equal to rejection of modernity as such. Unlike Sayyid Qutb for instance, al-Nabhani never rejected modernity as such. While rejecting everything Western, he argued that Islam was a modern ideology and that *Shari’a* could meet the requirements of modernity. Taji-Farouki discusses this apparent discrepancy in al-Nabhani’s thinking and airs the point of view that elements in al-Nabhani’s ideology were tailored “to impress the non-Muslim Western reader” – a controversial point that, needless to say, any member would deny (Taji-Farouki, 1996:75). In this connection, it should be noted that Taji-Farouki’s discussion of modernity in connection with al-Nabhani’s ideology and Hizb ut-Tahrir is weakened by the fact that she never defines modernity. On the contrary, in her work, it is implied that “modern” and “Western” are synonymous which of course is inexact (see Taji-Farouki, 1994: 374 and 376).

Moreover, Taji-Farouki argues that the modern elements in al-Nabhani's political project and his readings of canonical texts are indeed central to the survival and the dissemination of the ideology:

Fusing together his political experience and personal convictions, he [al-Nabhani] launched a modern *Islamic* political party with a program already conceived in prototype within a national milieu and typical in ethos of the new revolutionary parties. Through his presentist reading of the *sirah*, he sought to legitimate this political program in terms of traditional Islamic discourse (Taji-Farouki, 1994: 382).

Taji-Farouki's argument is that Hizb ut-Tahrir's political programme was constructed as a re-enactment of the prophetic paradigm whereby it was possible for al-Nabhani to present the establishment of Hizb ut-Tahrir as a religious duty. In and of itself, this is not playing on modern elements, but the argument is emphasised with examples of how al-Nabhani treated the textual sources on the Prophet Muhammad's intentions and actions to fit with his own political agenda (Taji-Farouki, 1994: 392). For example, the use of *hizb* (party) to signify political party is a modern invention as it can be dated back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although one could argue that this modern use of *hizb* is a "legitimate extension of the traditional and classical one" (Kedourie in Taji-Farouki, 1994: 376), Taji-Farouki claims that al-Nabhani is disregarding the Qur'anic meaning of the term in order to stress a signification more suitable for his own intentions. Also, al-Nabhani chose to refer to the people surrounding the Prophet as a *halaqa* (study circle) rather than the more commonly used *kutlah* (grouping) and then continued by adhering to the use of "study circle" when referring to Hizb ut-Tahrir recruits and members studying his party's ideological material (Taji-Farouki, 1994: 384). Another example is the usage of the concept *ummah* which according to al-Nabhani meant political party. Al-Nabhani understood this term as implying:

(...) something that is more specific than an association (in the general sense) (*jama'ah*): it is specifically an association made up of individuals who have a bond that unites them, through which they form a coherent grouping (*kutlah mutakattilah*) and a single unit, and (thanks to which) they continue thus (al-Nabhani in Taji-Farouki, 1994: 375).

In the article, Taji-Farouki makes the argument that al-Nabhani's political project was built on ahistorical and anti-contextual readings of Islamic canonical sources, readings that through extracting things from their historical context resulted in the creation of direct references to the present (Taji-Farouki 1994, 380). In his readings and the production of his own ideological material, al-Nabhani would present his political project as if it were based on historical and Islamic concepts and thereby he was presenting things and concepts as existing before they actually did. In al-Nabhani's readings of the Qur'an and the Hadiths, it would seem that Muhammad was working towards the establishment of a state with all the different stages and elements resembling the central political goal of Hizb ut-Tahrir in broad outlines as well as specific details (Taji-Farouki, 1994: 391).

Al-Nabhani's political project was a success in as far as the party, Hizb ut-Tahrir, still exists today and still refers to al-Nabhani's readings of the canonical textual sources of Islam.<sup>xviii</sup> This success could be said to be the result of al-Nabhani's cunning combination of knowledge of the Islamic sources and visionary and creative strategy for building a modern political party – what Taji-Farouki refers to as reflecting a “broader tension between the pull of modernity and the requirement of Islamic authenticity” (Taji-Farouki, 1994: 393).

Taji-Farouki's point concerning Hizb ut-Tahrir's ability to adapt to shifting trends and not least the fusion in the ideology between inspiration from modern lines of thought and thorough knowledge of Islamic sources is strong in that it is difficult to see how the ideology and the organisation would have survived otherwise. Here we also see a fusion between the points from Taji-Farouki's in-depth analyses and other scholars'

grand narratives of Islamism, for instance Kepel as seen later in this chapter, in that modernity is both a key ingredient as well as an insurmountable obstacle for an organisation such as Hizb ut-Tahrir.

With regard to the present study of Hizb ut-Tahrir, Taji-Farouki contributes important knowledge about the founder's personal background and the influential sources of inspiration in terms of political thinking at the time of the establishment of the organisation. It is clear that the specific time and context for the foundation of Hizb ut-Tahrir would have influenced the content of the ideology as well as the organisational structure and practical structure. Thus, Taji-Farouki demonstrates the impossibility of escaping from a specific context for an organisation such as Hizb ut-Tahrir regardless of the organisation's perception of its own independence and originality. This point is very useful in connection with the present study because my empirical data supports the argument that Hizb ut-Tahrir is subject to or shaped by its surroundings and specific national conditions. We shall return to this discussion in chapter three. Furthermore, Taji-Farouki's points concerning the modern elements of Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and not least al-Nabhani's understanding of party activities being a religious duty are very relevant to my analysis of information provided by my respondents. These points will be discussed further in chapter five.

### **Gilles Kepel: European Islamism as Part of Grand Global Narrative**

Since 1985, Gilles Kepel has published six books on the emergence and development of Islamism. Throughout these volumes, Kepel describes how Islamism is deeply rooted in struggles for the right to political representation in the Arab world, the wider Middle East and in Europe. He is preoccupied with identifying the roots of Islamist movements and with bringing the West, Western states and their Muslim minorities, into the analyses. The effort to clarify links and interdependencies between different regions and people of the world is consistent, and so is his focus on how different circumstances in states and in historical developments result in different outcomes.

Kepel's explanation model builds on a combination of national, regional and global historical elements. His analyses bring together historical trends and general developments with specific events. For instance the reason why young people with a North African Muslim background revolt against social and political authorities in Parisian suburbs and sympathise with bin Laden's ideology and activities will be sought in both French domestic politics and in the appeal in global Islamism (Kepel, 2008:243-254). Kepel refers to Islamism as a part of global currents and thinking, a product of contemporary society, and he claims that the West has a responsibility for the growth of Islamism due to the role played in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in Afghanistan, in relation to the Gulf states and the interest in their oil, and in all the wars fought in the Middle East. Thus Kepel points to events both in and outside Europe when explaining the rise of Islamism in Europe.

In his first book *The Roots of Radical Islam* (SAQI, 1985 and 2005) based on the PhD thesis entitled *The Prophet and the Pharaoh* (1984), Kepel identifies political Islam, Islamism, in historical and national terms (the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt) rather than ideological terms and throughout his work he never comes closer to an actual definition. In his following monographs, he focuses on a decade at a time and singles out significant events of particular importance. For instance, events in the Middle East in 1979, the Islamic revolution in Iran, Saddam Hussein's takeover of power in Iraq and the Russian invasion of Afghanistan are understood as consequences of two central breaks in the relationship between religion and politics after the Second World War. The first break was obvious immediately after the Second World War where religion was detached from politics as a consequence of a general admiration for technological progress and economical and political developments. Religion was seen as a private matter that would affect politics only indirectly. The second break happened in the 1970s when a new understanding of the role of religion was brought forward. During this decade, all three monotheistic religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism saw new groups of practising followers in the shape of fundamentalist schools of thought and groups that could not be ignored as peripheral or without importance. Such new groups consisted of well-educated young individuals who due to secular education

were the products of the modernity that they criticised in religious phrases for having failed. For these groups, according to Kepel: "(...) the aim was no longer to modernize Islam but to 'Islamize modernity'" (Kepel, 1994: 2) meaning that they wanted their political and religious voices heard as part of the global, modern political debate. Interestingly, religion appears as a driving force parallel to political rationales in Kepel's account.

Up through the 1990s to 2001, the majority of Islamist movements fell apart according to Kepel, who points to the election of Khatami as President of Iran in 1997 as the height of this development and as a prove of the theory of the gradual collapse of the global Islamist movement. Kepel continues to argue that the Islamisation wave was finally over when bin Laden took on the role as spokesperson for all critical of the American foreign policy in the Middle East. Whereas the 1990s had seen bin Laden's rhetorical outpourings directed at internal Saudi relations, these were now directed at the American administration – American foreign policy to be more specific – and had a more value-oriented and globalised content. The terror attack on New York and Washington in September 2001 stands paradoxically as both the greatest accomplishment and the fall of Islamism. When bin Laden took over the Islamist agenda and turned it into global anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism, it was the beginning of the end of Islamism (Kepel, 2002: 207-08, 375-76). Thus, in Kepel's understanding, Islamism is closely tied to states and state related agendas.

In relation to the presence of Islamist groups in Western Europe, Kepel argues that the past 20 years have witnessed the emergence of a new suburban proletariat consisting of young people with Muslim background on the fringes of the labour market. According to Kepel (1997), these young people have expressed separatism with reference to their religious identity as Muslims in new and varied ways, as a response to the designation of Islam as the enemy of the West after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the consequent break-down of the Eastern European Warsaw pact countries headed by USSR, as well as Khomeini's *fatwa* (religious decree) over Salman Rushdie, also in 1989. However, any kind of separatism, anger or frustration with the West and

Western lifestyle has been conditioned by the West and with the West as a focal point in terms of values. Creating a standpoint or a voice in the political debate that is not a direct continuation of Western norms and values or is in direct opposition to these is simply not possible:

The *Weltgeist*, according to Hegel, is moving towards the West. In following the same trajectory, the expansion of Islam in the post-industrial era faces a double challenge. Outside the intellectual protection afforded in the past by the boundaries of traditional Muslim societies, Islam must now place itself on an equal footing with this 'spirit of the world' within the region's strongholds in the West which produce and transmit throughout the world values, images and wealth which form the basis of its power. Between conflict and compromise, the features of the Islam of the twenty-first century are taking shape (Kepel, 1997:6).

By referring to Western norms and values as *Weltgeist*, Kepel is stressing that the West sets the frame for the formation of any kind of political expression. Thus, the Islamist movements and youth fora that we see arising in Europe today consist of children and grandchildren of the Islamist movements in the Middle East in the 1970s to a large degree and they are still as much a product of secularism and modernity as prior movements were.

With regard to the present study of Hizb ut-Tahrir, Kepel's assumptions concerning modernity and Islamism are relevant. Kepel argues that Islamism is a product of specific settings, time and place, but that all similar tendencies and developments are connected. Moreover, he understands religion and politics as equally important in relation to historical developments, organisational trends and revolts, and even interacting. Understanding religion as a driving force provides an interesting perspective in the study of Islamism, which tends to be understood as a political rather than a religious phenomenon. Finally, Kepel's understanding of modernity is important

for this study. Kepel argues that modernity is a way of thinking determined by a specific mindset rather than a physical location. Thus, according to Kepel, modernity is not a Western invention.

Overall, the strength in Kepel's explanation model is that his research and findings on the emergence of Islamism and Islamist groups in Europe always align current issues with historical, political, religious and social contexts. He outlines grand narratives in the shape of broad causal relations. And he identifies developmental tendencies across continents and religions without being blind to state-based differences. Islamism in all its variations, forms and shapes is understood as part of global tendencies and thus a product of contemporary thinking, whereby it is demystified and easily brought into debates concerning internal European political debates about minorities, security and integration. In Kepel's work, the world is here rather than out there. Having said that one should also be aware of the fact that the grand, all encompassing narratives fail to go beyond state logics and recognise phenomena that operate across borders. With Kepel's work as a point of departure, Hizb ut-Tahrir's European branches can be understood as political, religious, modern, European and Middle-Eastern all at the same time.

### **Olivier Roy: Hizb ut-Tahrir expresses Detachment to Place, Culture and Religion**

Like Kepel, Olivier Roy deals with broad lines and historical developments. But Roy adds a more explicit focus on how global tendencies affect the way Islam is practised and expressed in Europe today and moreover, he has contributed important discussions of definitions of trends within the Islamist tradition. In *Globalized Islam: The Search For a New Ummah* (Roy 2004a), Roy emphasises that Islam arrived in the West as the religion of individual immigrants, and that what has been changing over the years is religiosity rather than the religion itself. Islam is not changing – Muslims are. “What is evolving is not religion but religiosity – that is, the way in which believers build and live their relationship with religion.” (Roy 2004a: 120). Roy points to a deculturation and a deterritorialisation present in the way Islam is practised as a



minority religion. As a minority religion in Europe, Islam is losing its connection with Muslim states. Descendants of Muslim immigrants to Europe are not necessarily experiencing the same connection with the country their parents or grandparents emigrated from and are not necessarily emotionally tied to the same national traditions and customs that determined the older generations' religious practice. Present circumstances provide new possibilities in terms of scrutiny of sources and choice of practice and interpretations that seem more authentic than the ones bound to tradition. Islam's new reality in Europe includes new groups of believers, new ways of practicing the Islamic faith, new ways of engaging in religious activities and new ways of expressing religiosity. European converts to Islam would be an obvious example of a new group of believer, but overall, all young Muslim individuals growing up in families with Muslim non-European backgrounds who demand different things from their religious practice than their parents or Muslims in Muslim majority countries constitute a new group of believers who ask new questions concerning the role of religion in their everyday lives and who turn to different and new sources for answers compared to their parents and the immigrant generations as a whole.<sup>xix</sup>

As part of the same development, the meaning of the category 'Muslim' is changing. According to Roy, 'Muslim' is used as a "neo-ethnic definition" today (Roy 2004a: 126), which covers the understanding that all individuals with a Muslim background share a Muslim culture regardless of national or ethnic origin. Thus, religion is perceived as the main identity denominator and "Muslimness" as representing an independent culture. Moreover, according to Roy, the category "Muslim" also covers individuals who are not practising believers of the Muslim faith. Thence, "Muslim" is no longer descriptive in terms of religiosity and it would be possible to "speak of 'non-believing' Muslims" (Roy 2004a: 126). Finally, in a European context, Roy sees the new use of "Muslim" being juxtaposed by other "pseudo-ethnic" categories such as "white" or "European" (Roy 2004a: 126) rather than religious categories such as Christian or Jewish.

Thus, Roy argues, ethnic and national identity is referred to by the use of a religious category. Consequently, young European Muslims' religious practice is increasingly

becoming dominated by a deterritorialised and deculturalised approach to religion. To a growing extent, Europe's young Muslims consider their religion detached from specific states, cultures and traditions and thus consider it to be Islam in a purified form, cleansed of coincidental historical influences (Roy 2004a, 146-47). But, furthermore, the content of the religion is being diluted, too. If even non-practising individuals with a Muslim background are perceived as Muslim, then the reference to Islam is emptied of meaning.

With this analysis of developments among Islamists in Europe, Roy also touches on Hizb ut-Tahrir. Roy finds that Islam's detachment from territory is typical of new generations of Islamists that value the "uprootedness of uprooted people" (Roy 2004a: 270). Such individuals and groups – Hizb ut-Tahrir among them, according to Roy – are referred to as "neofundamentalists". Neofundamentalists reject the idea of different schools in Islam as well as all other differences between Muslims (race, ethnicity, language etc.) (Roy 2004a: 243-247 and 272). Several of the characteristics typical of neofundamentalism we also recognise in Hizb ut-Tahrir. According to Roy, neofundamentalists seek to unite the *ummah* and practise "a true Islam" (Roy 2004a: 268-69). Also, this *ummah* is imaginary as it is believed to unite Muslims regardless of ethnicity, race, language and culture. And, finally, in order to unite *ummah* and create the perfect state, "geography is as irrelevant as territory" (Roy 2004a: 272).<sup>xx</sup>

As mentioned, Roy locates Hizb ut-Tahrir among groups following this pattern and conviction. Typical for a traditional Islamist party would be Hizb ut-Tahrir's focus on the establishment of a state, the caliphate, the application of *sharia* and the use of the term ideology as well as the fact that they do have an ideological text corpus. However, as the following long quotation shows, according to Roy, Hizb ut-Tahrir's Islamist characteristics are less dominant than the features discussed here. Roy says about Hizb ut-Tahrir that it:

(...) has become an uprooted and deterritorialised movement, with no thought of taking power in a given country. The caliphate it wants to establish has no territorial

basis. Hizb ut-Tahrir uses pseudo-Koranic terminology, taken out of context, with no consideration of history and social circumstances. Its concept of Khilafat has little to do with the historical Caliphate; even if the party sees 1924 as the year when it ended, this does not mean that it wishes to revive the Ottoman political system. In fact, for Hizb ut-Tahrir the Caliphate is not a real geographical entity and has no territorial or sociological roots. It has to be established as soon as possible for the whole ummah and not on a specific territory. This global and abstract conception of the ummah is typical of neofundamentalism. The development of Hizb ut-Tahrir exemplifies how a former Islamist party turned neofundamentalist, even if it differs from all other neofundamentalist movements (Roy 2004a: 238).<sup>xxi</sup>, <sup>xxii</sup>

Here, it is very interesting to see that one of the key factors in Roy's characterisation of Hizb ut-Tahrir as neofundamentalist builds on Taji-Farouki's analysis. As we have seen, Taji-Farouki found that al-Nabhani was using Qur'anic concepts and phrases taken out of context when inventing the ideology of Hizb ut-Tahrir (Taji-Farouki 1994). Roy continues this analysis by saying that Hizb ut-Tahrir's Islamic state has very little to do with historical caliphates – a point which cannot be emphasised strongly enough. Thus, according to Roy, despite being an Islamist organisation in its outset, today Hizb ut-Tahrir could be characterised as a neofundamentalist enterprise operating with a deterritorialised political agenda in a transnational network of members and local branches. The core concepts addressed by Hizb ut-Tahrir – Islam, the caliphate and the Muslim *ummah* – have lost their connection with national territory, states, as well as specific traditions and cultures.

Roy's contribution to the study of Islamist organisations is important in that he recognises cross-border developments and trends among young Muslims. He draws a picture of Hizb ut-Tahrir as highly influenced by new perceptions of Muslim identity

and political and religious practice. However, where Kepel failed to acknowledge Islamist organisations and networks working across borders, Roy fails to recognise the ever-important influence of states and localities. Based on my empirical studies, as we shall see in chapter three, four and five, I find that despite a tendency to identify with Muslims elsewhere in the world, national contexts still play a very important role in Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities and in members' self-understanding. Consequently, my questions are, "Is it possible for an organisation not to be somehow a product of a specific context, time and place? Can any historical phenomenon be deterritorialised?"

Ultimately, with his analysis of Islam's and Muslims' deterritorialisation and deculturalisation, Roy is touching on the relationship between politics and religion in Islamist organisations. According to his argument and the characterisation of Hizb ut-Tahrir as neofundamentalist, Roy says that the religious content of Hizb ut-Tahrir is subordinated the political. This is a very important point with which I disagree completely, based on my empirical studies. We shall return to the aspect of the relationship between religion and politics in Hizb ut-Tahrir in chapter five. In the meantime, I would like to draw my reader's attention to the main aspect of Roy's analysis and argument, namely his understanding of Hizb ut-Tahrir as having developed into a neofundamentalist enterprise. With the label "neofundamentalist" Roy is saying that despite its Islamist origin, Hizb ut-Tahrir's practice is today detached from territory, culture and religion. He finds that in Hizb ut-Tahrir the Qur'an is subject to cut and paste techniques whereby new meanings are invented which match the organisation's ahistorical perception of *ummah* and caliphate. In essence, he finds Hizb ut-Tahrir members to be living in a dream world detached from any reality. Or, as he phrases it, "Hizb ut-Tahrir members are "cyber-Muslims [with their minds] set in another world" (Roy 2004a: 288). I follow Roy's argumentation, insensitively put though it may be, to a certain degree. Hizb ut-Tahrir's depiction of the caliphate is indeed ahistorical, and the aim to unite the Muslim *ummah* expresses a wish and a Utopia rather than a realisable political project. However, Roy fails to recognise the ever-important influence of Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and likewise, he underestimates the role of religion in Hizb ut-Tahrir.

### **Peter Mandaville: Transnationality and Translocality - The Return of Place?**

In his book *Transnational Muslim Politics. Reimagining the Umma* (Mandaville 2001), Mandaville posits that Islam exists independently of national and cultural divisions amongst younger generations of Muslims in the West. Furthermore, he sees a tendency among Muslims to practice their religion across state borders as a transnational community uniting all Muslims regardless of nationality. For Mandaville, this implies a focus on the positive, living, uniting, identity-creating and creative elements in Islam as a global religion. Thus Mandaville is forming a contrast to Roy's position, in that, for Roy, transnational and deterritorialised Muslim practice implies a focus on the growth potential for Islamist fanaticism, radicalism and terrorism.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Mandaville's point of departure is a critical analysis of the dominating state focus in the International Relations research field leading up to 2001. Instead he advocates the use of transnational anthropology (Mandaville, 2001:38-49). Transnational anthropology is the study of societies and tendencies focusing on global socio-cultural changes. Migration would be an evident object of transnational anthropology, and migration would cover the movement of peoples, the emergence of transnational social movements, the influence of supranational political organs, the growth of "global cities" as opposed to "migration cities" and the continuous development within travel and communication technologies. Mandaville rejects Giddens's contemplations concerning globalisation's annulment of Otherness (Giddens, 1990). On the contrary, according to Mandaville, due to globalisation we are more often confronted with otherness. Consequently, Mandaville finds that globalisation helps individuals, groups and nations to better understand themselves and their own traditions and habits by way of comparison with what is different (Mandaville, 2001: 30-33). The critical reading of Appadurai focuses on Appadurai's theory about –scapes,<sup>xxiv</sup> and the derived notion that culture is a dimension of globalisation. To Mandaville, culture is not a dimension of globalisation, rather it is a lens which all globalised phenomena should be studied through. As Mandaville phrases it, "[c]ulture is not a thing" and he "would not even want to see it as a noun" (Mandaville, 2001: 38). He understands culture not as

meaning but as the result of negotiations of meaning. And, according to Mandaville, the political is present in this negotiation process.

Mandaville then introduces the concept of “translocality” and argues that people don’t live “in” localities but “through” localities (Mandaville, 2001: 50). In other words, regarding political identity research, it used to be taken for granted that where you were geographically would say something about who you were politically and this no longer rings true (Mandaville, 1999:653 and 661). The concept “translocality”, derived from a discussion of Appadurai, stresses the importance of space and time in the study of organisations and political relations. Translocal politics is defined as the phenomenon when people and processes do more than operate across or between borders of nations, namely when these question the nature and limits of borders of nations by practicing forms of political identity that do not depend on limits of territory (Mandaville, 1999:654). Such activities and individuals are not necessarily entirely new phenomena but the notion of translocality is seen to undergo rapid changes and enter a new phase. The relationship between the state and the individual has thus far been based on the status bestowed on the individual by the state, citizenship, and this relationship is challenged in a more and more globalised world dominated by global markets, supra-state-organisations and speedy developments in transport and communication technologies (Mandaville, 1999: 657). Mandaville argues that the gap between individuals’ legal identities as citizens of territorial states and their political identities as actors in the public sphere is widening and that new analytical tools and concepts are needed in order to capture current developments concerning identity politics. Today, a passport tells us more about economic status than loyalty and political attachments (Mandaville, 1999: 657).

In the concept of translocality, Mandaville sees a fusion of locality and movement which means that this concept ties together time, place, organisation and motion and makes it possible to study how organisations (movements) create new political space. Something that is translocal connects people and their activities in places without regard to national borders and it creates a space for movement understood as both

motion from one place to another and organisation. The elements of translocality are in many ways similar to what many would characterise as “globalisation” – a term Mandaville refrains from using because some of the dynamics he discusses are worldwide without being global as such. Thus, Mandaville maintains a differentiation between global and translocal and prefers translocality as an analytic tool when dealing with new political spaces, new forms of organisation as well as travelling politics and religion. Mandaville finds that individuals identifying with each other across borders create communities give new meaning to “local” (Mandaville, 1999: 663). He continues by arguing that physical place and geography say very little with regard to identification and belonging. Rather, he thinks that people should be understood through analysis of their activities and self-definitions (Mandaville, 1999: 664). Applied to Hizb ut-Tahrir’s activities, I interpret Mandaville’s argument as follows: Hizb ut-Tahrir members all over the world belong to the same community regardless of state borders and language differences. Hizb ut-Tahrir is their chosen community, and it is through their membership of this organisation, activities and self-understanding that we should study the organisation and individual members.

Apart from Mandaville’s discussions of culture as negations of meaning and voluntary communities creating new localities across borders which are relevant for this study, he also asks the important question, “What happens to Islam (...) when it travels, migrates or becomes otherwise ‘transplanted’?” (Mandaville, 2001:109). Travelling Islam is defined with reference to three aspects by Mandaville. The first is physical movement of people from one national context to another. When Muslims travel and settle in new surroundings they adjust to their new conditions and Islam adjusts accordingly. The second is the mental aspect. When Islam travels, “old ways of knowing are relativised” (Mandaville, 2001: 109). In new places, new questions will be asked and new knowledge will be produced. Interestingly, Mandaville stresses the point that new questions are posed not only by individuals unfamiliar with Islam but also by Muslims who practice or understand Islam differently. When arriving to new places, Islam will meet “unfamiliar versions of itself” as Mandaville words it (Mandaville, 2001: 109). The third aspect of travelling Islam is connected to time. Here,

Mandaville argues that in the Muslims' diaspora, an "imagined nexus of past and future" occurs.<sup>xxv</sup> According to Mandaville, it is part of the diasporic experience that home will always be somewhere else in another time; "somewhere that once was and which could be again" (Mandaville, 2001: 109). Mandaville continues by saying that for many Muslims in diaspora, "'home' is the Umma of the Prophet's Medina" (Mandaville 2001, 109). Consequently, according to Mandaville, the idea of home somehow escapes adjustment to new settings.

In connection with travelling Islam, Mandaville discusses the role of the migrant. He sees the migrant as occupying a special position limited by neither physical state borders nor political boundaries (Mandaville, 2001: 103). With this understanding of the migrant, Mandaville links back to the understanding of *umma* as an idea that has travelled unchanged through time. He argues that Muslims living as minorities in Western societies tend to find refuge in the idea of the *umma* – an ideal about global Muslim unity that non-Muslims are excluded from – i.e. a community in which the majority populations in the West have the role of 'the other' (Mandaville 2001:104). In connection with this imagined global Muslim community Mandaville stresses that this ideal must remain exactly an ideal and never be a 'place'. If a shared ideal or an imagined community becomes fixed in a place it would automatically be determined by the norms and regulations of that place and thereby be subordinated a majority once again. Only if diasporic minorities keep referring to elusive communities transcending national borders can they uphold an identity freed from the dominance of the majority. Thus, migrants and diasporic Muslims have special access to ideas and ideals that transcend place and time.

What is of special interest for this study is Mandaville's interpretation of the connection between travelling religion, diaspora communities and the longing for home. Mandaville proposes that we study individuals and culture through practice and through self-understanding. On the one hand he argues that Islam is challenged and changed when it moves from place to place with practicing Muslims. He says that new knowledge is created and new religious practices and understandings are the outcome



when Islam and Muslims travel. On the other hand, he argues that there are some core ideas that bind together Muslims through time and place. He mentions *ummah* as one such core concept, and expands by saying that all Muslims in diasporic settings to some extent long for a lost home; *ummah* in Medina at the time of the Prophet.

Having a migrant background and living a life in diaspora, as the majority of Muslims in Denmark or Britain do, is for Mandaville synonymous with having the potential to challenge state borders and regulations. He sees great potential in individuals who are somehow in between categories such as states, cultures and religions. Individuals who belong to more than one place are prone to form translocal communities, whereby they connect with individuals in similar situations in other countries. Such communities feed into imagined unity and shared longing for home. In the context of this study, Hizb ut-Tahrir serves as a perfect illustration of a voluntary community of believers that long for an ideal that transcends time and place. As we shall see in chapter four, the *ummah* and caliphate ideals are very central to understanding how Hizb ut-Tahrir members perceive the idea of home and homelessness.

What I find particularly useful in Mandaville's work is the element of negotiation in Mandaville's culture and religion concepts. The argument is that context and locality influence ideas, individuals and groups, and that new meaning and practice are constantly negotiated and developed. If we use Hizb ut-Tahrir as an illustration once again, the fact that individuals have taken the ideology with them to Europe and established branches in Denmark and Britain has consequences for the ideology and the related activities. In minority settings, Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology is challenged by questions from the majority population but also from other Muslim individuals and groups. However, the problem with Mandaville's work is that albeit theoretically inspiring, it is not supported empirically. For instance, in the 2001 volume, Mandaville discusses Hizb ut-Tahrir as a "movement" that is practically the same as al-Muhajiroun (Mandaville 2001:116). Arguably, Hizb ut-Tahrir has movement qualities, but it is more precise to refer to it as an organisation due to its strict adherence to the Islamist ideology and the hierarchical organisational structure. This discussion will be extended

in chapter five. <sup>xxvi</sup> A better illustration of how Mandaville's contemplations are difficult to apply to empirical data is the emphasis on transnationality and translocality. According to the empirical data used in this dissertation, the transnational and translocal community that is Hizb ut-Tahrir is only one aspect of how members understand themselves and what Hizb ut-Tahrir activities are about. One national aspect maintained by Hizb ut-Tahrir, for instance, is the organisational structure. It is also reflected in the activities of the individual branches.

### **Eickelman and Piscatori: Interaction between Global and Local**

The combination of explanation models presented in work by Kepel, Roy and Mandaville provide many interesting answers as to how and why Islamist organisations function and thrive in Europe. Their work is also useful as a point of departure for discussions of transnationalisation and deterritorialisation of Islamist practice and of notions of belonging and home. Kepel's work demonstrates how Islamism in Europe today is related to Islamism in Egypt in the 1950s and the wider Middle East in the 1970s and 1980s and how European states get the minorities they deserve in the sense that the political landscape of each nation-state influences minority-majority relations. In other words, he shows us how important states are in understanding developments within the Islamism as a movement. Roy on the other hand argues that Muslims in minority settings, and Islamists and Neofundamentalists especially have their minds set in cyber-space and engage in religious practices detached from territory and culture. Increasingly, states are losing their influence over their Muslim minorities. Mandaville's position is in many ways an extension of this, only he argues that new political minority phenomena should be analysed as practiced culture. States represent old-fashioned institutionalised politics, practising Muslims in minority settings represent the future – cultural practices and identities independent of places, borders, states.

Interestingly, in 1996 Eickelman and Piscatori raised many of the questions concerning global-local representation and identification with regard to Muslim politics that both

Roy and Mandaville touch on. Eickelman and Piscatori highlighted changes in the geography of Muslim Politics and used Appadurai to introduce the idea that politics on all levels was becoming more and more globalised and that geography is both a question of physical and mental distance (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996). Advances within travel and communication technologies mean that a Turk in Copenhagen can feel as close to another Turk in Istanbul as he does to his Danish neighbour. When Eickelman and Piscatori using Tablighi Jama'at as a case example discusses how a transnational organisation becomes localised over time, and that "universalist and particularist forces are not opposites but a symbiotic pair" (Wallerstein in Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996: 149). They emphasise how members of this organisation originating from India in the 1920s are conscious of belonging to a worldwide community of believers and depending on local resources simultaneously (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996:150). This is closer to what I have found to be the case with Hizb ut-Tahrir than any of the analyses made and published by Roy and Mandaville after 1996. In Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities in the Danish and British branches, we see transnational and global tendencies as well as national and local tendencies. Members can easily manoeuvre between a holistic ideology, a transnational network of party branches and local activities. Thus, all levels exist simultaneously and interact as we shall see in chapter three.

## **2.2 The Sociological Approach to the Study of Islamists in Europe**

### **Wiktorowicz: Introducing the Group and the Rational Individual**

So far, the American Sociologist Quintan Wiktorowicz has contributed to research in Islamism with discussions of relevant aspects of Social Movement Theory (SMT) as well as very thorough studies of the Islamist organisation al-Muhajiroun (Wiktorowicz, 2004a, 2005 and Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler 2006).<sup>xxvii</sup> Wiktorowicz' overall point is that the explanation as to why some people choose to become members of a radical Muslim organisation in Europe should be found in commonly known sociological

phenomena, in group dynamics, influence from charismatic leaders and in individuals' own rational choices and life strategies. Or put differently: the link between involvement in Islamist activities and the individual consists of a long list of individual experiences and choices and more or less coincidental elements and events.

Wiktorowicz says about his own project in *Islamic Activism. A Social Movement Theory Approach* (2004b) that the study of Muslim activity up to 2004 has been centred on individual groups and their ideologies, history etc. and that other sociological aspects as a rule have been suspended in favour of references to distinct features in Islam as an ideology and in Muslim activism (Wiktorowicz 2004b:3). Thus, Wiktorowicz' project forms a break with this essentialisation of Islam and Muslims due to the application of a commonly used theoretical apparatus to shed light on recognisable dynamics in Muslim organisations and hence the possibility of performing comparative studies with other forms of religious and political activism. The applied definition of Islamic activism is "the mobilization of contention to support Muslim causes" (Wiktorowicz 2004b:2) and on this deliberately broad basis<sup>xxviii</sup> Wiktorowicz is aiming at establishing mechanisms behind collective motion and motivation. He does so by focusing on how social networks provide resources to organisations' survival and activism (Wiktorowicz 2004b). Wiktorowicz studies the motivation behind activism rather than the Muslimness of the actors and their political goals so to speak.

Wiktorowicz's argument is that it is necessary to bring in the individual member's personal story, background and motives for joining a radical group because like everyone else, radical Islamists read off opportunity structures both rationally and strategically (Wiktorowicz 2004b:15), and, among other things, the study of al-Muhajiroun in Great Britain shows that there is always more than one factor in play when an individual joins a radical Islamist group. Wiktorowicz recognises analyses carried out by Gilles Kepel and Olivier Roy stating that major historical events such as wars and political conflicts, as well as structural change, financial crises and social problems, play a motivational role. However, as Wiktorowicz phrases it: "[s]tructural strain and discontent may be necessary, but they are not sufficient causal explanations

for Islamic activism” (Wiktorowicz 2004b:9). The arguments are: if a crisis situation in and of itself was sufficient motivation to join a radical movement, the masses would be in a permanent state of revolt, and thus the crisis explanation does not fully account for why only a minority become members of radical groups. Neither do crisis explanations account for why young people with similar background, religion and convictions join different organisations. Rather, the crisis- and grievance-based explanations should be supplemented with individual explanations in all cases such as socialisation in the shape of an individual introduced to a certain radical group through friends, religious search motivated by the death of a close relative, youth rebellion targeting traditionally practising Muslim parents and so on (Wiktorowicz 2004a:7-8).<sup>xxix</sup>

Wiktorowicz points to four processes involved when an individual engages in Muslim activism and joins an Islamist organisation: the first is that an individual experiences a cognitive opening, whereby he or she becomes susceptible to new ideas. The second is religious seeking and refers to individuals seeking meaning through religious terms and channels. The third is frame alignment. This is the process of the individual taking in and accepting the representation of an ideology and worldview offered by an organisation. As Wiktorowicz terms it, this is where the radical organisation’s worldview “makes sense” to the individual (Wiktorowicz 2004a:1). Finally, the fourth process is socialisation in which the religious and political content of the organisation as well as activities “facilitate indoctrination, identity-construction, and value changes” in the individual (Wiktorowicz 2004a:1). Socialisation in an organisation can only be successful if the individual goes through the first three processes. If the first three processes are not experienced, it is unlikely that the individual will identify with the ideology and join the organisation (Wiktorowicz 2004a:1).

Engaging in these processes is a question of persuasion according to Wiktorowicz. An individual has to be persuaded about the content of the work and the nature of the activities as well as the underlying religious paradigm (Wiktorowicz 2004a:1). Here, the message and reputation of a particular group and not least how the message is delivered is important. In the case of al-Muhajiroun, several of Wiktorowicz’

informants explained that the founder, Omar Bakri Mohammed (Bakri), was viewed as both an equal because he cared, listened, remembered people's names and always asked for relatives, but also as a leader, someone they would listen to and take advice from. Bakri was and is still known for delivering enthralling and captivating speeches publicly as well as internally at more intimate gatherings. Overall, the impression and evaluation of Bakri and his message was not created in a vacuum but emerged in competition with other religious scholars, and among the primarily young people in the circles around al-Muhajiroun. Many Imams in the bigger cities in Britain have a reputation for having a static view of Islam and of being unwilling to discuss the religion in theory and practice. Contrary to this, Bakri always urged the young people to discuss and form arguments, which was part of the attraction of his group, but members and affiliates claimed that the attraction to leader Omar Bakri Mohammed's ideology and work went beyond that and involved both an intellectual, cognitive level and an emotional level based on personal religious search (Wiktorowicz, 2005: 138). On these grounds, Wiktorowicz concludes that it is necessary to combine the rational actor-model with grievance-based explanations in order to analyse the interaction between the individual, the group and society, so as to understand why primarily young people choose to join radical Islamist organisations in Europe.

What is gained through this approach is the highlighting of in-group dynamics and the individual member viewed as a rational actor. Also, Wiktorowicz's interviews with members of al-Muhajiroun show that joining an Islamist enterprise and committing to the activities and the ideology is a highly personal matter – both in terms of reasons for joining and outcome. Wiktorowicz's approach has served as a great source of inspiration in my research on Hizb ut-Tahrir. As we shall see in chapter five, the combination of the rational actor model and the socialisation processes are very useful in order to understand what draws individuals to Hizb ut-Tahrir. However, although Wiktorowicz discusses positive aspects of socialisation and group dynamics, I find the focus on grievance-based explanations dominant in his work. Despite the fact that he studies individual members of al-Muhajiroun as rational actors, there is still a tendency to look for negative explanations for joining. For instance, when Wiktorowicz describes

how Bakri becomes a father figure to some members, he indicates that these people were missing a father figure before joining (Wiktorowicz, 2005: 147-48). In chapter five I pose the question, “What if people join Hizb ut-Tahrir just because it feels good and makes sense to them at the time?”

The answer to this question is found partly in the empirical data, partly in work by sociologists with points of departure varying from that of Wiktorowicz. In chapter five I draw on the work by Maffesoli, who argues quite simply that in the world today, people form groups – or “*affectual tribes*” – based on the desire to belong to a group (Maffesoli 1996). This idea is discussed, and the point is made that Hizb ut-Tahrir contains elements of a traditional cadre party, a social movement and a tribe. With regard to Hizb ut-Tahrir containing elements of a social movement, this is discussed with work by Goodwin and Collins as the point of departure (Goodwin et al, 2001).

### **2.3 Hizb ut-Tahrir Specific Literature**

The little that has been published by academic institutions or in academic journals on Hizb ut-Tahrir exclusively has had a security focus (Mayer 2005, Karagiannis 2005, Karagiannis and McMauley 2006, Chaudet 2006, Hamid 2007, Herbert 2009), and furthermore there is a strong focus on Hizb ut-Tahrir’s activities in Central Asia and/or comparisons between Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Qaeda. The work by Mayer, Karagiannis and McMauley and Chaudet all comprises analyses of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s activities in Central Asia or comparisons between Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Qaida, and only a couple of people have applied different approaches relating to the security discussion, namely Herbert who discusses “*methods for evaluating key components of the Islamist persona*” (Herbert, 2009: 389)<sup>xxx</sup> and Hamid who looks specifically at Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain (Hamid 2007). Apart from those mentioned here, there are to my knowledge two PhD candidates in London currently researching Hizb ut-Tahrir. One is Noman Hanif, Royal Holloway, whose project is entitled “The Securitisation of Hizb ut-Tahrir”, the other is Ilyas Mohammed, who is based at the Department of Sociology,

Goldsmiths, University of London, carrying out a Social Movement Theory inspired comparative study of party activities in branches throughout Europe. I have not read any of his work but have corresponded with him in 2008-09 and met him in October 2008. The former, Noman Hanif, I have not been in contact with. Hanif is behind articles such as “The Caliphate: Islam’s Challenge to Global Order?” (Media Monitor Network, 2006) where he argues: “There needs to be a clear appreciation that the Koran is the nuclear reactor of the Islamic world providing energy for the restoration of the Caliphate and its consequent challenge to global order. The West has no option but to accept the inevitability of the Caliphate and formulate a clear, distinct and explicit position towards Islam which identifies its doctrinal incompatibility” (Hanif, 2006:5). It appears that Hanif is convinced of the inevitability of a “clash between civilisations” of sorts and furthermore, he seems to be taking a future Islamic Caliphate for granted. Outside Europe, M.M. Osman Nawab is currently writing a PhD dissertation on Hizb ut-Tahrir in South East Asia focusing on Malaysia and Indonesia based in Canberra (Australian National University). Nawab’s work is in many ways taking the shape of a historiographical analysis of party structure and lines of command and will show interesting new insights concerning internal splits in the party as well as detailed analysis of the hierarchical order in the Malay and Indonesian branches. One could say that Nawab’s work extends the study provided by Taji-Farouki adding updated analyses on Hizb ut-Tahrir in South East Asia and new perspectives on Hizb ut-Tahrir in the Middle East and Europe.

Another recent source of information about Hizb ut-Tahrir in Europe has been statements and biographical details in interviews, newspaper articles and comments as well as in books written by or with former members (Husain 2005, Maher 2007, Hee 2008, Nawaz 2008a and 2008b, Mustafa 2008, Bano 2010). Moreover, the London-based think-tank Quilliam Foundation established by former members of the party leadership in Britain, Maajid Nawaz, Ed Husain, Rashad Ali and Dawud Masieh saw the light of day in the spring of 2008 and has influenced the political and general public debate on radicalisation and Islamism since, with the publication of reports on radicalisation and extremism. Since 2008, Ali and Masieh have left the Quilliam



Foundation and are now involved with a counter-extremism group called Centri also based in London.

## **2.4 Summary**

As shown here, the historical-hermeneutical and the sociological approach to the study of Islamism contribute very different analyses. The work by Taji-Farouki is the most Hizb ut-Tahrir specific of the literature drawn upon here, and her analysis emphasises the historical and geographical context when explaining how al-Nabhani developed the ideology of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Her conclusions about the combination of al-Nabhani's deep knowledge of Islam and his understanding for the modern, Western *Weltgeist*, resulted in an ideology that has proved to be fit for survival. The interaction between the Middle Eastern and the Western lines of thought is central in Kepel's work, too. Kepel understands Islamism as a product of and a reaction to repressive state politics but also as a movement that ties people and continents together. According to his analysis, Islamism died on 11 September 2001, but in 2010 it seems more accurate to argue that Islamism has transformed from being tied to state logic and logistics to a way of thinking drawing on both territorial ties and the lack of territorial ties.

Roy's focus is on the weakening of the role of states with regard to Muslim minorities, and he concerns himself with the question why individuals choose to become members of Islamist organisations in Europe. He introduces concepts such as rootlessness, difficulties with adapting to a new or unfamiliar culture, identity building and political reasons for joining radical Islam such as anti-Imperialism, anti-Colonialism, anti-Occidentalism and third-world-ism. Kepel and Roy produce coherent narratives, but their work leaves unanswered questions concerning identification of the Islamist as an individual or the Islamist organisation or movement as a social phenomenon. Mandaville's work is conceptually close to Roy's regarding the focus on deterritorialisation and cross-border practice and identification. However, Mandaville is much more optimistic and positive in his analyses. Where Roy sees rootlessness,

Mandaville sees opportunities for cross-border communities, and where Roy sees marginalisation of Muslim minorities in the established political institutions, Mandaville sees the need for a new and broader definition of the political. Both Roy and Mandaville are concerned with developments within practice, but their conclusions concerning members do not rely on empirical evidence. Although Roy speaks about the members of Hizb ut-Tahrir and assesses their ideological publications and internet activities, he seems not to have been studying people. In his descriptions, Hizb ut-Tahrir members appear to be irrational actors out of touch with their surroundings. That does not correspond with my impression at all. Mandaville seems preoccupied with liberating minorities from positions lacking traditional political influence. This implicit victimisation does not correspond with my impression of Hizb ut-Tahrir members either. Certainly, there is an element of resonance with the ideology behind Hizb ut-Tahrir and this victimisation but not with the actual, acting members that I have met and interviewed.

Both Roy and Mandaville are inspired by Eickelman and Piscatori's book *Muslim Politics*, and the notion from Appadurai that deterritorialisation and transnationalism are consequences of intensified movement of people, the occurrence of new minorities in the West and new communication tools, but neither of them follow up on Eickelman and Piscatori's analysis of Tablighi Jama'at and the point that a transnational organisation can be localised over time. According to Roy, territory is losing its importance, and according to Mandaville, *trans* is the signifying syllable in translocality as opposed to *locality*.

Wiktorowicz's SMT-inspired analysis of al-Muhajiroun provides a characterisation of involved individuals as rational actors and of the interaction between individual member, group and leader, demonstrating that Islamist organisations in Europe do not just occur. They are created by leaders and actively chosen by members – behind each committed individual is a story of personal preferences and choices. This aspect adds valuable information and points of discussion to the study of Islamist organisations that the historical-hermeneutical perspective lacks. Taji-Farouki's work does not

explain why and how Hizb ut-Tahrir spreads successfully on a practical level or how the organisation functions on a member level. However, the sociological approach is blind to the importance of context. People and organisations are always placed in a geographical location. And this brings me back to the question of deterritorialisation and transnationality in the historical-hermeneutical work. Historical context should never be disregarded, and neither should practice. It is simply not possible to have any kind of practice separated from place. When organisations move, they are moved by people, and people are always located geographically.

With this rather long outline of how scholars working within a historical-hermeneutical or sociological framework have studied and analysed Muslim politics and Islamist organisations, the aim has been to show how context, place and practice are dealt with and what the advantages of either a historical-hermeneutical or a sociological analysis are. But also what gaps in terms of unanswered questions or blind angles still remain.

## **2.5 This Study**

I seek to combine the historical-hermeneutical and the sociological approach in the study of Hizb ut-Tahrir. In effect this means studying the phenomenon Hizb ut-Tahrir both in relation to context and in relation to member level activities. My empirical data derives from interviews with members and former members as well as textual analysis of ideological material and field observations in Denmark and Britain. Based hereon I cannot claim to be able to characterise Hizb ut-Tahrir on a meso level (organisational level), but rather what I aim at is a combined analysis of macro and micro level activities. I have studied Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological material and asked members to comment on specific ideological features concerning states, nations, home and belonging in order to be able to say what Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological stances are and how they are perceived by members, then I have looked at Hizb ut-Tahrir branches in two different countries in order to map out influences from different national contexts

and finally, I have asked members and former members about their travel patterns and other potential transnational activities as members in order to establish how much members of different branches are in touch. Subsequently, considering information about context, place and practice, I discuss home, belonging and personal relations and rationales.

The following three concepts are very central to this study: transnationalism, caliphate and home. Apart from the obvious inspiration from Roy and Mandaville, I find the Norwegian Historian Knut Kjeldstadli's definition of transnationality very useful:

Transnationalism may be given a meaning separate from "international", to denote phenomena that do not exist between nations or states but across borders. Likewise one may distinguish between movements that are transnational, i.e. comprising at least three states and those that are truly "global", spanning the bulk of states (...) transnational does not mean virtual; participants in movements are always located (Kjeldstadli, 2006:1).

As is the case with Mandaville's and Roy's use of the concept, transnational means crossing borders, according to Kjeldstadli. But Kjeldstadli adds an emphasis on place saying "participants in movements are always located". This is an important contribution to the definition with regard to the present study, because of the emphasis on different national contexts and the important of place. Whether Kjeldstadli would characterise Hizb ut-Tahrir as global rather than transnational due to its 43 national branches is of no importance for the further discussions.

What is important, however, is to highlight one of the central keys to Hizb ut-Tahrir's success: the idea of the caliphate. Since al-Nabhani first launched his political project, the call to unite the Muslim *ummah* in a caliphate has sounded and today its national branches spread from Malaysia in East to the United States of America in West, Norway in North and Sudan in South. Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology is based on the need to

overthrow existing governments in Muslim majority countries in order to establish the Caliphate which, it is believed, should be done through convincing the masses of the superiority of Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and vision for the caliphate as well as influencing people already in power in Muslim countries. As stated in a document published by Hizb ut-Tahrir's British branch in 2003:

Hizb ut-Tahrir is a political party whose ideology is Islam, so politics is its work and Islam is its ideology. It works within the Ummah and together with her, so that she adopts Islam as her cause and is led to restore the Khilafah [caliphate] and the ruling by what Allah (swt) revealed. Hizb ut-Tahrir is a political group and not a priestly one. Nor is it an academic, educational or a charity group. The Islamic thought is the soul of its body, its core and the secret of its life (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2003: 4).<sup>xxxii</sup>

According to this passage, Islam is a complete system of guidelines for a way of life including politics, faith, economy and welfare and in Hizb ut-Tahrir's understanding, politics and religion cannot be separated.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The caliphate is seen as a system of government that has been given by Allah, albeit, historically, caliphate (the word stems from the Arabic *khalifa* meaning successor) refers to the system of government imposed after the death of the Prophet Mohammed in 632. The caliphate was continued under the Umayyad Dynasty (661–750) centred in Damascus, the Abbasid Dynasty (750–1517) first centred in Baghdad, afterwards in Egypt. Between 1517 and 1924, the Ottoman Sultan had the title of Caliph until Kemal Atatürk abolished the last caliphate as part of the creation of the modern Turkish national state in 1924. To the Turkish leader, the termination of the caliphate was a necessary step towards the creation of a modern, secular Turkey.<sup>xxxiiii</sup>

From a historical point of view, the caliphate has been many and very different systems of rule, each one reflecting the prevailing societies and epochs. However, Hizb ut-Tahrir does not differentiate between the different caliphates and their specific

characteristics. On the contrary, Hizb ut-Tahrir sees the caliphate as one and the same system despite the different forms and manifestations. To Hizb ut-Tahrir the caliphate is a unifying historical, religious and political basis shared by all Muslims regardless of ethnicity, geography and orthodoxy (Sinclair, 2008: 46)<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Hizb ut-Tahrir's notion of caliphate is central to this study, because, first of all, it is the core of the organisation's political thinking and its ultimate political goal – it is what members work for – but also because this understanding of a unifying future state for all Muslims is in sharp contrast to present conditions where Muslims are divided by national borders and are subject to different systems of governance. Based on the ideological understanding of the caliphate as briefly outlined in the above, Hizb ut-Tahrir members all over the world will feel homeless until the caliphate is re-established. The idea of the caliphate is the core of members' critique of the West and their feeling of rootlessness. In Hizb ut-Tahrir material distributed on the streets of Danish and British cities, the caliphate is the ideal that makes it possible for them to distance themselves to everything Western. It is their political alternative, their utopia.

So what I have sought to understand is how members make sense of working for the establishment of a future Islamic state in a Muslim country while living in Denmark and Britain. Knowing that the majority of members in Denmark and Britain are well-educated and seemingly well-integrated with jobs and families, do they really feel homeless? The answer from Danish members was “yes”, and when I proceeded to ask former members, the answer was “yes”, but the feeling of homelessness ended with the membership of Hizb ut-Tahrir.

In order to explain how individuals relate to home, I draw on theories inspired by cultural and human geography. In doing so, I wish to move beyond the thinking that homelessness or the notion of home are merely features of modernity. Homelessness is not necessarily a human condition due to the modern experience of fragmentation and meaninglessness. Feeling at home and creating homes away from home can be regarded as questions of socialisation and individual choices. Work by primarily two scholars, Tim Cresswell and Ida Wentzel Winther have proved useful in this

connection. In his introduction to *Theorizing Place*, Tim Cresswell (2002) argues that the notion of place is not necessarily bound to either authenticity and rootedness or the nomadic. Based on work by Soja and Lefebvre he introduces the concept "lived space".<sup>xxxv</sup> Lived space is to be understood as a category beyond Soja's definitions of "firstspace" and "secondspace". Firstspace refers to objective and empirical phenomena, secondspace refers to subjective and conceived phenomena. In order to avoid thinking along the obvious dichotomies, objective/subjective, real/imagined etc., lived space has been introduced as an alternative. Cresswell quotes Soja with this characterisation:

(...) Lived Space is portrayed as multi-sided and contradictory, oppressive and liberating, passionate and routine, knowable and unknowable (...) it can be creatively imagined but obtains meaning only when practised and fully lived (Cresswell, 2002: 21).

Lived space is practised space. With reference to Doreen Massey (2005), one could say that lived space is space turned into place, in that places, according to Massey, consist of human relations. The key here is to analyse place in terms of verbs rather than nouns and thus focus on practice. When people "are placing", creating homes and engaging in activities that make their lives meaningful to them, when they are manoeuvring in the complexity of all elements influencing human life and relations, this constitutes lived space and creating place out of space.

Another related concept is introduced in work by Ida Wentzel Winther, a Danish researcher in social education and expert in cultural phenomenology, and supports the emphasis on activities and strategies in relation to understanding aspects of place. Winther argues that the nomadic has not become a dominant feature in contemporary societies, nor is it to be seen as an ideal for individuals' self-understanding. Rather, while it may have become more normal for many Westerners to have to be able to feel at home in more than one place, this is not the same as being a nomad or losing any sense of home (Winther 2006:182). On the contrary, individual tactics to create homes

in more than one place are commonly – but perhaps to a large extent subconsciously – developed and applied.

I find the work by Cresswell and Winther constructive in my analyses of Hizb ut-Tahrir and notions of belonging and home because by studying how members place themselves, it is possible to avoid long theoretical discussions of identity and culture. As Brubaker and Cooper point out, since the 1960s, social sciences have sought answers in essentialist, fluid or constructivist understandings of identity without getting closer to a useful analytical category (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:2), and the same goes for culture. When discussing homing and placing, I am of course touching on both identity and culture. However, the aim is to maintain a focus on practice (and culture as practice) and place. Also, rather than discussing identity, I refer to the individual's self-understanding based on respondents' explanations and accounts. Here, I understand "self-understanding" on the basis of respondents' accounts of their own practices and rational and emotional engagement with Hizb ut-Tahrir.

I am influenced by Anthony Giddens's work with regard to agency, modernity and self-understanding. I am convinced that states continue to play important roles in international politics and for rationally acting individuals. I think that globalisation is real and that it can be perceived as a logical consequence or a further development of modernity rather than something completely different to modernity. Globalisation is features of Western modernity (transport and communication technologies, migration patterns, new political formations, increased individualisation, reflexion and democratisation) turned global. And in a modern and globalised reality, individuals try to make sense of themselves by creating coherent narratives of who they are and how they got there. Failure to do so implies that involvement in social activities with other individuals is impossible (Giddens 1990, 1991, 2002).



## **2.6 Method and Data Acquisition**

### **Approaching Hizb ut-Tahrir**

The past three years, I have read all the ideological material in Danish and English in order to define Hizb ut-Tahrir's understanding of caliphate, nation, nationalism. Also I have read all non-adopted material accessible from the various Danish and English web pages as well as material distributed at party events. "Non-adopted" is a Hizb ut-Tahrir phrase meaning "not part of the official ideological text corpus." Non-adopted material is typically written by members or people closely affiliated with Hizb ut-Tahrir. Furthermore, I have followed blogs and internet forums involving Hizb ut-Tahrir members and former members. Finally, I have watched videos from Hizb ut-Tahrir events or events involving Hizb ut-Tahrir members uploaded on social web forums such as YouTube. Parallel to studying Hizb ut-Tahrir through text and visual representations, I have been in contact with members and former members in Denmark and Britain. I conducted interviews with the spokesperson and leader of the British branch in 2003, Dr. Imran Waheed – the branch's media advisor today – and Jalauddin Patel, and with the prominent female members Dr. Nasreen Nawaz and Ruksana Rahman. Dr. Nasreen Nawaz is still the women's media representative in Britain. In Denmark, I was in regular contact with the former spokesperson Fadi Abdullatif between 2002 and 2008, which apart from one long face to face meeting and interview (ca. 10 hours over two days in May 2003) consisted of email exchange and phone conversations. Abdullatif was always very helpful in terms of answering questions and commenting on my written work. Fadi Abdullatif stepped down and the function was taken over by Chadi Freigeh in the winter of 2008/09. During 2009 I have conducted three interviews with Freigeh – one face to face in Copenhagen, one over the phone and one written, where he answered questions posed by me in an email. Another member was present at the meeting and took part actively in the interview. At all times my questions have been known to the Hizb ut-Tahrir representatives before our meetings and other conditions have been set by the Hizb ut-Tahrir activists. I have been allowed to record the interviews on the condition that the respondents could read and comment on my transcriptions. I have had to announce whether I

showed up alone or would be seconded by someone (and in that case inform about the gender of this person), and finally, I have had to accept that the meeting place was chosen for me. In 2008 in Walthamstow, I interviewed Anjem Choudary and three of his students from The London School of Sharia. Here, Choudary did not accept that I recorded the interview and although he was inform about the nature of my questions, he interrupted the interview and refused to answer the bulk of my prepared questions. Rather, he decided that we would be all the wiser if I would answer his question, “Are you a democrat?” I am, and although the interview was finalised without any satisfactory answers from Choudary related to my project, he decided to leave me with his students after declaring that my mind was corrupted. After the departure of their teacher, the students felt obliged to answer my questions.

Hizb ut-Tahrir’s British branch has not responded to my continuous stream of emails throughout 2008 and 2009. Nor do the mobile numbers that I had from previous contact seem to be in use any more. I have tried approaching them through *gatekeepers* (Gilliat-Ray, 2005) and have asked fellow researchers, Danish members, Anjem Choudary and former members in Britain to mention me and my research interest, introduce me, take me to meetings and so on and so forth, and both colleagues and Danish members have promised to help in any way possible. As mentioned in Chapter 1, after suggesting that I could just email the branch using the official email address available on the web page, the Danish Media Representative declared himself unable to help me. He was not in a position to ask any favours from his British colleagues after all – maybe because he has not held the position very long and thus does not know his British colleagues personally (he took over from Fadi Abdullatif in the Winter of 2008/09) or maybe because it is not customary to introduce researchers. Both Taji-Farouki and Nawab are in regular contact with British members of Hizb ut-Tahrir and have asked for a meeting on my behalf. Anjem Choudari refused to help me, although prior to his arrival at our meeting (Walthamstow, June 2008), his students emphasised that he could introduce me, if he wanted to and that he “knows everybody” (interview with unnamed student, June 2009). Naturally, it was difficult for former members to help me. Some were not in touch with friends and relatives still

involved in the organisation, others simply could not bring themselves to ask old friends still in Hizb ut-Tahrir for a favour. Moreover, I tried gaining access to British members at party events and at other organisations' debate meetings, seminars etc. without any luck. And in the autumn of 2009 I finally gave up. This has meant that my study of the two branches does not consist of a 1:1 comparison. However, I have found ways of analysing the lack of access to primary empirical material and thus view the denied access as part of empirical study itself. Inspired by Sophie Gilliat-Ray's informative and humorous article "Closed Worlds. (Not) Accessing Deobandi *dar ul-uloom* in Britain" (*Fieldwork in Religion*, 2005), I have come to see the silence from Hizb ut-Tahrir's British branch as part of a bigger picture involving an ever-changing political reality in Britain. Clearly, the party in Britain is affected by an increasingly strict anti-terror legislation in the aftermath of the terror attacks on London in 2005. They have cut back on their public appearances, there has been a change of guard in relation to the media-related posts and in the leadership, there are new voices in the public debate, consisting of former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir who criticise the party with insiders' knowledge of disputes over strategies, hierarchies, problems, frustrations and also, more simply, knowledge about how the party's ideology is sold to members i.e. knowledge that may harm the party's future chances of recruiting new members. As a result, the reasons not to speak to a Danish researcher in general and to take part in this particular project are plenty: Denmark is not relevant to the problems Hizb ut-Tahrir is facing in Britain today, and the research question behind this study may have been deemed irrelevant. Furthermore, apart from the Women's Media Representative, Dr. Nasreen Nawaz, the individuals dealing with public relations today are different from the people I spoke to in 2003.

Apart from using Hizb ut-Tahrir as an example of how an Islamist enterprise is balancing on a sharp edge between two camps, a government eager to provide security for its citizens and prevent future terror attacks, and new groups of former members eager to settle with their past and consciousness, there is a different and very relevant point to be made on the basis of the lack of access to Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain, namely the fact that the Danish branch has not been able to help and serve as

gatekeeper. On many occasions, I asked the Danish representatives to mention me to their British counterparts, to make a call or write an email on my behalf, and for a long time I was met with the answer that the people in London was “probably busy” but they would see what they could do to help. Until in the Summer of 2009 when Chadi Fregeh answered: “you know, I hardly ever speak to them. I have only met Jamal Harwood [Head of Legal Affairs in Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain] on one occasion when he was invited to speak at our conference in 2007.” In the light of my work indicating that there is very little contact between Hizb ut-Tahrir branches this information was useful in itself.

### **Description and Reason for the Method of Research**

This dissertation builds on a combination of theoretical studies and empirical observations and qualitative interviews. The empirical part of the work could not be called field work or participant observation in that although I have attended Hizb ut-Tahrir events for years, I have never been able to attend closed party meetings, study circles and have not been able to follow members as such very closely. Rather, the empirical observations could be characterised as a series of interviews and attendance at party events.

The reasons for choosing qualitative interviews with members and former members are twofold. First of all, the number of people that can be involved in any type of survey or interview when studying Hizb ut-Tahrir is limited. Hizb ut-Tahrir does not allow you to interview members randomly and at party events, conferences, demonstrations etc. Members that are approached without appointment or agreement will only answer questions superficially and direct you to the officially appointed spokespersons to elaborate or clarify details. In other words, the number of Hizb ut-Tahrir members in Denmark and Britain would allow for a quantitative investigation, but party rules and regulations do not. Second, qualitative interviews are superior when it comes to producing knowledge about how a limited number of people define concepts, think and feel about things in their life. It is a major strength

of the qualitative interview as a method that it “generates richer and more in-depth information than other methods” (Giddens, 2009: 50). However, this method also has its limitations. It is only useful for studying small groups of people or small communities and findings might only apply to the groups and communities studied. Hence it can be difficult to generalise. Furthermore, the outcome depends on the researcher’s ability to evince confidence among respondents. It is a challenge for the researcher to take part actively and create a pleasant atmosphere, be attentive and ready to have the respondent elaborate points without influencing the outcome too much (Giddens, 2009:50 and Giddens, 1989: 696).

In the present work two different types of interview guides were used. Interviews with Hizb ut-Tahrir members followed a list of questions agreed upon before the actual interview took place. Additional questions were asked each time but all Hizb ut-Tahrir spokespeople reserved the right not to answer if the question had not been known prior to the interview. All interviews taking place during face-to-face meetings were taped and afterwards, the people involved had the possibility to read, correct and comment on the transcriptions as long as any changes were clearly marked. Thus, the recorded interviews were never regarded as fixed statements. On the contrary, the transcriptions were considered texts that could be altered in the work process. Phone interviews were not recorded, but the notes from these were also sent to the respondents afterwards. This was partly due to the fact that interviews with Danish members of Hizb ut-Tahrir took place in Danish and any quotations going in the actual dissertation would have to be translated anyway (and then accepted by the involved respondent once again) and partly because possible corrections might contain interesting information in themselves. But the same practice was followed in regard to interviews conducted in English, due to the overall ethical perspective: it was important for me as a researcher to be able to confirm beforehand to respondents what their contributions were being used for.

The interviews with Danish and British former members took part under different circumstances. Most of these took place over the phone and none of them were

recorded. They had the status of more informal talks and many of the respondents I spoke to several times. On every occasion the respondent had the opportunity to correct and comment on the content. Often, my documents were returned with more explanations and more details and on two occasions, I was asked to call back and let a respondent elaborate on something. Thus, Danish and British members and former members alike have had the possibility to comment on transcriptions or notes and I have found that the few comments and corrections made added interesting perspectives to the initial content.

### **Description of Sources**

As I do not read Arabic, I have read Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological material in English and Danish translations carried out by party members in these two countries. When I discuss al-Nabhani's viewpoints, I refer to Suha Taji-Farouki's work from 1994 and 1996 as she has read all ideological party related material in Arabic but writes in English. I have had the pleasure of discussing Taji-Farouki's research with her on several occasions in Oxford in 2008 and 2009. I do not go into discussions of language and style and the general choices made in the various translations, rather I use material that has been produced in either Danish or English and compare with the translations of al-Nabhani's works in the process.

Concerning interviews, information from the following interviews and respondents is used:

- Copenhagen, May 2003: Interview with Media Representative Fadi Abdullatif (conducted with Malene Fenger-Grøndahl)
- London, May 2003, Interview with Leader Jalauddin Patel and Media Representative Dr. Imran Waheed (conducted with Malene Fenger-Grøndahl)
- London, May 2003: Interview with Women's Media Representative Dr. Nasreen Nawaz and Ruksana Rahman (conducted with Malene Fenger-Grøndahl)
- London, June 2008: Interview with former member J<sup>xxxvi</sup>

- London, June 2008: Interview with London School of Sharia Spokesperson Anjem Choudary and three anonymous students
- London, August 2008: Interview with former member J
- Odense, September 2009: Phone interview with former member J
- Copenhagen, December 2008: Interview with former member A
- Odense, February 2009: Phone interviews with former members C, D, E
- Odense, February 2009: Written interview and phone interview with former member H
- Copenhagen March 2009: Interview with Media Representative Chadi Freigeh and member Saad
- Odense, April 2009: Phone interview with former members A, F, G
- Odense, June 2009: Phone interview with Media Representative Chadi Feigeh
- London, June 2009: Interview with former members C and J
- Odense, October 2009: Phone interviews with former member A, B, C
- Odense, November 2009: Phone interview with Media Representative Chadi Freigeh
- Odense, November 2009: Phone interview with former member A and C
- Odense, December 2009: Phone interview with former member E

## Chapter 3

### Concurrent Transnational and National Tendencies

Interviews conducted with members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain in 2003, revealed striking differences between the two branches.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain seemed much more progressive than their Danish colleagues in terms of public relations strategies and the general information level. They were forthcoming and interested in telling us about their work and political aims. As a contrast to this, in Denmark, the party was very secretive and the Media Representative gave priority to control of information supply over actually representing the party in the Danish media. To give an example, it took several months to organise an interview with Fadi Abdullatif, the Danish Media Representative at the time, whereas the British Media Representative at the time, Dr. Imran Waheed, answered his mobile phone immediately and agreed to arrange a meeting in London the following week. Furthermore, in connection with the interview in London, which took place in a London hotel in May 2003 and where then leader Jalaluddin Patel was present, too, they provided us with the so-called “Info Media Pack” – a folder containing information about the party’s history, strategy and aims. And after the interview, Dr. Waheed asked if we would be interested in talking to members of the women’s section of the branch. He set up the interview with members Ruksana Rahman and Dr. Nasreen Nawaz, who is still the Women’s Media Representative, the following day. We were taken aback by the whole experience. Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark did not have information folders ready for the curious public and they would not readily suggest meetings with other members. Due to our Danish experiences, it had not even occurred to us to ask to speak to female members in Britain because this request had been turned down instantly by the Danish branch.<sup>xxxviii</sup> It was this experience of noticeable differences between the Danish and British branches in an otherwise ideologically stringent organisation that became the starting point of the research presented in this dissertation.



Since 2006, I have been studying transnational and national tendencies in Hizb ut-Tahrir's Danish and British branches and I have found that the individual party branch is highly influenced by national and local political debates, by the ethnic composition of the Muslim communities in their country and by the general perception of Hizb ut-Tahrir in a given country. By way of introducing this chapter on transnational and national tendencies in Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain, let me elaborate on some of these points with a few examples of how Hizb ut-Tahrir's branches are shaped by their national contexts.

Starting with the question of ethnicity, the vast majority of Muslims in Britain are of South Asian descent. Similarly, the majority of members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Great Britain have South Asian background, i.e. Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Indian. This was also the case with the former Leader Patel and spokesperson Dr. Waheed. In Denmark, the majority of members are Arabs, as is the case with both the former and the present Media Representatives. Both come from Palestinian families in Lebanon and both were born in Lebanon. The ethnic background of the leadership and the members has a say concerning the political focus of the individual branch. Thus, based on the observation that the British branch focuses primarily on South Asian relations, Pakistan especially, and similarly that the Danish branch (dominated by Arabs) focuses on questions related to the Arab world, mainly Palestine and Iraq, it seems reasonable to argue that the background of members as well as the ethnicity of the largest Muslim minority in the society, i.e. the pool of potential future members which the party is interested in recruiting from, determines the geo-political focus.<sup>xxxix</sup>

The Danish and British strategies towards minorities differ and one of the results has been that the applied approaches to Hizb ut-Tahrir have been dissimilar. In Denmark, the public was not familiar with Islamism prior to the attacks on 11 September 2001 and the political reaction after the atrocities in 2001 was that Hizb ut-Tahrir was named a local variant of al-Qaeda.<sup>xi</sup> This reaction incited Hizb ut-Tahrir to express their politicised message in increasingly demonstrative and confrontational ways. Since 2003, the discussion of the possibility of a ban has recurred annually, and the Public

Prosecutor has investigated the matter twice (2004 and 2008) with the result that Hizb ut-Tahrir cannot be banned according to the Danish constitution.<sup>xii</sup> Lately, after the Cartoon Controversy in 2006, Hizb ut-Tahrir has toned down its message and has shown initiative to work together with other Muslim organisations in Denmark on minority issues of more general interest.<sup>xiii</sup> Thus, since public attention is currently lacking, Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark is focusing on winning the attention of the Muslim community by discussing topics closer to home as well as topics that are less controversial. In Britain, the political response to the terror attacks on 11 September 2001 did not involve a discussion of banning Hizb ut-Tahrir.<sup>xiii</sup> This discussion was not initiated until 2005, where, after the terror bombs in London on 7 July, the protection of religious minorities has given way to stricter anti-terror legislation and public safety priorities.<sup>xiv</sup> Up until 2005, Hizb ut-Tahrir cooperated more openly with other organisations, took part in public debate meetings and so on. After 2005, however, the core ideological aims have been prioritised and the branch seems to have closed in on itself again.<sup>xiv</sup>

As shown here, Hizb ut-Tahrir's profile and strategies are shaped by public perception and national politics, by ethnicity and international politics and by the members and leaders involved. Based on the examples and historical development outlined above, it is difficult to say exactly which factor determines what. Furthermore, my research has shown that there are more factors involved in the shaping of Hizb ut-Tahrir's strategies and profile. Apart from the obvious influence from national contexts, it is possible to point out clear transnational elements of Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and activities. Although it is difficult to divide an organisation with a holistic ideology into four levels for the sake of analysis, this is, nevertheless, what I aim at in this chapter. The argument I wish to make is this: while Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain are noticeably impacted by the national contexts within which they operate, they retain their characteristics as a global Muslim/Islamist organisation. However, while transnational and national tendencies are present simultaneously, the Danish and British branches are apparently becoming more and more nationalised.

Here my study differs from other studies of Hizb ut-Tahrir and Islamist organisations in Western Europe. Contrary to previous studies (for instance Taji-Farouki 1996, Roy 2004a and Baran 2004), I compare analysis of Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and organisational structure with their practical activities and member networks and find that the organisation is far from as transnational as previously claimed. Thus, this dissertation contributes the finding that nationalisation processes are taking place in the Danish and British branches of Hizb ut-Tahrir and that similar developments are to be expected in all branches. The reason for this is that the branches are becoming more independent and that relations between members within national branches are more influential than the transnational network of branches.

In this chapter, I investigate transnational and national elements on four levels: the ideological level (section 3.1), the organisational level (section 3.2), the practical level (section 3.3) and finally the media related level (section 3.4). By ideological level I refer to thinking and rhetoric in the party's ideological material as well as in statements by official party representatives in Denmark and Britain. When discussing the practical level, I refer to members' activities with emphasis on travel and communication patterns. The organisational level covers the hierarchical structure of the organisation exemplified with an example of a top-down instruction from the international leadership in Amman. Finally, in terms of the media level I investigate how Hizb ut-Tahrir has presented itself in the media exemplified with internet web pages. I have chosen to focus on web pages specifically because of the connection between cyberspace activities and the concept of transnationalism often made in Islamism and radicalisation studies. According to this understanding, internet activity is equal to activities on the ground. Thus a party web page with links to several languages claiming to represent as many national branches, is perceived to verify the existence of these branches and activities (Taji-Farouki 1996, Baran 2004, Roy 2004b). In the last section of the chapter, I discuss Hizb ut-Tahrir's Danish and British branches as not only present "in the West" but to a growing extent influenced by their national contexts and thus "of the West".

### 3.1 The Ideological Level

In Hizb ut-Tahrir's canonical literature the understanding of two central concepts justify labelling Hizb ut-Tahrir as transnational. Firstly, there is al-Nabhani's understanding of the Muslim caliphate, and secondly, there is the understanding of *ummah*, the global community of followers of Islam. These interpretations have been explained and confirmed by both Danish and British representatives of the party (Interviews with Danish Media Representatives in 2003 and 2009 and with British Media Representatives in 2003).

According to Hizb ut-Tahrir, the re-establishment of the caliphate means a re-unification of all Muslims regardless of ethnicity, language, traditions and a liberation from Western imperialism and colonialism (Al-Nabhani The Concepts of Hizb ut-Tahrir, 75-76). Furthermore, the future caliphate is a just state (Draft Constitution in The Islamic State page 140ff)) with set rules for the election of the leader and defined rights for minorities etc. and it is a good state with a social system providing for all human needs. The basis for the state is Islam and the pious way of life of practising Muslims. Al-Nabhani explains:

The only way to establish the Islamic State is to carry the Islamic Message and to work towards the resumption of the Islamic way of life, which necessitates taking the Islamic countries altogether as one unit because the Muslims are but one Ummah (The Islamic State, page 236)

According to al-Nabhani, all Muslim countries should be united in the caliphate because all Muslims belong to the same community of believers. Once the caliphate has been re-established, Al-Nabhani contends, the process of bringing together people who are already Muslim and new converts will follow the pattern of events in the time of the first caliphates. Under the headline "Molding [sic] People into one Ummah", Al-Nabhani continues:

The inhabitants of these countries [the countries included in the caliphate by the Umayyads] varied in ethnicity, language, religion, traditions, customs, laws and culture. They naturally differed from each other in mentality and attitude. Therefore, the process of moulding these countries together and of uniting them into one single Ummah adopting the same Deen, language, culture and laws was a colossal task. Success would be a tremendous and extraordinary achievement. This happened solely through Islam and was only achieved by the Islamic State. Once those people were identified by the banner of Islam and ruled by the Islamic State, they became a single Ummah, which is the Islamic Ummah (Al-Nabhani 1953:157, translated by Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain in 1998).

The logic from this perspective is that all differences can be overcome when Muslims and non-Muslims are united in an Islamic state. Four reasons are given for such a claim: firstly, the introduction to the teachings of Islam will make non-Muslims convert automatically; secondly, Islam is the truth and people recognise the truth when confronted with it; thirdly, the interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims in newly conquered lands will make non-Muslims see how much happier Muslims are, compelling them to convert to Islam; and finally, these newly converted Muslims will experience a “radical change” from a “dismal situation to a better one” (al-Nabhani 1953:158, translated by Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain, 1998). Therefore, Al-Nabhani claims, knowing Islam means wanting to embrace it. Transnationalism in a holistic ideological perception signifies that all things separating Muslims, and all differences between Muslims, should be discarded. According to Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Muslim community is always already a unified whole, however, a unit that has been wronged by artificial, colonial borders and suppressors, and subsequently a community that must be freed by the Liberation Party. In unifying Muslims in the caliphate, Hizb ut-Tahrir lives up to its name.

### **3.2 The Organisational Level**

Hizb ut-Tahrir has a hierarchical structure with the International leader, the Amir, at the top. Below him are three levels of which two are administrative committees. The first level is the provincial or national level organised with a national leadership committee, the second consists of local committees covering urban areas or towns, and finally, the third and last level comprises numerous study circles with 5 members and a leader (Mushrif). The international leadership committee appoints the members of the national committees, the leader is referred to as the Mu'tamad, and the national committees appoint the local committee members. The leader of a local committee is entitled Naqib. Ideally, the national committees consist of between five and ten individuals, whereas the local committees have four members (Taji-Farouki, 1996:116). However, new branches just starting up have been known to deviate from this arrangement. As an example, when the Danish branch was just starting up, it was much easier to achieve full membership and be assigned to a specific post or responsibility than it would be in a more established branch simply because the party was short of hands and resources (interview with former member, 2009). As a rule, all instructions are delivered from the top and downwards and all committees are obliged to report back with information about activities and developments within their radius.

The national committees have a special place in the hierarchy in that they have authority to act on behalf of the international leadership if necessary. Also, the international leadership has been known to formulate specific guidelines and strategies to individual national committees. So an element of autonomy or independence from the international organisation is present at this level (Taji-Farouki, 1996: 119). However, the fact that most activities are the same in all party branches is explained with reference to the continued strong influence of the international leadership in Amman. All national leadership committees still take orders and guidelines from the international leadership under Zaloom and the international leadership defines not only what party activities should be but also how these should be prioritised. Hence, there remains a strong correlation between the practical and the organisational levels. A good example of how a national branch like the British

continues to adhere to orders from Amman, emphasising the strong hierarchical core of Hizb ut-Tahrir, is found in the content of a Strategy Document from 2005 and the subsequent changes that could be detected.

The document, called "Strategies of Action in the West", reveals how the international leadership views Muslim presence in the West and how they advise party members in Britain to approach Muslims and non-Muslims in the British Isles.<sup>xlvi</sup> It consists of three pages discussing Muslim presence in the West on the basis of the party's ideology and the method of distributing the party's message through educating the masses and more specifically through the "assimilation of Muslims and [by making] Muslims realise that they are part of the great Umma" (Hizb ut-Tahrir, strategy document, page 2).<sup>xlvii</sup>

The document presents four amendments to a strategy document from 1998, stating that the situation for Muslims in the West is changing in that increasing numbers of Muslims have settled in the West permanently, a fact that makes it possible to talk about Muslim communities in Western countries. It also emphasises that Muslims have taken to staying in the West for different reasons "including work, persecution and marriage" (Hizb ut-Tahrir, strategy document, 2005:1). Hereby it is evident that Hizb ut-Tahrir's leadership continued to see "Muslim countries" as the destination for all activities and the future caliphate. It says in the document: "The party has not extended its action to the lands of the unbelievers", whereby one could understand that the activities of the European branches of the party are not regarded part of party "action" which is an interesting point considering the size of the British branch and the importance of the activities on the British Isles in distributing the party message and setting up party branches abroad. This statement might indicate that although Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain could be said to be a vehicle for spreading party activities to new countries and regions, the party leadership does not recognise activities that do not aim specifically at the re-establishment of the caliphate in a Muslim majority area. This is a fine example of transnational thinking on an organisational level whereby activities in European branches aim at re-establishing a caliphate in a Muslim majority country.

Furthermore, this description of Muslim presence in the West shows that the party up until 2005 has thought of Muslim presence in the West as primarily temporary. As the strategy document puts it “[n]ow it has become a reality to find an [sic] Muslim community in the West, and many more Muslims have settled in the West permanently” (Hizb ut-Tahrir, strategy document, 2005: 1). This is noteworthy due to the fact that 2005 seems very late for the Hizb ut-Tahrir leadership to realise that Muslim communities have settled permanently in the West.

The document adds four areas of special interest to previous strategies concerning party work in the West:

- Political activities in the West. The party aims at establishing a caliphate not in the West but in Muslim countries. Members are not to take part in governance in Western countries, i.e., to cast their votes in elections or the like, but are obliged to express opposition to any kind of maltreatment of Muslims anywhere (the examples given are banning of the veil or banning of Friday prayers) and to express criticism of leaders of Muslim countries visiting and working with the West.
- Opposition to Western culture. Party members must undertake education of Muslims about their culture and strengthen Muslim minority relations in order to counteract the negative influences of Western culture: “Muslims in the West are exposed to Western culture and civilisation which might influence them. Therefore the party should educate Muslims about their religion and maintain intensive relations with the community” (Hizb ut-Tahrir, strategy document, page 2).
- Consequences of the "War against Terror". Apart from launching attacks on Muslim countries after 11 September 2001, the West has pressured Muslim minorities in the West by trying to force them to assimilate and not unite in the work for the establishment of the caliphate. Hizb ut-Tahrir-members should counter this development and work towards greater identification with the *ummah* among Muslims in the West.



- Western weaknesses. The fact that the West is plagued with crime and corruption proves that Western inventions such as capitalism, democracy and human rights are not solutions to the challenges faced by humanity.

These strategic interests target two main groups: Muslims in the West and Non-Muslims. And the group of Muslims in the West is divided into two subgroups: Muslims staying in the West permanently and Muslims staying in the West only temporarily. If we look at actions targeting Muslims first, action directed towards Muslims who have taken permanent residence in the West is first and foremost interaction in order to gain their trust and educate them about their religion. The purpose of this is to emphasise their belonging to *ummah* and to prepare them for the establishment of the caliphate in a Muslim country. According to the document, this can be done through the highlighting of threats to their freedom of religion in Western countries and through gaining the 'Ulama's, religious scholars, support for the caliphate. The actions targeting Muslims staying in the West temporarily depend on which category these individuals belong to. Hence, Muslims staying in the West temporarily are divided into four groups. The first group consists of students, tourists and businessmen, and Hizb ut-Tahrir members have to ensure that individuals in this category "carry the message of the mission to the West" (Hizb ut-Tahrir, Strategy document, 2005:2) and return to their countries. The second group consists of pro-Western individuals and groups. Members should react to this group with protest and emphasis on the betrayal of the *ummah*. The third group consists of representatives of political parties and independent politicians. This group should be approached with the message of the party, stressing Muslim related topics and Islam. The fourth and final group consists of influential individuals who should be provided with information about the state of the world and Hizb ut-Tahrir's agenda (Hizb ut-Tahrir, Strategy Document, 2005: 3).

Non-Muslims are divided into three groups: 1) converts, 2) thinkers and politicians and 3) institutions. Converts to Islam are to be educated in order to "carry the strong message" (Hizb ut-Tahrir, Strategy document, 2005: 3), whereas the recommended

strategy towards thinkers and politicians is "interaction" based on discussions of the shortcomings of the capitalist system, the collapse of democracy and freedom after 11 September 2001 and the inequality in society and discrimination against Muslims. It is suggested that an introduction to Islam's history and past civilisations will demonstrate the superiority of Islam and the Islamic state as an alternative society that secures equal treatment for all. The third group, institutions ("institutes, think-tanks etc."), should be monitored and relevant publications brought to the attention of "those in power" (Hizb ut-Tahrir, Strategy document, 2005: 3). Unfortunately, the document gives no examples of who "those in power" are, but the common understanding in the party is that "those in power" refers to policymakers and military leaders (Interview with the Danish Media Representative in 2003).

Apart from the introduction emphasising the party's focus on the Middle East and "Muslim countries" more generally, the comparison between the four points in the "Strategies for Action in the West" document from 2005 and the rest of the list of strategies originating from 1998 tells us how Hizb ut-Tahrir understood the consequences of world events in the period between 1998 and 2005. Firstly, the focus in 1998 was still on Muslims staying in the West temporarily. Secondly, the terror attacks on New York and Washington in September 2001 are viewed as highly important to Muslims. The document explains how 11 September 2001 has increased the general suppression of Muslims and intensified the pressure on them to assimilate, and explains that the aftermath of 11 September 2001 proved the inadequacies of Western democracy and human rights in a time of crisis, when liberties are restricted and difference is less tolerated. Thus, 11 September 2001 is used to emphasise the suppression of Muslims in non-Muslim countries and the inadequacies of democracy. Thirdly, among the points from 1998 it is evident that the party has had a special interest in converts, something which converts among former members have substantiated (interviews with author, 2008 and 2009),<sup>xlviii</sup> and this could be said to emphasise the notion that people born in Muslim families are expected not to take residence in the West permanently, hence individuals of Western and non-Muslim origin are the only Muslims expected to stay in the West permanently and therefore of

special interest to the party's spreading of the message in non-Muslim countries. Fourthly, it seems that the international Hizb ut-Tahrir leadership recognises as late as in 2005 that Muslims originating in Muslim majority countries have settled in the West permanently. Fifthly, it is evident that any correspondence with me as well as material sent on from other research institutions is part of the party's strategy for activities in the West and not just expressions of helpfulness or shared fields of interest,<sup>xlix</sup> and finally, it is difficult not to wonder why the international leadership of Hizb ut-Tahrir waits until 2005 to send out amendments to a strategy from 1998 covering events in 2001.

One of the most interesting features of the strategy document is the emphasis on the importance of strengthening the notions of Muslims' identity and religion in Muslim communities. This is a central message to party branches in Muslim minority countries in the West; hence it allows European and other Western branches of the party to focus on their national and local Muslim communities more explicitly. Furthermore, the fact that the whole organisation views activities in European branches as something that must lead to the implementation of a caliphate somewhere in a Muslim country is an expression of transnationalism. The fact that the leadership in Amman is still in a position to give directions and formulate strategies for action for branches in Europe emphasises the strict and centralised control with branches. Furthermore, the fact that Muslim majority countries are still the ultimate focus point of the party's activities emphasises a transnational aspect on an organisational level: members in all of the 43 branches are working towards establishing a caliphate somewhere in a Muslim country. While the British branch is likely to be the most active in terms of transnational activities (publication and distribution as well as senior members' travels), it continues to be classified as peripheral by the international leadership. From a British point of view, directing much of its attention to South Asia, one can only wonder how Amman succeeds in remaining the centre of operations.

In terms of national perspectives, the strategy document acknowledges Muslim presence as permanent in the West, which initiates a new way of approaching Britain's

Muslim population. In 2005, it became permissible to address these as British and to use the British context more explicitly in party propaganda. But in actual fact, the Danish and British branches have had different political perspectives according to different national profiles of members throughout.

### **3.3 The Practical Level**

On a practical level, Hizb ut-Tahrir can be characterised as transnational in the sense that all internal party activities (study circles, production and publication of written material, organisation of events etc.) as well external activities directed at the public (participation in live debates and internet- based debates, public meetings, demonstrations, distribution of written material etc.) are the same in all branches.<sup>i</sup> Also, there are examples of members travelling from one branch to the next in order to propagate the ideology and inspire to more activities. An example of this is Maajid Nawaz's work in Denmark in 2000. In his capacity as senior member of the British leadership committee with Pakistani background, Nawaz travelled to Denmark in 2000 to help the Danish branch set up study circles among Pakistani youth in Denmark<sup>ii</sup>. Maajid Nawaz also claims to have been instrumental in setting up branches in Malaysia and Pakistan, which both local branches dispute.<sup>iii</sup> There is no doubt that Nawaz, due to his seniority in the British branch, his position as a member of the British national leadership, his Pakistani background and his political and oratorical gifts, has been instrumental in spreading Hizb ut-Tahrir's message from Britain to Denmark, Pakistan, Egypt and possibly other countries, too. Nawaz was imprisoned for his Hizb ut-Tahrir related activities in Egypt in 2002. Thus, Nawaz was engaged in promoting transnational collective action while travelling around the globe as a foot soldier to share ideas, give talks and appeal to joint activities in Europe, the Middle East and South Asia (Kjeldstadli, 2006:2). The activities of Nawaz, who since leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir in 2007 (Nawaz is now propagating anti-extremist views in Quilliam Foundation) has told his story widely, help paint a picture of Hizb ut-Tahrir as an organisation based on transnational communication and activities.

Prior to Nawaz's activities, Hizb ut-Tahrir was brought to Europe by other individuals. Hizb ut-Tahrir has existed in Europe since the 1960s, but not until party activist and preacher Omar Bakri Mohammed (Bakri) set up study circles in the London area in middle of the 1980s did the party become more commonly known.<sup>liii liv</sup> A decade later, in the middle of the 1990s, Fadi Abdullatif started distributing leaflets under the party's name in Copenhagen.<sup>lv</sup> Today, Hizb ut-Tahrir's Danish branch leads all Scandinavian activities and uses the signature "Hizb ut-Tahrir Scandinavia".<sup>lvi</sup> There are between 100-200 members in Denmark and approximately 1000-1500 in Britain currently, and the majority of these are between 20 and 30 years old.<sup>lvii</sup> Of these members, only a small fraction is involved in cross-border activities. When asking about travel activities and contact with members in other countries, the following patterns emerged: the party incites all members to propagate party ideas as much and as widely as possible, and members with ties to Muslim majority countries are urged to take advantage of such ties and distribute material and ideas when travelling to Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Arab world etc. However, the vast majority of members do not travel outside their own country as part of their involvement with the party and only senior members in Britain have been sent abroad to help set up new branches. The situation has been somewhat different in Denmark, as there has been regular interaction with the German branch.

Respondent A, for example, went from Denmark to Germany and the Netherlands with the party to attend seminars and also travelled to Palestine on a study trip with other party members. He explained that he met members from Germany regularly as they came to Copenhagen to help educate the Danish members. It has been said that the Danish branch has played an active part in setting up the German branch but this is not something the Danish representatives are eager to discuss and according to Respondent A it was the other way around: from the late 1990s up until the German ban in 2003, the German branch was helping the Danes by organising seminars and teaching sessions on the party's ideological texts for key members of the Danish branch (interview with Respondent A, 2009).

According to Respondent B,

I was never asked specifically to go and live or work somewhere, but generally there was this idea in the party that people should go back to where they were from and spread the ideas. Pakistanis should go to Pakistan etc. (Interview with Respondent B, 2009).

Respondent B was involved with Hizb ut-Tahrir for 12 years and was a trusted member. Among other things, he was responsible for preparing all English language material sent out from London to branches all over the world and was thus indirectly in contact with members globally. However, he was never in touch with members outside Britain personally.

Respondent C was never asked to go and live in another country either and the personal wish to go to India and work for the caliphate was never fulfilled. She did not have much contact with members in other countries either and explained that only senior people were sent out or were given responsibilities with regard to international branches. Respondent C stayed in touch with a friend who moved to Pakistan but never knew if this friend was sent by the party. The friend worked in Pakistan and the friend's husband was eventually arrested in Pakistan for being involved with Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Respondent D explained:

I was introduced to Hizb ut-Tahrir in 1991-92 while I was at university. In the early days it was just ten sisters and no sisterhood as such or any circles for sisters. Hizb ut-Tahrir only had sisters in London then, and actually only existed in the London area. I was travelling from college to college doing hands-on work, giving out leaflets etc. and repeating the party slogans. (...) I was never asked to travel by Hizb ut-Tahrir. Activities like that came much later – after we

started marrying each other. The idea was to have people go back home and sell the ideas to people there. Essentially, Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain was always dominated by South Asians and these people were travelling back to Pakistan and Bangladesh to spread the party ideas (Interview with Respondent D, 2009).

This explanation emphasises that Hizb ut-Tahrir expected that members took advantage of personal family links to certain countries and furthermore that it became custom in the British branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir for members to marry each other. This implies a rather closed network of members and recruitment strategies based on personal relations. As a member, Respondent D was friends with a party member in Lebanon who tried talking her out of leaving – without any success.

Respondent E travelled to Pakistan to visit relatives twice while he was a member and described the development in Pakistan as follows:

The first time (1997 or 1998) I brought with me Hizb ut-Tahrir books in my suitcase because I considered it to be new and interesting reading. I discussed the material with my cousin who was a teacher – I gave him party books. During this visit there were no signs of Hizb ut-Tahrir activities in the village where my relatives were staying. However, the second time I went (2003 or 2004), I did see Hizb ut-Tahrir stickers with slogans in the village and did hear about a person affiliated with Hizb ut-Tahrir in a neighbouring village. My relatives advised me not to see him or to take him too seriously. He seemed to be someone who did not have much else to do and who was not fully aware of what he had gotten himself involved in. Hizb ut-Tahrir's work seemed more real in a country like Pakistan because you might meet influential people there. In Britain

you can say what you want but never really influence things.  
(Interview with Respondent E, 2009)

According to this account, Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideas spread to Pakistan between the late 1990s and the middle of the following decade, and as a member, propagating the party message to Pakistani Muslims made more sense than in Britain.

Neither Respondent F nor G nor H did any Hizb ut-Tahrir related international travelling, and according to Respondent F international travels were for senior members only. Respondent G did not do any travelling at all while affiliated with Hizb ut-Tahrir. Respondent F travelled between British cities and stayed in touch with people in the party who travelled to Pakistan and Syria on shorter trips (family visits, study trips). Differing from this, Respondent H was in touch with members all over: the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Iraq, Sudan, Norway, Germany, Palestine/Israel and Canada. The different patterns are explained by the different life stories of Respondent F and H. Respondent F was born and grew up in Britain and had very little contact with relatives outside Britain. Respondent H never lived more than 9 years in one country and always travelled a lot privately.

Respondent J was the only one of the respondents to have been sent out by the party. While serving the party he was sent to Bangladesh, Pakistan and Qatar, and he was instrumental in setting up the Bangladeshi branch. Moreover, he was in touch with members in Qatar, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Abu Dhabi, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Germany. Although he was never a member of the British leadership committee, he did have a key position in setting up study circles in Britain and in taking the party ideas to both South Asia and the Middle East. Interestingly, both the former and the present leader of the Bangladeshi branch are from London, and the former leader has now returned to London.

The former members' explanations paint the following picture: senior British members have been instrumental in setting up party branches in South Asia, but only senior members of the British branch were sent out to other branches to perform tasks for



the party. The majority of members were engaged in travel activities in their own country, but British members with family ties in other countries were also expected to go there and spread party ideas although few did. Most members were only in touch with members in other countries that were regarded as friends. Members of neighbouring European branches assisted each other, and the British branch had and still has a central role in distributing English language material to other branches. Overall, the British branch seems to have been connected to other branches more closely than the Danish – apart from the cooperation between the German and Danish branches, the Danish branch has not had much contact with other branches.

The individual respondents did not consider national political agendas or transnational aspects of Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities while they were members. They focused solely on their own performance and achievements for the party. In order to propagate party ideas most efficiently, members have distributed material and discussed party ideas in their personal networks, with family, friends and colleagues, just as they have taken advantage of access to other social spheres – for instance university campuses with student unions and societies, maternity groups, open debates, events etc. (interview with Nasreen Nawaz 2003, and former members 2009).

Drawing on personal networks and relations means that the spread of party ideas and the ensuing recruitment of new members are initially shaped by the dominant ethnic or social group in a branch. When Pakistanis turn to other fellow Pakistanis in their British hometown or in their family's village in Pakistan, and Arabs in Denmark address other Arabs, the result is that Hizb ut-Tahrir develops according to specific social (often family based) and language patterns. Furthermore, the fact that marriages within Hizb ut-Tahrir circles are widespread indicates that the party network in a branch remains relatively closed and subjected to direct social control from leaders of study circles, regional leaders and ultimately national leaders. There is always a brother or a sister in the hierarchical level above you who knows you and your family members. Thus, Hizb ut-Tahrir members in Denmark and Britain are juggling several political agendas and

questions of national affiliation and belonging in their work for the party, and additionally, they feel personally responsible for the development of the party.

### **3.4 Media Related Activities**

This section covers Hizb ut-Tahrir's presence online primarily. As explained in the introduction to the chapter, the organisation's shared international web page and the many alternative pages are often seen as a clear sign of the transnational nature of activities on the ground. This section investigates the content of the Danish and British pages and discusses recent developments.

At first glance, Hizb ut-Tahrir's presence on the World Wide Web is an expression of its global appeal and presence. However, the development in the Danish and British branches' use of individual pages emphasises national differences and how both branches adapt to their national settings and relevant political agendas. Hizb ut-Tahrir has been present on the World Wide Web with party web pages since 1997 and the early presence and skilled use of cyber communication has been noticed by researchers (Taji-Farouki 1996, Baran 2004). However, my detailed studies of the development of party web pages run from Britain and Denmark have shown that not until recently have the party web pages been updated regularly and thus been efficient tools in terms of communication with the wider public, between members and in terms of drawing attention of potential recruits. Furthermore, based on my research I argue that web pages launched by the Danish and British party branches relate to the surrounding society in a more direct way than previously seen. This development is seen most explicitly after 2005 when the British branch re-invented itself as "Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain"; HTB.

Via internet archives that register changes and updates on homepages, one can get an overview of what material has been available on specific homepages and thereby how and when exactly the party has responded to world events. The first Hizb ut-Tahrir homepage, "hizb-ut-tahrir.org" was launched on 8 October 1997 and was very basic

with a party definition on the front page and links to “Aim”, “History”, “Books”, “Leaflets”, and “FAQ”. All in all, the first homepage functioned as a notice board presenting the party on the internet with short explanations, descriptions, definitions and a very limited amount of party material. Compared to other organisations’ homepages at the time, I find this to be the standard for web pages at the time. For instance, to give an example from another Muslim organisation with global presence, The Minhaj ul-Quran homepage (“minhaj.org”) did not exist until December 1998 and then it was very basic, too. On the Minhaj page, the audience could choose between material on the organisation in either English or Urdu but the amount of material was very limited. For the sake of comparison, BBC launched its first homepage in 1996 and it consisted of a static opening page with the organisational logo and a menu on the right hand side of the screen with links to “UK Television”, “UK radio”, “Politics”, “Education” and other relevant topics. Thus, the fact that Hizb ut-Tahrir had a web page in 1997 albeit with limited sources was, if anything, a sign of a progressive attitude. From the early days of the internet, there was an awareness of the importance of being present in cyberspace in the party. Up through 1998 and 1999 more and more material could be accessed through the international party homepage (hizb-ut-tahrir.org). In 2000 the page had a new lay-out with the well-known symbols, the flag and the globe, placed centrally on the front page. Furthermore, this page had links to the pages of national branches represented by a list of languages: Arabic, Turkish, English, German, Urdu and Malay.

As with all internet activity and development of web pages, a lot has happened with Hizb ut-Tahrir’s pages since the first page was launched in 1997. The first page, hizb-ut-tahrir.org, contained links to several pages in different languages which were updated from time to time with an increasing amount of material over the first couple of years. Then the links were deactivated and the pages in all other languages than English and Arabic seemed to be dropped. However, the real changes and developments are found on the national web pages behind the addresses khilafah.dk and especially hizb.org.uk. When the latter occurred in 2005, it introduced new standards for Hizb ut-Tahrir’s internet communication in a European language. It addressed community related

topics, it introduced interactive communication with users, it contained invitations to party events and so on. It was, in other words, addressing an active British Muslim audience.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's first official international web page is interesting for a number of reasons. First of all, because it has existed since 1997 which is quite early compared to other organisations' web pages. Secondly, it is interesting to compare the list of links to pages in different languages and find that, as a rule, the links are not all active and if they are, the content of the pages is very limited and in most cases not of news interest. This gives the impression that it is important for Hizb ut-Tahrir to have the list of languages for the sole purpose of signalling that Hizb ut-Tahrir is indeed an international enterprise. However, if this is taken into account, it appears to be contradicted by the fact that the Danish and English pages did not contain links to the international media office at the same time. The Danish page was fitted with a link to the media office in August 2005, whereas the English page did not have a similar link until January 2007. One would think that an organisation that defines itself as having a universal ideology would coordinate links and content on pages better and have links to the international media office in place as soon as possible. While this may suggest insufficient or flawed coordination between the different branches of the organisation, and maybe even inadequacies in the international leadership, it may also just suggest that the individuals involved in the national leadership committees are responsible for prioritising the means of communication in their own branches and that resources are scarce.

Thirdly, the study and comparison of web pages in European languages have shown a tendency not to mention important historical events that pose difficulties for the party in terms of taking a clear stance. For instance, in 2001, the terror attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September were not mentioned, and instead the party branches in both Denmark and Britain commented on the acts in leaflets and articles. An issue of the *Khilafah Magazine* in English published in October 2001 had a photograph of the terror attack on the World Trade Center twin towers in New York on

the cover and contained an article on the terror attacks entitled “The Politics of Terrorism” (Khilafah Magazine October 2001, Vol. 14, Issue 2). Furthermore, the different national debates on bans have not been discussed on the web pages. Neither the German general ban of party activities in 2003 nor the British campus ban in 2004 have been mentioned on the German or British pages respectively.<sup>lviii</sup> However, the British branch did announce the application sent to the European Court to overrule the German ban in June 2008. Another example would be the lack of comments on the 7 July 2005 bombings in London on the first English homepage. This is puzzling as the organisation must have expected more attention from both critics and possible recruits in the aftermath of the 7 July 2005 attacks and thus finding an article with the title “The butcher from Andijan” and comments on the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit in February 2005 strikes one as being outdated and potentially even contra-productive to the party’s overall agenda of drawing attention to their cause.

Thus, it is a finding of interest to the present study that Hizb ut-Tahrir web pages leave out events that either involve the organisation directly or events which one would think to be of outmost interest to the party. This could either be interpreted as a deliberate choice from the party’s side or it could demonstrate that the web pages are not deemed a primary communication channel in the party prior to 2005. My assumption is that all events that are difficult to explain or criticise by Hizb ut-Tahrir and thus pose a challenge to Hizb ut-Tahrir’s position and ideology, are left to be dealt with through personal communication. It would have been very difficult indeed for Hizb ut-Tahrir to comment on the atrocities of 11 September 2001 and 7 July 2005 without being labelled as supporters of terror and thus risking legal proceedings.

The page launched in English by “Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain” in 2005 marked a shift with regard to topicality, the news value of the content, but was at the same time a re-branding of the British branch of the organisation – HTB. Since 2005, HTB has stood for more interaction with a reading and engaging audience via the web page, numerous calls to press conferences and demonstrations and, again on the web page, “most popular” lists, mailing lists, and page headers such as “What can I do” and “In the

community”. It was on this page that the events on 7 July 2005 were commented on by the HTB for the first time: “Following the July 7th bombings in London, the Blair government seems to have been doing everything in its power to collectively punish the entire Muslim community in Britain” (November 2005). Ergo, when HTB commented on the 7 July 2005 attacks after four months, they shifted to the focus to a critique of the British government. Any instant reaction or a following debate about the responsibility in the Muslim community is left untouched.

A similar development has been seen with regard to the Danish branch’s pages since 2006. Parallel with the Danish page [hizb-ut-tahrir.dk](http://hizb-ut-tahrir.dk) the page [khilafah.dk](http://khilafah.dk) has existed since 2000, but contrary to the Danish version of the international and official web page, this page has contained speeches and lectures by prominent members since 2002, and since 2006 [khilafah.dk](http://khilafah.dk) has been updated much more regularly than [hizb-ut-tahrir.dk](http://hizb-ut-tahrir.dk). The web page [Hizb-ut-tahrir.dk](http://Hizb-ut-tahrir.dk) was not updated once in 2008, and in 2009 new material about conferences, political analyses and comments could only be found on [khilafah.dk](http://khilafah.dk).<sup>lix</sup> This page contains the Danish Khilafah Magazine archive and articles written after the Danish Khilafah Magazine ceased to exist in 2002. Moreover, this page contains links to general Hizb ut-Tahrir material in Danish, English and Arabic and is, all in all, much more user friendly and informative than the [hizb-ut-tahrir.dk](http://hizb-ut-tahrir.dk) page.<sup>lx</sup> In Denmark, [Khilafah.dk](http://Khilafah.dk) has been the primary page since 2006, and Hizb ut-Tahrir refers to itself as “Hizb ut-Tahrir Scandinavia” on this page despite the fact that the content relates to Danish issues primarily. On the web page there are no comments or information indicating that this branch represents the whole of Scandinavia apart from the signature. It will be interesting to see if this changes over time – if we will see comments on Swedish or Norwegian politics in the future, calls to party events in Sweden or Norway or the like.

To compare the Danish and British branches of Hizb ut-Tahrir with regard to media strategies and public profiles, one could argue that Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark spent the years between 1998 – 2001 developing a party structure and creating a public image. Between 2001 and 2006 they used the events on 11 September 2001 as a

window of opportunity to establish an easily recognisable profile in the Danish political landscape. Since 2006, following the Cartoon Controversy and internal shifts on central posts, they have tried organising events with other organisations alongside their own recurrent events and conferences. But so far, attempts to open up have not resulted in an increase in public interest. In Britain, the development has been the opposite. After establishing an organisational structure between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s under Bakri's leadership, the branch peaked between 1994 and 1996 with the 7.000 people present at the Wembley conference in 1993 as a symbol of this. After Bakri left the group in 1996, the party needed to create a "Bakri-free"-image which was done primarily through the use of alternative and new channels for communication and activities. With Waheed as spokesperson, the group wanted to emphasise their intellectual approach to the re-establishment of the caliphate and the implementation of Islamism. Nevertheless, the ban of party activities at British university campus areas in 2004 and the anti-terror legislation following 7 July 2005 seems to have necessitated a change of strategy once again. The launch of the new web page in 2005 and the branding of the British branch as "HTB" imply a wish to distance themselves from other Islamist organisations and to signal to British Muslims that they represent a political alternative not unfamiliar with life and norms on the British Isles. Thus, since 2003 and especially since 2005, the overall impression of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain is that they are closing the door and focusing on delivering their message in a quieter but nevertheless easily recognisable manner. As mentioned, Chairman Ghani advises members to keep a low profile and to focus on the core issue, i.e. the re-establishment of the caliphate.<sup>lxi</sup>

### **3.5 From "Hizb ut-Tahrir in the West" to "Hizb ut-Tahrir of the West"**

Seen in the light of Hizb ut-Tahrir's aim to re-establish the caliphate in a Muslim country, the leaked strategy document from 2005 is interesting. Although it is stated in the document that Hizb ut-Tahrir has not extended its activities to "the lands of unbelievers", it is nonetheless acknowledged that the presence of Muslim minorities in

the West is permanent, and that the party branches in Western countries thus have to direct part of their activities to these settled groups of fellow believers. The 2005 amendments state that the party is obligated to educate Muslims in the West about their religion and make sure that they are opposing the strong and negative influences of the surrounding Western societies. Also it is stressed that Hizb ut-Tahrir branches are obligated to focus on community work, which would be interpreted as a way of maintaining Muslim identity in minority settings. This acknowledgement from the international leadership in Jordan is matched by the content of the 2005 web page [hizb.org.uk](http://hizb.org.uk) where Hizb ut-Tahrir's British branch brand themselves as Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, HTB, and introduce tabs such as "In the Community" and "What can I do" on the web page. It may be overemphasising a detail but it seems that introducing the brand HTB, which has been followed up by the US branch calling themselves Hizb ut-Tahrir America, HTA, in connection with their Chicago conference in July 2009, is evidence that Hizb ut-Tahrir branches are focusing on their national audiences and have grown to think of themselves as not just "in" their specific Western country but "of" their Western country.

Prior to 2005, the international party web pages linked together through [hizb-ut-tahrir.org](http://hizb-ut-tahrir.org) were used as notice boards in Urdu, Arabic, English, German, Malay, Danish and Turkish, and although not an uncommon phenomenon at the time, this was tantamount to the web pages not functioning as important or primary channels of communication between members and between party branches and their wider public audiences. Between 1997 and 2009, all pages connected via [hizb-ut-tahrir.org](http://hizb-ut-tahrir.org) could be regarded as not only notice boards with one way communication but outdated notice boards with inactive links, old material labelled as new and no comments on current affairs or news stories. Thus, I would argue that the web pages behind the address [hizb-ut-tahrir.org](http://hizb-ut-tahrir.org) must have had another function – they have been evidence of the existence of Hizb ut-Tahrir. They have represented Hizb ut-Tahrir in cyberspace, and they have been used to publish the important list of languages representing countries in which Hizb ut-Tahrir was active, signalling that Hizb ut-Tahrir is an important, global enterprise.



Interestingly, many Western researchers studying Hizb ut-Tahrir have accepted this representation as the truth about the party. They have fallen into the trap set by the party when they have described Hizb ut-Tahrir as of important size and influence. In fact, I think that referring to Hizb ut-Tahrir as “transnational” is in many ways equal to accepting the party’s own representation of itself as well as the self-understanding found in the ideology. Hizb ut-Tahrir thinks of itself as having a universal ideology and as capable of uniting all Muslims in their future caliphate. This self-understanding is behind a long list of languages on a web page with little information and deactivated links. And the term “transnational” is Western researchers’ name for it.

Another conclusion to be drawn from the study of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s activities and attitude towards the media is that national branches such as the Danish and British respond differently to national contexts and political agendas and furthermore that the internal structure of the organisation, including who holds which posts, is important for how the individual branch chooses to use the media and attract attention to its work. Since 2001 and especially since 2005, two quite different developments have been taking place in the Danish and British branches. The British branch is once again focusing on its own agendas after flirting with different web initiatives and public appearances, while the Danish branch seems to be opening up and allowing cooperation with other Muslim organisations. These developments match the attention directed at the organisation by the British and Danish societies. In Denmark, the amount of attention has declined since 2003-04, in Britain, it has increased since 2005.

It is often argued that Hizb ut-Tahrir and other Islamist transnational organisations communicate with members and the wider public through their web pages, and that they have been very progressive and skilled when it comes to attracting new recruits via web pages (Bowen 2004, Baran 2004, Brandon 2008).<sup>lxii</sup> However, it is also argued that “the internet can support and facilitate but never completely replace direct human contact” (Stevens and Neumann 2009: 13, Sageman 2004: 163). Seemingly, this argument is relevant in regard to Hizb ut-Tahrir’s activities, too. Thus, due to the

irregular and slow updating of material on the web pages, potential new recruits must still have been recruited primarily through meetings, demonstrations and word of mouth up until 2005. This argument is emphasised by the fact that 11 September 2001 was discussed in leaflets and at meetings but not mentioned on the web pages. Face-to-face contact between members and between members and potential new members must have been the primary form of communication and spreading of the party's message, and this is supported by the former members that have taken part in interviews in connection with the present work: all but one were approached by a party member who invited them to a party event, big or small, to meet more members (interviews with Respondents A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and J, 2008 and 2009).

The fact that Hizb ut-Tahrir develops through personal relations explains both the transnational elements of the organisations and the national differences. Party ideas travel with individuals from country to country – be it via migration (work migration, refugees etc.), private leisure travel or as a result of deliberate party strategy. And as individuals settle in new parts of the world, so does Hizb ut-Tahrir. The spread of party ideas along the lines of personal relations, also determine the national differences. As long as Hizb ut-Tahrir expands through personal networks and most individual's networks consist of people with same background as themselves, it will be the majority ethnic group within a Hizb ut-Tahrir branch that continues to be the most dominant. Hence, attempts to label Hizb ut-Tahrir as transnational or explicitly Danish or British are not as fruitful as expected. These labels simply do not cover the activities and the orientation in the organisation. While each branch still responds to orders and regulations from the international leadership, they are very pragmatic and reflexive when it comes to personal preferences, national politics and legislation and competition from other groups. Hence, the Danish and British branches are slowly becoming increasingly influenced by their surroundings.

### **3.5 Summary**

To recapitulate, Hizb ut-Tahrir has branches in over 40 countries and there are ideological as well as media related aspects that are clearly transnational. However, with regard to the organisational level, the division into national branches and the increased independence of these branches means that the transnational tendencies are less dominant than the national on this level. This pattern is also seen at the practical level of the organisation. Among ordinary members, party activities are marked by national and local work communities, personal relations and individual preferences. For instance, there has been very little contact between the Danish and British branches despite the short distance between the two countries. The Danish Media Representative has explained that branches only cooperate if it is found necessary. Apparently cooperation was necessary when a representative from the British branch spoke at a Danish conference in 2007, and prior to that when Nawaz travelled to Copenhagen to help set up the a study circle for individuals with Pakistani background in 2000.

If we compare the lack of transnationalisation on the organisational and practical levels of the organisation with the fact that the national web pages are much more functional and used than the international web pages, then it is reasonable to argue that the term “transnational” does not cover all Hizb ut-Tahrir’s activities. Despite the fact that communication on the internet is not limited by national boundaries, solid presence on the internet is not equal to transnational activities on the ground. Hizb ut-Tahrir’s internet activities are both transnational and national, but it is the national web pages that represent interaction with a real live audience. Considering the organisational, practical and media related levels there seems to be a nationalisation process taking place in Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Danish and British branches. However, the transnational ideological framework is maintained by all branches and all member activities. Without this, Hizb ut-Tahrir would quickly fail to recruit new members and would cease to exist.

## Chapter 4<sup>lxiii</sup>

### Practising Place and Home

In March 2009, I met with the Danish Media Representative of Hizb ut-Tahrir and another male member. I had suggested a date for the meeting, and they subsequently set the exact time and place. Thus, we met in a civic centre in the Copenhagen suburb Valby in the afternoon. Not long into the interview, the two men excused themselves – it was prayer time. They chose a corner of the meeting room and started praying. I turned off the tape recorder and sat in the room watching Freigeh leading the prayer for quite a while. Afterwards, the two men returned to the table. They apologised for interrupting the interview which I accepted without a comment. This scenario was identical to the experience I had when I first met and interviewed the former spokesperson of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark, Fadi Abdullatif. This meeting also took place in a civic centre in Copenhagen, and Journalist Malene Fenger-Grøndahl and I interviewed Fadi Abdullatif as part of our research for a book on Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark (Sinclair et al. 2003). Three male members assisted Abdullatif, observed the event and made their own recording of the interview. Abdullatif set the time and place for the meeting but not too long into the interview, he interrupted the session in order to conduct prayers in the room with his three proselytes. This particular interview ended up taking the whole day and we witnessed several prayers during the day. But had the interview ended within a couple of hours, Abdullatif had made sure that we would not have missed witnessing the men praying. After experiencing this scenario twice, I understand witnessing prayers to be part of Hizb ut-Tahrir's participation in an interview. It is common knowledge that practising Muslims undertaking work tasks or other activities of importance can postpone prayers or combine them and thus make up for lost time. But Hizb ut-Tahrir's Danish representatives have chosen not to do this when meeting me for interviews.

In sharp contrast to the demonstrative prayers in the interview sessions, my first impression of Hizb ut-Tahrir was that religious elements were subordinated political

activities in this organisation. In the ideological material, for instance, Qur'anic quotations are used to stress arguments within the political framework. But due to its rejection of sectarianism, the organisation does not engage in religious activities in mosques or engage in debates about religious practice as such. Furthermore, several former members have criticised the party for being uninterested in religious aspects of Islam (Interviews with former members, 2009).<sup>lxiv</sup> However, analysing Hizb ut-Tahrir activities in relation to place and practice has made me re-evaluate my initial understanding. The differentiation between religion and politics does not make sense in the light of Hizb ut-Tahrir's holistic ideology, and members do not differentiate between the two themselves. Thus, I have come to understand prayers as practiced ideology. Praying in the middle of interviews is the involved Hizb ut-Tahrir members' way of showing me what their dream is. They dream of re-establishing an Islamic Caliphate in which pious Muslims will form the majority and where all the failures of the West will be of the past. By interrupting the interview with prayers, they demonstrate that in their future state, their agenda is superior to mine. In this way, the prayers may not be an expression of the importance of religious elements in Hizb ut-Tahrir but rather of the importance of religion as rituals that can be practised. When praying in front of an interviewer, Hizb ut-Tahrir members practise their caliphate.

In this chapter, I discuss notions of home and belonging in Hizb ut-Tahrir and I make the argument that the caliphate is not something of the future but something that Hizb ut-Tahrir members practise in their daily party-related activities. Hereby, I draw on perspectives of place and practice that are as concrete as possible. As opposed to this I find the concepts evolving around "trans" and "between" perspectives (Roy 2004a and 2004b, Mandaville 2001 and 2005) less concrete. When, for instance, Roy characterises Hizb ut-Tahrir as transnational, it is not an exact description of activities conducted in Hizb ut-Tahrir as we saw in chapter three. And when Mandaville, as we shall see later in this chapter, understands minority groups in the West as in-between cultures and homes, and *in flux*, this is not based on studies of members' concrete activities either. Hence, I argue for the necessity to look at place and concrete practice in order to move beyond the dichotomies of home and homelessness, rootedness and unrootedness,

attachment to place and displacement. In doing so I examine how Hizb ut-Tahrir, represented by the present Danish Media Representative Chadi Freigeh, understands the terms “nation” and “homeland” and how the caliphate can best be understood in relation to these categories. The party’s understandings and definitions of “nation” and “homeland” imply that working for the re-establishment of a caliphate is a rational, political project entirely, and that the party acknowledges emotional ties with homelands; i.e. both members’ birth countries and countries of residence. The party argument is that not until the caliphate is established and individuals are born there, will anybody be able to think of the caliphate as their homeland. A homeland is where you are born in other words. This, however, conflicts with the party rhetoric condemning Western lifestyle and Western systems of government. As we shall see in this chapter, condemnation of the West and victimisation of Muslims is prevalent in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Hence the following questions are posed: how can you feel at home in a place that you denounce in your political world view? And if you do not feel at home in the country you live in and the caliphate is not yet re-established, does that make you emotionally stateless? Where do you belong? Where is home?

The differentiation between rationality and emotions is very central to the analyses and discussions in this chapter. Drawing on analyses of refugees and different connotations of a lost homeland, this chapter discusses whether one can work for the establishment of a caliphate without any emotional affiliations with one's political project. The official party line explains that the caliphate is a rational and political project solely and that members’ emotional affiliation will follow the establishment of the Islamic state. However, a comparison between the party explanation and statements by former members on notions of home, made apparent that working for the caliphate is not a project for practical and rational minds purely. In interviews, former members have stated that their notion of home changed when they left Hizb ut-Tahrir. The majority of respondents acknowledged that Britain or Denmark had been home all along although, as members, they would disavow every aspect of life in these countries. Furthermore, interviews with former members revealed that on a practical level, very little changed when they left Hizb ut-Tahrir. Life continued and it

was business as usual apart from the absence of party-related activities. So, according to my respondents, it is possible to practice 'home' without feeling at home in your country. We shall take a closer look at how this is possible in the following. According to my analysis, members practice the caliphate in all party activities and consequently the caliphate is not merely a political dream to them, but something they practice, are emotionally involved in and identify with in Denmark and Britain today.

Before reaching the point regarding the caliphate as something that is practiced, the intermediate calculations are divided into five sections. The first section consists of Hizb ut-Tahrir's official definitions of nation, nationalism and homeland. Nationalism is dismissed as inferior and counter-productive, homeland is understood as an emotional and inter-relational category unsuitable for the party's political project. As opposed to these categories, the caliphate stands out as being based solely on reason and rationality. In the second section of the chapter, we shall see how Hizb ut-Tahrir's contradistinction of rational and emotional can be dismissed on the basis of former members' accounts of how party events were a matter of staging and impressing participants and audience alike. The third section discusses victimisation as an important ingredient in Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological condemnation of the West. The discussion is based on modernity theory and the understanding that self-victimisation is an important strategy in the battle for the attention in a modern mass society. In section four we return to the caliphate. Here Hizb ut-Tahrir's voluntary alienation in the world and members' longing for the caliphate is compared to studies of refugee groups' different notions of homeland. The point here is to shed light on the connection between Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological isolation and caliphate ideal. Finally, in the last section, I discuss how members make sense of the alienation and the elusive caliphate through practice.

#### 4.1 Hizb ut-Tahrir on Nation, Nationalism, Home and Homeland

The line of thinking concerning nations and belonging in Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological material is that patriotism and nationalism are signs of emotional and thus weak ties between a state and its people.<sup>lxv</sup> Al-Nabhani explains how nationalistic emotions increase if a country is under threat of attack or occupation from foreign powers. As stated in *The System of Islam* (Al-Nabhani, 1953: 33):

Whenever the level of thinking declines, the patriotic bond (raabitah al wataniyyah) amongst people arises, due to them living in one land and being attached to it. The survival instinct drives them to defend themselves, the country they live in and the land they live off. Hence the patriotic bond arises. This patriotic bond is the weakest and lowest level of bonds. It is present amongst animals and birds as well as human beings. It manifests itself in an emotional way. It comes about in the event of a foreign aggression against the homeland, either when attacked or occupied. The patriotic bond has no effect when the homeland is safe from aggression. It ceases when the foreigner is repelled or banished from the homeland. Therefore, this bond is of a low level (Al-Nabhani System of Islam 1953: 33).

Al-Nabhani states that nationalism is inferior because it is based on tribal hierarchies and tribes' attachment to specific plots of land. Furthermore, nationalism is emotional and based on survival instincts rather than reason, and finally, it is not only inferior but inhumane because it leads to conflict between peoples. (Al-Nabhani, *The System of Islam*, 1953, page 33-34)<sup>lxvi</sup>. As an alternative, al-Nabhani introduces Hizb ut-Tahrir's caliphate based on rational thinking. This is perceived as more humane by Hizb ut-Tahrir in that all humans will recognise the rationale behind the state, acknowledge the caliphate as a superior state solution and thus the caliphate and the ideology behind it will spare people from involvement in future conflicts. Thus, the thinking in



Hizb ut-Tahrir is that emotional ties between people and territory are arbitrary and unsuitable platforms for political structures and state politics in general – hence al-Nabhani’s characterisation of “weak” nationalistic bonds in the above quotations. This view was supported and elaborated by the Danish Media Representative:

Nation is a concept that means a group of people which can be defined on the basis of language, ethnic or ideological criteria. In effect, it is a relative concept that does not determine how a given group of people is demarcated. It is merely used to describe a specific community existing between a group of people. “Nationalism” on the other hand is a certain idea concerning how any given community can be demarcated and defined. According to nationalism, people’s affiliation and identity is based on language and ethnic background

(...)

Our stance on nationalism is that despite the fact that it is a (...) strange idea that does not spring from the Islamic sources or Islamic history, it contradicts the Islamic opinion. According to the Islamic opinion, a community has to be demarcated not on the basis of ethnicity but on the basis of conviction, intellectual conviction, and we believe it has to be an Islamic intellectual conviction that should demarcate the Islamic community. (...) The Islamic state should be able to embrace and include and amalgamate different nations across languages and ethnic boundaries (Interview with Chadi Freigeh, 2009).

As expected, the Media Representative’s argumentation does not deviate from al-Nabhani’s text. Nationalism is regarded weak because it is based on emotions, because

it does not derive from Islam and because it divides Muslims. Hizb ut-Tahrir counters that Islam possesses uniting forces. (Al-Nabhani, *The Islamic State*, 1953).<sup>lxvii</sup>

The ties between people and between people and state should not be confused with the emotional ties that exist in connection with homelands according to Hizb ut-Tahrir. Following Hizb ut-Tahrir's understanding, people should and will feel an obligation to work for the caliphate that is based purely on rational conviction and intellectual understanding of the foundations of the state. In this very long quotation so typical of Hizb ut-Tahrir representatives, it is noteworthy, that Chadi Freigeh equates "rational" with "Islamic" when explaining how the foundation of the caliphate differs from that of an ordinary state:

The caliphate should not be perceived as a homeland. And the feelings attached to a homeland should not be attached to the caliphate. A homeland is the place one is born and raised and it is a natural instinct to have certain feelings towards the place where one grew up due to specific experiences, a specific climate, family relations and friendships. (...) This is only natural and this is accepted in Islam. (...) But when one talks about the caliphate, one refers to the political system which is the only acceptable system according to the Islamic ideology in terms of handling Muslim affairs and implementing the Islamic system. (...) This is not based on emotional, instinctive or sentimental attachment. My attachment and my loyalty towards the Islamic state and to the political project is based on Islamic conviction and intellectual reflection. I recognise the Islamic foundation, because I recognise Shari'a as the core of what can actualise human interest and dignity as opposed to capitalism and socialism. (...) So, you see, the connection has to be purely Islamic... It has to build

on an intellectual basis whereas the emotions linked to a homeland rest on instinct and sentiment alone. And furthermore, you will find people who are born outside the caliphate, I mean, take a convert born in Denmark, who loves Denmark and who loves a certain climate, and certain people here, and who has a lot of experiences tied to a specific birthplace. These feelings are not un-Islamic, but on the other hand, they have nothing to do with his affiliation with the caliphate either (Interview with Chadi Freigeh, 2009).

Thus, detaching the future caliphate from emotions means that more people can identify with the underlying political project. Hizb ut-Tahrir defines the caliphate as a political project because this has the potential of making it palatable to more individuals. If the party demanded any kind of emotional attachment from future recruits, this would seem unrealistic and possibly even untrustworthy. Rather, Hizb ut-Tahrir establishes the emotional connection to the caliphate by referring to the examples set by the prophet Mohammad. The Danish Media Representative made this analogy:

Even the Prophet who was born and raised in Mecca, established his state in Medina. He spoke fondly of Mecca, but nevertheless he chose to emigrate to Medina and build his state there. (...) Similarly, I may have certain feelings towards Lebanon because I was born there (...) but the caliphate could be somewhere else. I would keep my feelings for the country or the town where I was born, while working for the caliphate, because my affiliation with the caliphate is based on something completely different. We warn Muslims against accepting Islam and Shari'a on the basis of emotional arguments. Acceptance should be based

on conviction because that creates the correct attachment to the caliphate (Interview with Chadi Freigeh, 2009).

Rationality, according to Hizb ut-Tahrir, is the source of the project's strength. As opposed to fluctuating emotions, Hizb ut-Tahrir's caliphate is based on ideas given by God that are understood and carried out by the use of intellectual thinking and reasoning. Hizb ut-Tahrir's postulate is that rational thinking and rational arguments bring someone to believe in the caliphate as a perfect state and hence work for the re-establishment of the caliphate in the future. Because the conviction is based on Islam and rational argumentation, citizens of the future caliphate will be loyal to their state and identify with it. It is different with a homeland. The concept "homeland" is inter-relational, as seen in the citation above. A homeland becomes a special place to an individual due to experiences and emotional connections. Although this is thought of as irrational and an element more suitable for sentimental songs than Hizb ut-Tahrir's political project, Hizb ut-Tahrir still acknowledges the existence of such connections and inter-relativity.

#### **4.2 "Home would be when the Khilafah would be established again" – Former Hizb ut-Tahrir Members' Notions of Home and Homeland**

According to Hizb ut-Tahrir, a homeland is where one is born and raised and it is accepted and even expected that people have certain feelings towards their country of birth. This is by no means an obstacle to working for the caliphate which is an entirely political project. Not until the first children are born in Hizb ut-Tahrir's caliphate will anybody be expected to think of the caliphate as their homeland. In the meantime, members can feel at home wherever they are. However, conversations and interviews with former members have shown that the question of home and homeland is not as simple as indicated by Chadi Freigeh in the above. On the contrary, after leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir, former members have described themselves as "stateless" and full of hate of the West while they were members. Thus, despite official party arguments, the

questions of home and belonging are very emotional. Through membership and long term engagement with Hizb ut-Tahrir, members and affiliates learn to refute their homelands.

In my interviews with former members of the organisation, I asked questions concerning home and homeland. The answers revealed that the respondents rejected Denmark or Britain as homelands as members. In some cases they explain not to have had that concept as part of their Islamist mindset, in others that they had felt more affiliated with Muslim countries than any non-Muslim country. Ultimately, that home would be when the caliphate was re-established. For one, Respondent A was so direct as to refer to Hizb ut-Tahrir members as stateless:

Ideologically speaking, as a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, I didn't have a homeland. We all regarded ourselves stateless. The caliphate would be our homeland, once it was established. In the meantime we regarded all nation states illegitimate. But on a practical note, Denmark was my homeland. This is where I was born and this is where I have lived all along (Interview with Respondent A, 2009).

Respondents D and H supported this:

I regard UK as home now. When I was in HT, UK couldn't be my home and Egypt [the country of origin of Respondent D's father's] wasn't home either. Home would be when the Khilafah would be established again. HT members are aliens everywhere, you hate everything and everybody (Interview with Respondent D, 2009).

While I was in Hizb ut-Tahrir there was no notion of "home" – that's part of the Islamist mindset: The whole world is seen as the "abode of disbelief". In my case, having never spent more than nine years in any one country, this was

convenient as I had no strong roots anywhere. Since leaving, I consider the UK to be home (Interview with Respondent H, 2009).

Others, Respondents C, E and F, mentioned the special significance of the Arab and Muslim countries:

As a member I thought home could be an Arab and Muslim country, where I could live and learn Arabic and pray etc. I couldn't feel at home in Britain or another Western country: I honestly did believe that the West was out to get us ... That has changed now. Britain is my home, and I am happy to be where I am. This place is all I have ever known (Interview with Respondent C, 2009).

To a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir no country or state is ideal. There are countries of importance such as Arabic speaking countries or Pakistan because it is a military power (the bomb!). In the party there is a particular understanding of identity stressing "we are Muslim first, everything else comes second". So I might think of myself as 1) Muslim, 2) Pakistani and 3) British. Today, obviously, that has changed for me. The UK is my home. I was always most comfortable in Britain. Since I am not fluent in Urdu and I don't speak Arabic I could always get my message through more easily in Britain (Interview with Respondent E, 2009).

Members generally reject any nation state, but there may be some affinity to the Muslim world. The true affinity is to the future caliphate. Now, I would say my home is in Britain (Interview with Respondent F, 2009).

The last three respondents related to the concepts of home and homeland differently compared to those already mentioned. One claimed always to have thought of Britain as home: “Home was always Britain. It is where I was born” (Interview with Respondent J, 2009). Another respondent claims never to have felt at home anywhere: “Regarding homeland I probably should say Denmark, but I have always felt like a stranger here, and while I was with Hizb ut-Tahrir that feeling was even stronger. Today I would say that Denmark is my homeland – Denmark or nowhere” (Interview with Respondent G, 2009). And finally, the last respondent explained that not until recently did he consider where home was:

I never thought about “home” – I didn’t have that concept. However, I thought about it recently and it is here; Britain. The reason I thought about it, the home question, was I thought about where I would rather live than here, and the thing is, I don’t like any of the other European countries. I identify with British norms (Interview with Respondent B, 2009).

For all respondents but one, leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir meant changing attitudes towards notions of home and homeland. Leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir meant realising that home had been Denmark or Britain all along.

According to these statements and explanations, what constitutes the possibility of regarding a country as “home” is that one is familiar with a given geographical territory and has lived there for a long time (A: “Denmark is where I have lived all along”, C: “This place is all I have ever known”, E: “I was always most comfortable in Britain”, J: “It is where I was born”) and that one understands, acknowledges or even identifies with the norms of that country as explained by Respondent B. Furthermore, a practical perspective to the notion of home which is also present albeit implicitly in the other answers, when A explains to have differentiated between the caliphate as a future homeland and the practical everyday life and routines in Denmark – the only country he ever lived in. He states: “...on a practical note, Denmark was my homeland. This is

where I was born and this is where I have lived all along.” When looking back, he is fully aware that on a practical level, his home was always in Denmark. An example of the same point made in an implicit way is when Respondent E talks about being more comfortable in Britain despite the fact that his parents were born in Pakistan. He is more comfortable in Britain because this is where he was born and English is his first language. Thus the mentioned practical aspect of communication is used as an example of how he is more certain of the ways things are done in Britain which then makes him feel more at home here. Finally, Respondent H talks about not being rooted in any specific country after having moved a lot, and this emphasises that a sense of rooting is connected to time – one can only be rooted in a place that one has lived in for a long period of time (longer than nine years). Only one respondent stated that he felt like a stranger in his native Denmark before joining Hizb ut-Tahrir and that this feeling has continued after leaving the group. When asked to name his homeland he answers: “Denmark – or nowhere” (interview with Respondent G, 2009).<sup>lxviii</sup>

The picture drawn by the respondents is that it was not possible to feel at home in the West as members of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Of course, one could point to numerous individual and personal reasons for this but in the present context the aim is to look for an explanation in Hizb ut-Tahrir’s line of thinking and in the party rhetoric.

### **4.3 The Uninhabitable West**

In Hizb ut-Tahrir’s thinking, the West is portrayed as the power behind the destruction of the last caliphate, it being Atatürk’s main influence behind the creation of the modern Turkish state. In most of the party literature including the majority of articles in the *Khilafah* magazines in various languages, the West is portrayed exactly as the destructive power corroding the foundations of Muslims’ moral and cultural superiority, whereas the caliphate is described as the mother of the *ummah* – the protector of the children in *ummah* and of Muslim interests. The West is characterised as the opposite of the caliphate: as disregarding traditions, religion, justice and



compassion. Furthermore, as a consequence of secularism and its strong emphasis on progress, the West becomes the ultimate Other. Any Khilafah article on the caliphate will outline this dichotomy and emphasise the West as a nest of moral decline due to the subordination of religion.

The typical depiction of the fall of the caliphate gives Hizb ut-Tahrir a historical point of departure for its criticism of the West: the logic being that Hizb ut-Tahrir is working towards the establishment of the caliphate that the West destroyed. Any reference to the caliphate and the West's role in the abolition of the caliphate will automatically appoint the West as the enemy of Muslims. In Hizb ut-Tahrir rhetoric, the West becomes the indisputable enemy, the Other *par excellence*, and without further explanation or examples, it is clear that the criticism of the West is a premise for Hizb ut-Tahrir's depiction of Muslims. The demonization of the West is counterbalanced by an idealisation of Muslims and, interestingly enough, often in a preference for the Arabic language (Al-Nabhani, *The Concepts of Islam*, 1953: 3). This preference is mentioned by the Danish Media Representative, when he agrees to be called an Arab but not Lebanese although of Palestinian /Lebanese descent:

We don't define ourselves on the ground of nationality. If you ask: Are you Arab? I would say: "Yes, I am Arab". If you ask: "Are you Lebanese?" I would say no although I was born in Lebanon. If you ask if I am Palestinian, because my parents were born in Palestine, I would say no. This type of definition is a product of colonialism and I refuse to identify on the basis of them. I am Arab because I speak Arabic, and because the messenger said that anyone who speaks Arabic is Arab. (...) According to the Islamic definition anyone who speaks Arabic is Arab (Interview with Chadi Freigeh, 2009).

Speaking Arabic defines a person as being an Arab according to this reference to the Prophet Mohammed and this identity marker is superior to any national affiliation. In Hizb ut-Tahrir literature, both in adopted and non-adopted sources, one finds many

references to the privileged status of Arabic which is connected with the fact that the Qur'an was written in Arabic and is still read in Arabic.<sup>lxi</sup> The overarching argument is that the Qur'an was given by Allah in Arabic and that Arabic thus possesses special communicative qualities. It is argued widely that the unsurpassed status of the Qur'an points to the fact that thus far it has proved impossible to translate the beauty of the Arabic in the original Qur'an to any language or to copy it in any other publication.

In a Danish context especially, Hizb ut-Tahrir is known to characterise Arabic as one of the main common denominators for Muslims. This is not the case to the same extent in Hizb ut-Tahrir's British branch as discussed in chapter 3. However, at least parts of Hizb ut-Tahrir seem to be inspired by the German romantic tradition found in Herder's writing where language is understood as the fundamental identity carrier and as a carrier of certain characteristics of a people's spirit. In a Danish context one could also point to work by the theologian Grundtvig stating that the spirit of a people is located in its language. Rather than seeing the valorisation of Arabic as something that might diminish the role of Turkish, Urdu and Farsi speaking Muslims, Hizb ut-Tahrir sees Arabic as a uniting factor for Muslims.<sup>lxx</sup> One could argue that the fact that Arabic is given a special status by al-Nabhani is an expression of an essentialisation of this language rather than an expression of Arabic superiority. Hizb ut-Tahrir's goal is not to create tension between Muslims but rather to unite the *ummah* against the West. With regard to the Danish and British branches of Hizb ut-Tahrir, the different emphasis put on Arabic as Islam's language is significant. In the Danish branch, where the majority of members are of Arab descent, strong emphasis is put on the importance of Arab language. In the British branch, I have never heard any members discuss the central position of Arab language in Islam, and as long as the majority of members are of South Asian descent this is unlikely to change. However, there is another point to add in this connection. The emphasis on language as a central part of a nation's identity could also be read as an expression of a *Blut und Boden* inspired understanding of nationalism. Such an understanding is prevalent in a German as well as in a Danish context. Thus, by emphasising the importance of a particular language, Arab in this case, Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark is mirroring the common Danish

conceptualising of what binds people together as a nation. They are expressing yet another Danish inspiration. The British tradition being completely different with regard to the perception of nation and nationalism, Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain would not be inspired to emphasise any language when discussing factors that bring together the *ummah*. The Danish branch's emphasis on language could be seen as a good example of influence from the Danish and German conceptualisation of nationalism.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's aim to unite Muslims against the West can also be seen as an expression of reversed Orientalism (al-Azm 2000, Sinclair 2003, Sinclair et al 2003). When, in 1978, Edward Said published *Orientalism*, he posed a critique of tendencies in the Western academic approach to the geographical areas lying to the East of Europe: The Orient. His controversial argument was that Western academics had been and still were essentialising the Middle Eastern region in their work resulting in the production of simplistic, static and eternal characteristics disregarding any historical identity and dynamics. Put differently, Said's argument was that Western academics were producing the Orient as a literary and theoretical construction, rather than describing and analysing the Middle East as a region inhabited by real people. Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and rhetorical figures draw on the same type of essentialisation in two ways. The party produces an essentialisation of the West in order to distance Muslims from the West and unite Muslims against this perceived enemy. Moreover, the party claims to speak on behalf of all Muslims. According to Said, the core of Orientalists' work is first of all stating "the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is the rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior" (Said, 1978:300). In Hizb ut-Tahrir's optic, the essence of the dichotomy is the same, but the categories are switched round: The Orient – in the case of Hizb ut-Tahrir the *ummah* and the future caliphate – is rational, developed, humane and superior, whereas the West is undeveloped and inferior.

Ultimately, Said is calling for a distinct voice of the people of the Orient which implies that classical works should be put aside for the benefit of studies of modern realities. His argument is that the area known as the Middle East or the Arab and Muslim worlds

is not best described by Western academics but by the area's own people. Precisely this call is interesting in connection with the study of Hizb ut-Tahrir, because the claim to be speaking on behalf of “Orientals”, Muslims, is so central to their self-understanding and not least their rhetorical outbursts. Hizb ut-Tahrir claims to define and represent a distinct Muslim voice and use this voice to expose the weaknesses of the West. Their argument is that it is the West, not Muslims, that needs to be defined and rescued by Muslims organised in the caliphate. In this way, one could argue that Said's critique of classical Orientalism is useful in understanding how Hizb ut-Tahrir manoeuvres and argues rhetorically – otherness and enemies are identified through a reversed Orientalist logic. Having made this point, it is important to note that al-Nabhani himself could not have read Said and thus, the inspiration behind the juxtaposition of the West and Muslims is likely to stem from his own reading of the Western academic representations of the Orient as well as from reading scholars discussing similar aspects before Said. In fact, the consistent dichotomisation of Western societies and the caliphate could very well be another example of al-Nabhani's Western inspiration as analysed by Taji-Farouki (Taji-Farouki 1994).

The Western inspiration behind al-Nabhani's thinking is particularly visible with regard to expressions of modern experiences of fragmentation and loss. The lengthy descriptions of the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate in Hizb ut-Tahrir's material is a very good example of this. Here, historical facts give way to emotional accounts of *the loss* itself. The loss, then, is connected with the representation of the West as essentially inhabitable. For instance, accounts of the events in 1924 show Muslims as a people suffering from a loss and the following dichotomisation of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in the West is seen as a consequence hereof. The West is guilty of causing a loss for Muslims, the Muslims are victims. Victimisation and loss are common themes in work theorising on the modern experience. Some of this work analyses the modern human being as homeless in the world (see for instance Berger et al. *The Homeless Mind*, 1973) other authors analyse how identity formation was effected by the loss of meaning experienced during and after the First World War. According to the Danish historian Henrik Jensen, “The Great War” resulted in a

collective loss of a common understanding of the world and reality, the loss of overarching interpretations and meaning causing an extremely fragmented world where individuals are responsible for creating meaning in their own lives. Benedict Anderson describes these experiences as “collective amnesia” and Orwell discusses the consequences of the war as general bewilderment and confusion (Jensen, 1988: 216). In this fragmented and highly individualised world, the only way an individual can be certain to achieve attention from its surroundings is by being recognised as victim. Only as a victim is the individual visible in the modern mass society. Therefore, understanding how to position oneself as a victim means winning an ideological upper hand or, as Trond Berg Eriksen phrases it, healthy people portraying everyday life in the West as a struggle for survival are merely subconsciously exploring “the moral climate” of the time (Eriksen, 1990:241) in order to get attention and feel acknowledged as individuals.

This perspective is useful in the analyses of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s emphasis on Muslims as victims. The victimisation of Muslims should not be seen as something Middle Eastern, Arabic or Muslim but as containing elements of modern, Western culture and self-imaging. Hence, the victimisation of Muslims in Hizb ut-Tahrir literature does not function as an attempt to awaken a historical consciousness or knowledge about historical reality among Muslims. On the contrary, it should be seen as a modern strategy seeking attention from potential recruits but also from the surrounding societies. Here, it should be noted that the reasons for Muslims to identify as victims are many fold – the situations in Israel/Palestine, in Iraq and Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya to name just a few. Both elements, fact and fiction, are present in Hizb ut-Tahrir literature and rhetoric, and the party uses all these current examples to state that Islam and Muslims are victims of Western aggression. According to Hizb ut-Tahrir, all the historical episodes mentioned are assaults on Islam.

Today as in the year of the founding of the party (1953), party ideologues will point at the abolition of the last caliphate (1924) and the creation of Israel (1948) as the two main examples of how the West dominates the Middle East and Muslims.

Furthermore, they will point out how present day crises and conflicts fit into this pattern of dominance, suppression, exploitation and humiliation of Muslims using the war on terror, Iraq, Afghanistan or the Gaza war as illustrative examples hereof. The aim behind the emphasis on Muslims as victims is to tell members and affiliates that they are not and never will be regarded as part of the West – that they will never and should never feel at home in a Western country. On top of the argumentation about Muslims as victims, Hizb ut-Tahrir ideologues add a focus on the moral decay and general decadence of the West. This line of thinking is known from other contexts. For instance, it is found in the concept *gharbzadegi* which was translated into *Plagued by the West* by Paul Sprachman.<sup>lxxi</sup> The core of this concept is what was perceived as the West's infection of Iranian culture and language also referred to as Westoxication. Professor Fardid from Teheran University who first coined the phrase in the 1940s found that the only element of authentic value that Iran had managed to keep from Western influence was shi'a Islam. If we return to Hizb ut-Tahrir, the very same conviction prevails. Take any issue of the *Khilafah* magazine and you will find articles on political double standards, perverted sexuality, failing family values etc. in the West.<sup>lxxii</sup> With this focus, Hizb ut-Tahrir stresses that the last thing any truth seeking, God fearing Muslim would ever want is to be associated with the West. Thus, the road is paved for the launch of the party's ultimate political goal: the re-establishment of the caliphate. The Islamic caliphate is Hizb ut-Tahrir's solution to all challenges faced by the world's Muslims and is regarded the form of government most true to the Qur'anic prescriptions. Thus, the West cannot be home, it constitutes the ultimate Other. The West is decadent and evil – it inspired the abolition of the last caliphate and made Muslims homeless. Moreover, throughout history the West has turned Muslims into victims in wars and conflicts and Muslims still find themselves at the receiving end of Western aggression. It is easy for Hizb ut-Tahrir to point at Palestine, Bosnia, Chechnya, Iraq and Afghanistan for recent examples of this and to think like Respondent C that “the West was out to get us!” (Interview with Respondent C, 2009).

To sum up, according to Hizb ut-Tahrir, the West is not a suitable place to live for Muslims, but the party accepts the fact that members will have emotional ties with the

countries they grew up in and live in. These ties are, however, very different from the motivation behind members' work towards the re-establishment of the caliphate, which relies on rational conviction alone. From an ideological point of view, Hizb ut-Tahrir cannot feel at home in the West, and the feeling of unrootedness is an ideal due to the fact that it sharpens the motivation to work for the caliphate. The feeling of not belonging anywhere makes the need for the establishment of the caliphate acute. In this manner, specific meanings and self-understandings are constructed in Hizb ut-Tahrir.

#### **4.4 Roots and Rootlessness**

With their focus on *ummah* and caliphate and thus the wish to unite Muslims from all geographical and ethnic backgrounds, Hizb ut-Tahrir is playing an active part in the ideological deterritorialisation of Islam.<sup>lxxiii</sup> To scholars such as Roy and Mandaville, Hizb ut-Tahrir thus forms an almost perfect example of a transnational Islamist organisation with a global outreach. However, after having questioned that term "transnational" with regard to Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities on a practical level and its structure on an organisational level, here I would like to turn to the understanding of Hizb ut-Tahrir members as being more homeless, rootless or *in flux* than other individuals.

Certainly, Hizb ut-Tahrir is partly transnational and contributes to transnational identification and the creation of networks among members as discussed in chapter three. Also, to a certain degree this transnational identification results in members choosing the ideologically defined caliphate as "homeland" over any concrete nation state. As touched upon earlier in this chapter, the latter is partly a result of a choice guided by Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and victimisation of Muslims. Based on the transnational elements and the inherent victimisation, Mandaville argues that Hizb ut-Tahrir and other so-called khilafist-jihadist groups appeal especially to individuals who feel marginalised:

Promulgating Islam as a higher order identity, would-be-supporters are asked to deemphasise national affiliations in the name of the ummah and to understand the suffering of Muslims in other lands as their own – and as circumstances into which they are obliged by their religion to intervene. In this sense, the khilafist-jihadist agenda might be said to hold the greatest appeal for those whose sense of belonging is already in flux – those disjunct from mainstream society and somehow adrift (Mandaville, 2005: 314).<sup>lxxiv</sup>

According to Mandaville, Hizb ut-Tahrir's European branches are likely to inspire and draw to them individuals who feel disconnected with any kind of mainstream culture (be it the mainstream culture of their European homeland or mainstream Islamic practice and interpretation), individuals who feel more detached, homeless or unrooted than the majority of people. Also, Mandaville argues that individuals belonging to any given majority, i.e. Muslims living in Muslim majority countries, are not in flux to the same extent as their fellow-believers in Europe. Belonging to a minority religion, European Muslims are between cultures, between countries, between homes. And because of Hizb ut-Tahrir's anti-Western ideology and their ideological longing for Muslim unity in an ideal Islamic state, individuals belonging to this group are in-between or unrooted *par excellence*. While my analysis of Hizb ut-Tahrir is inspired by this thinking, I would argue that Hizb ut-Tahrir members choose to uproot themselves due to the mindset they adopt, as opposed to being unrooted. The latter seems to contain positively valorised elements in work by Mandaville and before him Said for which I find no empirical justification. Rather, as I hope to show, according to my analysis of former members' accounts, the voluntary uprootedness amongst Hizb ut-Tahrir members has more to do with the applied understandings of caliphate and homeland.

Forming a contrast to the focus on individuals as in-betweens, Liisa Mallki discusses "rootedness" versus "unrootedness" in her 1992 article in *Cultural Anthropology*.<sup>lxxv</sup>



Based on analyses of the use of biological metaphors in connection with identity studies, Mallki states that traditionally rootedness signifies a good, sound, healthy and normal state and status via the obvious link to biology and nature. On the contrary, something unrooted is considered unnatural, unstable and even a challenge to existing moral, law and order (Mallki 1992:32). Mallki argues:

The point here is obviously not to deny that displacement can be a shattering experience. It is rather this: Our sedentarist assumptions about attachment to place lead us to define displacement not as a fact about sociopolitical context, but rather as an inner, pathological condition of the displaced (Mallki, 1992: 33).

Mallki's argument is that neither attachment to place nor displacement should be regarded more natural than the other. Likewise, neither rootedness nor unrootedness is a question of pathology. Thus, Mallki avoids the valorisation present in Mandaville's argumentation about Islamists *in flux*. In the mentioned article, Mallki compares two groups of Burundi Hutu refugees in Tanzania. One group resides in an isolated camp, the other consists of refugees scattered in a town area. The comparison shows how very distinct and different connotations of the homeland developed in the two groups. The refugees living in the town area are not identifying as a group and have become more integrated in Tanzania as a result. They have engaged in a new way of life in their new country whereby the country they originated from and the lives they led there remain in and of the past. To this group, Burundi is a geographical destination they left, a place they came from. To the other group of refugees living together in a camp, the lost homeland also represents lost identities and lost purpose and aim. They not only dream of having their land back, they dream of having their old identities and lives back. It is what they had in the lost place they miss as much as the place itself. When they express a strong sense of Hutu identity it is because they identify their former and better lives in Burundi with being Hutu. Therefore, their Hutu identity is expressed much stronger than is the case with the town refugees who have found new content

and meaning with their lives in their new setting. Mallki's point is to demonstrate how the refugees' current setting determines how they think of their homeland. In Hizb ut-Tahrir, members are taught to think of themselves as having lost their homeland and to identify with the group of similar minded individuals. Although very few members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark or Britain are refugees, they all think like Mallki's camp refugees longing for lost identity and home. Subsequently, it is tempting to maintain that Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology turns its members into mental refugees. The refugees in the camp create a collective identity based on their "Hutuness" and they see their homeland as something more than a geographical category. Based on this comparison, Mallki argues: "... the collective, idealized return to the homeland is not a mere matter of travelling. The real return can come true only at the culmination of the trials and tribulations in exile" (Mallki 1992: 33).<sup>lxvii</sup> Thus, the homeland becomes a moral destination rather than a physical one for the Hutu camp refugees. In the same way, Hizb ut-Tahrir's caliphate is rarely discussed in terms of territory and geography in party literature or parlance. Rather, the caliphate constitutes a political vision that motivates members to work for the party and identify with the underlying ideology.

As Mallki demonstrates in her work, attachment to place and displacement, rootedness and unrootedness is not a question of belonging to a place, identifying with place or being displaced. Rather, it is a question of mental maps or gaps. This is relevant in the analysis of Hizb ut-Tahrir members' relation to their European homelands. As seen above, it is often argued that Muslims in minority settings in Europe, and Islamists distancing themselves from their European homeland especially, are textbook examples of unrooted individuals. I would say that Mandaville's emphasis on migrants and Islamists in minority setting as being more *in flux* or unrooted than other people serves to lift these people and their organisations out of place. Rather than explain why individuals are attracted to a particular organisation through discussions of minority-majority relations, I suggest that we look at members' practices and relation to places.

## 4.5 Practising Home and Caliphate

Posing questions to former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir concerning their daily activities and homes revealed that the respondents were engaged in the same type of work and family life, reading the same newspapers, socialising with many of the same friends etc. after leaving the organisation. Thus, leaving made them realise that they had been leading “Danish and British lives” all along. Hizb ut-Tahrir and the caliphate may have been present in their homes and lives via symbols such as the black party flag or party literature, but these things would be removed easily and would not be permanent components leaving visible traces of a past political engagement. One former member explained that he had simply moved the black flag from the wall of his living room to the garage after leaving the party. Another described how she had owned a framed picture consisting of a *hadith*, a record of the sayings and customs of the prophet Muhammad, on a nice background that carried a message about a group of people of special importance to the Prophet which she identified herself and other Hizb ut-Tahrir partisans with. She found herself emotionally moved by the message as a member and was proud to keep on her wall. Nevertheless, after leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir, she had also moved house and lost trace of the picture in the move. Apart from losing the wall decoration, Respondent C had altered her way of dressing after leaving the party. She stopped wearing the garment considered obligatory for women by Hizb ut-Tahrir, the *jilbab*, which is a long garment covering the body like a thin coat typically worn as an extra outer layer. Instead she started wearing more ordinary modest clothes such as long cardigans over jeans and shirts. The impression given by the respondents was that these aspects were not too important. The most important change was the identification with Britain as home.

Also, it became evident when discussing the caliphate with former members that the caliphate had different connotations to different people. In party material, you find descriptions of a political entity, a constitution and references to a legal framework but these documents and references do not draw a complete picture of what the caliphate will be exactly or what it will be like to live there. It does not say anything about geographical location either. On the contrary, the descriptions of the caliphate are

elusive enough for all members to relate to it in terms of picturing their private ideal state. Thus, one former member would describe the caliphate as a state with perfect health care and a state that had eradicated any form of hunger, poverty or social problems. Her caliphate was a state that was admired widely for its technological advancement – and place with visiting tourist from the West envious of the obvious progress and prosperity. Another former member explained that the caliphate to him would be a liberal state subscribing to the most liberal interpretations of the Islamic legal system, *Shari'a*, as possible. Hence he was not talking about liberal dressing, there would be no mini-skirts, but rather a state where it would not be regarded advisable to punish people and so the implementation of *Shari'a* would not necessarily imply the introduction of capital punishment or the chopping off of hands. There is little doubt that the caliphate is thought of as an ideal state by members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, but descriptions given by former members show that personal preferences are prevailing when it comes to actual content, substance and details. Thus, to some extent, *Shari'a* was understood as a polythetic concept by some members. There would be common connotations when thinking about the caliphate in broad terms, but individual members would easily create a synthesis between the party's descriptions of the caliphate and their own ideal.

Here, Winther's social analytical approach can provide a theoretical framework for understanding how different connotations of caliphate and homeland are brought into play with daily routines, practice and places. According to this approach, time and space are always related through the practice of individuals. Furthermore, universal and particular ideas are always related to time and space through the practice of individuals. If we turn to the present context and look at Hizb ut-Tahrir members, any Hizb ut-Tahrir member will at any given time have the meta-historical and universal idea of caliphate, but the same person will also and simultaneously have the particular and historical place that is his or her home. Although these two categories exist simultaneously in the life and mind of our case person, this person might experience the two categories as contradictory. The actual home may not fulfil the expectations to a home that a given person develops based on his or her understanding of the

caliphate. However, this does not mean that he or she is not at home in the physical location that is home. According to Winther, creating home and feeling at home other places than “at home” rely on mental strategies. These strategies could involve copying certain practices, for instance certain ways of unpacking a suitcase in a hotel room and arranging clothes copying patterns from home, it could involve watching TV at a specific time, or it could involve bringing pictures or books from home etc. The result of these strategies for creating home, “homing tactics” as Winther calls them, is the expansion of personal territory. Not necessarily in a physical sense – one does not take over a hotel room as such – but in a mental and tactical sense. By applying homing tactics and thus “doing place” or “living space”, one can feel at home anywhere anytime (Winther 2006: 188-190). For a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, having the caliphate as a political ideal might collide with living in Britain or Denmark in terms of accepting life under a different political agenda and neighbours with different beliefs and norms. But it does not necessarily pose a conflict with feeling at home in one’s home due to the ability of developing “homing strategies” and “doing place”. This point is emphasised in Chadi Freigeh’s explanation of the homeland category as being inter-relational.

Let us now turn to the statements and explanations provided by former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain. Each individual member of Hizb ut-Tahrir would operate with specific notions of home and develop matching homing strategies at the same time as believing in the Islamic caliphate as an overarching ideal. A picture on the wall or a special garment could in some cases be part of the homing strategy and help provide the necessary link between the ideal home and the actual home. However, it turned out that there was also a shared understanding in the party concerning how the party should be presented to the public. Respondent C who was involved in organising conferences and other big meetings and debates explained that female members spoke about the important “wow factor”. When organising events, they aimed at perfection and tried to think of everything:

I was in charge of the crèche and we made sure that everything was perfect – it was almost like a miniature utopia. The wow factor was important to us and we wanted everything to be like little caliphates. It had to be perfect. There would be games and we would provide lunch, water, fruit and other snacks. Also, we would register children, write their names on stickers and place them on their backs, and we would note the mothers' mobile numbers and call them if their children were crying and we couldn't comfort them ourselves. It was important that everything was organised and everyone was happy with the service. The kids loved it and would ask to be taken back by their parents (Interview with Respondent C, 2009).

Children are known to be influential when it comes to families' consumption, so making children happy would be worthwhile in order to encourage parents to return to party gatherings. However, the explanation given about the importance of organising perfect events and thus creating little caliphates emphasises my point about practice. Not only are well-organised events and hostesses with a strong sense of detail a significant part of Hizb ut-Tahrir's public staging and image as intellectual and elitist. More importantly, organising these events has had a major significance for the involved members themselves. They have been practicing the caliphate, living the caliphate, *caliphating* to use Winther's terminology, every time they have acted as party representatives and engaged in party activities. Thus, to these members, the caliphate was not solely a project of the future, it was also a place they entered every time they attended a party event.

With this in mind we can return to the idea of the caliphate as both a question of geography and borders in the 1950s ideological material and a moral destination in the minds of its present day members. Hizb ut-Tahrir members link the dissociation with the West and working for the re-establishment of the caliphate. Among Hizb ut-Tahrir

members, the caliphate is both a moral (and imaginary) destination that constitutes a foundation for a shared identity and something they practice in their party activities. My argument is that this combination of idea and practice is what makes the caliphate such a powerful denominator for members. The combination of a political ideal and practice matches Hizb ut-Tahrir's overarching holistic ideology and the practical aspects make it possible for members to relate to the ideal. On paper, the idea of the caliphate would not be strong enough to motivate and mobilise members to work for it, but when brought into play with victim strategies and feelings of unrootedness (or voluntary uprootedness) and practice, it becomes alive and real and thus trustworthy. Subsequently, the claim made by party representatives that they differentiate between emotional links to a homeland and a rational connection with the caliphate seems to work only in principle. Individual members automatically imagine the caliphate and relate to it emotionally while engaging in party activities. Thus, ideologically Hizb ut-Tahrir affiliates may feel alienated and homeless everywhere in the world until the caliphate is re-established, but in the meantime these individuals are at home wherever they live and work. Much to the contrary of what Roy and Mandaville claim in their work, there is no empirical evidence for thinking that on a practical day-to-day level these individuals are not "at home" in their current, existing homelands in Europe. Hizb ut-Tahrir manages to convince members that the return of the caliphate is realistic and could happen anytime soon by wrapping up the elusive, moral destination of the caliphate in rational, political arguments and the possibility of practising the caliphate. Members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Europe are no more *in flux* than any other Europeans, they are just taught to think of themselves like this through schooling in the Hizb ut-Tahrir ideology.

Based on statements made by former members about their everyday lives as members and possible shifts in their understanding of where home is or can be after leaving the party, one can argue that Hizb ut-Tahrir members are not lacking roots any more than other people, however, while integrated in party thinking they share an understanding of themselves as homeless in the West and thus stateless or rootless. As members, they thought of themselves as "stateless", "homeless", "rootless" or "in flux" but in

actual fact, the real change after leaving the party had to do with the perception of Britain rather than concrete activities. After leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir, they could think of Britain as their home – knowing that it had been all along. The party's ideological and rhetorical disassociation with the West serves to motivate members to work for the re-establishment of the caliphate. In the meantime, the individuals concerned are living space and doing place and thus integrating abstract ideas with practical strategies and making home and sense of where they are. Unrootedness and homelessness are not ontological categories but party specific ideological lenses through which the world is seen.

As emphasised by former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir for them, as members, it was considered an impossibility to think of Britain or Denmark as home. As party members they would reject any nation state as political entity and as home. The caliphate was seen as the perfect state and homeland and the re-establishment considered realistic. However, although Britain and Denmark would be rejected as homeland, day-to-day activities would be influenced heavily by the British or Danish context and thus family habits, the choice of news sources, social activities, education system experiences etc. could all be categorised as more or less typically British or Danish. Nevertheless, members choose to believe that the re-establishment will happen anytime soon. The question is how this understanding of the caliphate is created in the party, and a possible explanation could be found in Mallki's analysis of different notions of homeland among Hutu refugees. By establishing the caliphate as both a geographical place, a state that will soon be created in a Muslim majority area in the Middle East, and a moral destination, a utopia where all Muslims will find peace, harmony and home, the party is combining rational argumentation as well as sentimental longing for a home which is a powerful and persuasive combination.<sup>lxxvii</sup>



## 4.6 Summary

The social analytical approach to Hizb ut-Tahrir combined with Mallki's findings concerning varying connotations of homeland form the basis of an argument that breaks with former understandings of Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities and members in two ways. Firstly, with regard to the party's own perception of homeland and caliphate, and secondly regarding scholarly perceptions of members' sense of belonging.

According to the official party line, Hizb ut-Tahrir's caliphate is a purely rational project but the statements of former members illustrated that the caliphate was much more to them as members than a political project. Besides a political ideal, the caliphate was a place they longed for like someone away from home longs to return home. Moreover it was a source of motivation when organising party events and engaging with other members and potential future members and something members felt they practiced when they sought perfection. Thus, the caliphate was a complete way of life for members matching Hizb ut-Tahrir's holistic ideology.

If we turn to previous scholarly analyses of Hizb ut-Tahrir, there is a perception of members as being detached from physical and geographical location in work by both Roy and Mandaville (Roy 2004a and 2004b, Mandaville 2001 and 2005). Roy emphasises Islamists and Neofundamentalists as practicing a deterritorialised version of Islam (Roy 2004a and 2004b), while Mandaville as shown in this chapter claims that "the khilafist-jihadist agenda might be said to hold the greatest appeal for those whose sense of belonging is already *in flux* – those disjunct from mainstream society" (Mandaville, 2005: 314). That is, the individuals who are drawn to Hizb ut-Tahrir and similar organisations feel homeless in the world before joining Hizb ut-Tahrir. My argument is the opposite: it is after joining Hizb ut-Tahrir that members are taught to comply with the group, respect the hierarchy and work for the caliphate. And it is while working for the re-establishment of the caliphate that they dissociate themselves from their surrounding society. In Hizb ut-Tahrir they learn to think of themselves as Mallki's camp refugees. They become voluntary refugees and the

caliphate becomes a moral, a sentimental and an emotional destination as well as a question of rationale and geography.

Furthermore, as discussed in chapter three, while the ideology may be transnational, members and the majority of member related activities are not. The study of their practices and the knowledge about how ideals are not hindering homing strategies show that members are not *in flux*, in-between or homeless either. As we shall see in chapter five, the importance of the state and the ideology as references and the religious rationalisation in Hizb ut-Tahrir form the framework for individual members' practice.

## Chapter 5

### Organisation, Ideology and Individual Rationales

A former member of Hizb ut-Tahrir explained to me how she was introduced to Hizb ut-Tahrir for the first time. Her story is a good example of how certain elements in Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology are reflected in members' self-understanding and used to attract the attention of potential new recruits. In the party, there is a prevalent understanding of being on an important political mission and of posing a threat to existing states. As a young university student and a new convert to Islam, my respondent was attending a debate about Islam organised by Hizb ut-Tahrir on campus. She was very keen to learn as much about her new religion as possible and attended many different meetings and debates. At this particular debate, she overheard a group of young women discussing a meeting they were all going to attend later. The young women talking seemed to know each other well and also seemed very knowledgeable about Islam. When my respondent approached them and asked what they were talking about, they changed the subject and ignored her request. However, not long after this episode, she was addressed by one of the women from the Hizb ut-Tahrir event. The woman explained that they were all part of an Islamist organisation and that they would be willing to consider her participation in a future meeting in their little group. She was thrilled to be accepted into this circle of trust and responded positively to the invitation (Interview with Respondent C, 2009).

As I later discussed with this Respondent there were many key factors at play in the process that lead her to join Hizb ut-Tahrir. If we look at the historical and the personal perspectives to begin with, the situation described above took place in the late 1990s before Hizb ut-Tahrir was commonly known and before the campus ban in 2004. Thus, being introduced to Hizb ut-Tahrir's thinking on campus meant that the involved party representatives appeared to be well read and trustworthy. Furthermore, the setting for the encounter also increased the credibility of the organisation. Concerning the personal perspective, my respondent was young and open minded, she referred to

herself as “impressionable” (interview with Respondent C, 2009), having just left home to initiate her university studies. Moreover, she had just recently converted to Islam and was eager to learn everything about her new religion. Nevertheless, considering these perspectives she could have been attracted to any Muslim organisation active on her campus. The fact that it was Hizb ut-Tahrir that managed to persuade her to join and become an active member had to do with the encounter with the group of women as described. The secrecy with which the women surrounded themselves, and the apparent importance of their mission was what compelled my respondent to approach them. And their initial rejection of her only made them seem more interesting and their group more unreachable and thus desirable. On this basis, the result of her second encounter with one from the group was given: she was honoured to be asked to join the women’s group (Interview with Respondent C, 2009).

The notions of importance, secrecy and exclusiveness are central here. Hizb ut-Tahrir’s ideology is inspired by cadre party thinking. Thus, in the party there is an understanding of Hizb ut-Tahrir being a chosen group; an elite responsible for leading the masses towards a better future. The re-establishment of the caliphate is the backbone of all future improvements. This understanding is established through the study of party documents and discussions in study circles. Also, attached to this thinking is the understanding that the party is posing a threat to existing regimes in the Muslim world because of its goal concerning the re-establishment of the caliphate and the obliteration of existing governments and borders. The facts that Hizb ut-Tahrir has been banned in the majority of Muslim countries and members are being persecuted by weak states (members are regularly being imprisoned and persecuted in Syria, Kirgizstan and Uzbekistan to mention a few places) only emphasise the self-understanding of posing a threat. Hence, party members throughout the world are instructed to hide personal facts and membership details from the public. No branch will provide general membership information or numbers, and it has never been possible for me to have an ordinary member discuss a personal view on something. Ordinary members point to the Media Representatives who provide standard answers according to the ideological texts. Hizb ut-Tahrir members share a perception of being

on an important mission for the party. Consequently, exclusiveness and secrecy are used to attract new members.

In this chapter, I shall investigate what Hizb ut-Tahrir offers its members. What is striking is that recruitment to Islamist organisations tends to be explained with regard to moral, political, economical or emotional deficiencies or grievances (for instance Roy 1993 and 2004a, Kepel 2004, Wiktorowicz 2001 and 2004a). Could it not be that people join because they want to? Could joining not have to do with gaining something? What if many join just because it feels good and makes sense to them?

Based on analyses of statements from former members, I find that Hizb ut-Tahrir operates on more than one level. On the organisational level, it offers its members a political framework and goal, an ideology with a fixed set of instructions concerning all aspects of life. Respondent C's story about how she joined Hizb ut-Tahrir is tied to the organisational level. The sentiment surrounding the party members on her London university campus was marked by emotional templates that are part of the party's self-understanding. Such templates will be subject to further scrutiny in the present chapter.

On the personal level, Hizb ut-Tahrir offers its members the possibility to practise religion and be part of a group. Speaking to former members made it apparent that while the first level may be what attracts new recruits, it is activities and dynamics of the personal level, emotions and religious rationales, that make people stay in Hizb ut-Tahrir. It is also activities and commitment on the personal level that make it hard to leave the organisation again. With Social Movement theory and analyses of group dynamics, rational actor models (Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler, 2006), ideas discussed in *Passionate Politics* (Goodwin et al, 2001) and Maffesoli's use of "affectual tribe", I discuss Hizb ut-Tahrir as a hybrid between a cadre party, a movement and a tribe. In doing so, I advocate that we look at what is in play for members of in Hizb ut-Tahrir rather than what might be lacking.

Thus, in Hizb ut-Tahrir the political and the religious content operate on different levels. The politics is found on the organisational, transnational and ideological level, whereas the religious content is on the individual and personal level. In this chapter, I will discuss what is gained by the interaction of these two levels. Hizb ut-Tahrir offers members a palette from which members can choose and define their own rationales. Emotions and religion play important parts here, and although these are not strictly connected to the political goals, the ideology and the mission, they are not entirely undisciplined, either (Goodwin et al, 2001:16). Interaction and expectations in social and religious movements move members in certain directions and this is also the case in Hizb ut-Tahrir.

The present chapter links back to the findings in chapters three and four. In chapter three, I found that although Hizb ut-Tahrir contains both transnational and national tendencies, on the street level among ordinary members, contact with other members follows a pattern of personal relations. While the transnational organisation defines a frame for activities, it is personal relations that determine who the individual member is in direct contact with and what party activities entail. In chapter four I found that Hizb ut-Tahrir members manage to combine their utopian ideal with their everyday party activities so much so that they felt that they were practicing the caliphate in ordinary party activities. Thus, the caliphate was very real to them and the re-establishment of the state accordingly realistic. Central to all the findings are individuals, practice and questions concerning belonging.

Where previous work on Hizb ut-Tahrir focuses on the political content of the ideology (Taji-Farouki 1994 and 1996, Roy 1993 and 2004a) or the minority aspects attached to Hizb ut-Tahrir in the West (Mandaville 2001 and 2005), and social movement theory tends to analyse negative emotions as motivation for joining (Wiktorowicz 2004a, 2004b and 2005), I highlight the individual level of the organisation and positive emotions. My point is that Hizb ut-Tahrir is more religion than it is politics in the sense that Hizb ut-Tahrir's holistic ideology is practiced like a religion. The ideology may have its references from Islam, but it is the ideology that is worshipped rather than the

Muslim God. This does not mean that Hizb ut-Tahrir' ideology is neither politics nor religion. Hizb ut-Tahrir provides a political framework, but ultimately, it is group dynamics and individual emotions and religious rationales that move the members. Hizb ut-Tahrir provides so much more than political answers and solutions to its members. It provides a holistic approach to the world, a way of life and a home in the group.

The chapter consists of five sections. The first section is entitled "Joining Hizb ut-Tahrir". Here, statements from former members concerning their initial motivation for joining are analysed as are various approaches used by Hizb ut-Tahrir for the purpose of recruiting new members. In the second section, Hizb ut-Tahrir is discussed as a hybrid between a cadre party, a social and/or religious movement and an "affectual tribe". Hizb ut-Tahrir's current branches manage to combine a hierarchical organisational structure which enables committee members to keep control of party activities with elements from social movements. In this connection, Maffesoli's idea that groups form homes is discussed.<sup>lxxviii</sup> Maffesoli argues that the core of belonging to a group in the world today is the individual's desire for unbroken relations and home. In section three, I investigate the role of religion and members' religious rationales for joining and staying in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Finally, in section four, the point of departure is former members' accounts of why they left Hizb ut-Tahrir. These accounts are analysed in terms of the interaction between the political and the religious content in Hizb ut-Tahrir. It becomes clear that Hizb ut-Tahrir members are equally drawn by the political framework and the individual content (being religion and the pleasures of belonging to a group). Of the two levels, however, it is the personal level that serves as the strongest motivation for membership. Typically, it is not until members become dissatisfied with the holistic approach, the role of religion or the group dynamics involved that they are able to disconnect themselves from the organisation.

## **5.1 Joining Hizb ut-Tahrir**

In the introduction to this chapter, Respondent C accounted for the events leading to her joining Hizb ut-Tahrir. She had been impressed with members' appearance and argumentation and had found them knowledgeable of Islam. The combination of the members' secrecy and confident attitudes, her own curiosity and lack of knowledge about her new religion meant that she was drawn in. She wanted to learn more and she wanted to be part of the group. She was then invited to join a study group according to practice in the organisation. Within the party, the study circles are not considered a part of the structure but rather one of the party's main activities. However, due to the fact that all members regardless of seniority and rank belong to a study circle and answer to a given Mushrif, it can be viewed as the lowest organisational level. The study circles also constitute the formalised entrance to the party for new members – all new recruits join a study circle in order to study the party ideology and thus advance to become a full member. In this manner, the study circles form the first line in the party's feeding chain. In the study circles two simultaneous processes take place: new apprentices qualify to become full members and the party representative, the Mushrif, observes and assesses the process and the potential of the individuals concerned. Full membership depends on results and achievements in the study circle. If the Mushrif does not find the efforts of a new recruit satisfactory – if, for instance, a new recruit fails to meet the demands concerning punctuality or shows signs of lack of enthusiasm or ability concerning the acquirement of the necessary knowledge about the party through the reading of party material – then this person receives a warning. If the behaviour persists, the person is excluded from further participation. Thus it is through the study circles that the party's sustainability is assured and just as importantly, it is here that the exclusiveness of the party is established.

Other respondents have told their stories about how they were approached by Hizb ut-Tahrir and how they perceived the party at first. Thus, a respondent from North England who had been affiliated with Hizb ut-Tahrir for approximately 10 years explained in detail how he had been approached by Hizb ut-Tahrir as a university



student in North England. He was training to be a teacher and admitted being fascinated by the rhetorical skills of a couple of unnamed Hizb ut-Tahrir members at a meeting on campus. To me he explained:

Hizb ut-Tahrir thinking becomes part of your life. It becomes part of who you are. Some people are looking for something, they may be unemployed or poor, but that is not how they are recruited. What happens is that Hizb ut-Tahrir will ask questions that you can't answer and then provide you with an answer. This makes you give them the authority they need to recruit you and drag you in. They are very good at using people's backgrounds and interests, so to me they would say: How do we change things? Through the educational system! How do we change the educational system? Through local and national government, new government! How do we guarantee a new and better government? By getting an Islamic one! (...) Their arguments are so well structured, and members are given the tools to do this (Interview with Respondent E, 2009).

The point about rhetorical skills and how argumentation is adjusted not only to a specific audience (for instance university students) but to a specific individual (a future teacher) sheds light on how the teaching in Hizb ut-Tahrir's study circles is structured. In the study circles, recruits and new members alike are educated in al-Nabhani's teachings and in presenting the party arguments and rationales to a broad spectre of audiences. The individuals who become members think of themselves as well read within the Islamic scholarly tradition although they will have studied the works by the founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir primarily (Interview with Hizb ut-Tahrir affiliate, 2003). Moreover, they are taught how to use certain news items and ignore others as illustrated by this statement:

Hizb ut-Tahrir chooses which news to use to sell their ideas – the present minaret case is good because there is a discrimination aspect [minaret ban in Switzerland, Autumn 2009]. The Amsterdam/Nigeria bomb case is bad because the Nigerian bomber is linked to al-Qaeda in Yemen and terror [failed terror plot, December 2009]. They always present the chosen news in light of reasoning based grievances: something is always victimising Muslims and the West is always to blame (Interview with Respondent E, 2009).

The training in study circles continues until each individual study circle member has found satisfactory answers to all his or her questions and has “accepted the narrative” as a former member called it (interview with Respondent E, 2009). When a new member has partly certified answers for all his or her own questions, they are sure they have answers for all possible questions regarding Islam and the need for the Islamic state. As Respondent C recalled: “After a short while in Hizb ut-Tahrir, you are confident enough to discuss with anyone” (interview with Respondent C, 2009).

Respondent B was not approached by Hizb ut-Tahrir. Rather, he approached them due to his own ideas and religious seeking. He explained:

I wasn't recruited. I approached them. (...) I was affiliated because of my own intellectual ideas. I wasn't religious when I was younger, but I came to decide independently that God existed. Actually, the experience was similar to what Nabhani describes in his first book. I came to the idea that if you've got a type of independently determined compass for human activities in terms of a defining system for everything then in principle there's no big problem. If you don't, you have a problem. I had a big problem with relativity. How would you ever determine what to do and

make any decision? If you have a divinely defined system then you're o.k. So I went and found out about the Qur'an and the Shari'a and Hizb ut-Tahrir seemed like good people to talk to (Interview with Respondent B, 2009).

Respondent B had a problem with relativism and in Hizb ut-Tahrir he found what he had sought: a combination of politics and religion that provided answers covering all aspects of life. For Respondent G, the encounter with Hizb ut-Tahrir was different to the experiences of both Respondent E and B. Respondent G, who was only loosely affiliated with Hizb ut-Tahrir, was politically active in leftist movements when he converted to Islam. Although he was initially attracted by the political rhetoric in Hizb ut-Tahrir, he was not impressed with what he found. He said:

Although I was interested in the political as well as the religious content I was not very motivated. Hizb ut-Tahrir was just one of many possible ways to go. I took part in a study circle for a couple of years. I had no intentions of becoming a member but was open to the discussions and the content. I felt that Hizb ut-Tahrir's behaviour towards me was very determined. I was, for instance, put in a study circle with senior members. It felt like a focused recruitment effort, but it had the opposite effect on me. I was not looking for a new social circle. I had both Muslim and non-Muslim friends. And I was not overly impressed with Hizb ut-Tahrir's political rhetorical skills. Political rhetoric was not new to me as I came from a more radical political environment in Copenhagen [the radical left squatter movement known as "BZ"]. I knew the crude and simplistic political rhetoric from the far left and saw this as new wine in old bottles. However, I did benefit from the discussions with people in Hizb ut-Tahrir's circles and I did not reject the

party or the ideology immediately. Also, I could see that people around me were very impressed with Hizb ut-Tahrir's studied rhetoric. But I found that the rhetoric and the argumentation were founded on the dismissal of premises differing from Hizb ut-Tahrir's own. And Hizb ut-Tahrir never loses a discussion based on its own premises (Interview Respondent G, 2009).<sup>lxxix</sup>

According to Respondent G, he received special attention from Hizb ut-Tahrir because of his convert background, and he was in a study circle consisting of senior members. This matches the experiences of Respondent C who was also a convert to Islam. Respondent C was instructed to use her background to impress people who were born Muslim. The idea was that she should emphasise what a good, practicing and pious Muslim she was and make other Muslims feel that they could be doing more to serve and please God (Interview with Respondent C, 2009). If we return to Respondent G's statement, it is also of interest that although it was clear to him that other people were impressed with Hizb ut-Tahrir's political thinking and rhetorical skills, he himself was not impressed. He had seen and heard it all before in other political environments, and he found it to be old wine in new bottles. Consequently, his was a failed attempt at recruitment. It was never his intention to become a full member, and he did not change his mind about this in the study circle.

Based on the four examples provided by respondents in the above, we know more concerning what Hizb ut-Tahrir has to offer and how and why new members are attracted to Hizb ut-Tahrir. Hizb ut-Tahrir offers new recruits the opportunity to join a study circle and learn about the ideology and Islam; political solutions and religious motivation. Furthermore, in the study circles, individuals receive rhetorical training and they are introduced to an organisation with a strong social network. Concerning why individuals choose to join Hizb ut-Tahrir, we can state that for some it is a question of religious seeking, while for others a question of political seeking. Respondent B was searching for a "compass" to guide him in his life and help him

eliminate relativity. Respondent E found that his curiosity was awoken when Hizb ut-Tahrir members provided answers to political questions he could not answer himself. Respondent C was drawn in by the social aspect provided by Hizb ut-Tahrir. She was fascinated by what appeared to be a social circle of young Muslim women knowledgeable of Islam. Having recently converted, she was interested in learning more about her new religion, but her immediate attraction was to the social community that she sensed behind the political and religious argumentation. Individuals such as Respondent G, who was not looking for a new social circle and who was familiar with the thinking in holistic ideological organisations, are less prone to be impressed with Hizb ut-Tahrir's interpretations and argumentation. Although interested in the political and religious discussions, Respondent G was not willing to work for an ideology that he found was merely a copy of a well-known song. Subsequently, it is understandable why Hizb ut-Tahrir has been seeking to recruit new members among young people at British university campuses or, in Denmark, at high schools. Hizb ut-Tahrir has to make sure that potential new members are introduced to a holistic ideological thinking by Hizb ut-Tahrir. If Hizb ut-Tahrir is not first with this kind of message, the audience will be less susceptible to join.

Once new study group members have become familiar with the ideological thinking and the argumentative skills are in place, another aspect of membership is introduced. New members are instructed to adopt certain behaviour in public. A respondent gave a very illustrative example of how a specific rule in the party concerning men's association with women in public places and vice versa can come across as both unpractical and impolite:

The party would have you do things that would come across as unpractical and maybe rude. For example, Hizb ut-Tahrir would tell you that you couldn't be in a lift with a strange woman, so if you were alone in a lift and a woman entered, you would have to get out which may seem rude. Or if everybody was getting out and leaving you alone with a

woman, you would have to leave, too, although you weren't at the right floor yet. Hizb ut-Tahrir wants you to wear a mask – they want you to behave in a certain way in public (Interview with Respondent E, 2009).

Respondent E gave another example of unpractical and potentially rude behaviour when he characterised Hizb ut-Tahrir as an echo chamber. This characterisation implies that members primarily socialise with other members and spend their time discussing party related issues and activities. Respondent E gave examples of members “who would only speak to other Hizb ut-Tahrir members or speak to people outside Hizb ut-Tahrir only if it was strictly work related” (Interview with Respondent E, 2009). It can be difficult to understand the purpose of the described behaviour. Why would Hizb ut-Tahrir committee members instruct subjects to behave in manners that may be perceived as rude? Does this not contradict the party's general attitude towards Muslims as role-models and Hizb ut-Tahrir members in particular? (Interview with Danish Media Representative, 2009). According to my analysis of practice, the party code concerning behaviour has to do with already mentioned factors: namely internalising the party and turning the ideology into a way of life. As discussed in chapter four, the caliphate can be said to be practised by members at party events. Likewise, showing behaviour in public that somehow deviates from what one would normally do means that one is actively and consciously playing the part of the party soldier working for an important cause.<sup>lxxx</sup>

The process of adopting ideological thinking and behaviour is referred to as “frame alignment” in social movement theory (Wiktorowicz, 2004a:1). According to Snow's original definition of “framing”, it is when “conscious strategic efforts by groups of people (...) fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action” (McAdam et al, 1996: 6). When the individual frames have been aligned with the party's frames, each member readily accepts the party's mission as his or her own. Thus, when respondents explained how there is an understanding in the party that the caliphate could be re-established

anytime, this is an expression of frame alignment. Individuals believing this to be the truth have stopped conducting their own investigation into realities and have stopped questioning the party's political goal. When members reach the stage of having accepted the party ideas as their own, all that is needed is small reminders about the importance of the work. An example of such a reminder is how a text message from a superior in the organisation concerning the movement of equipment would end with the words: "do not stop on the way". That is to say: You are on an important mission for Hizb ut-Tahrir and every second counts. The two respondents sharing this information with me could not help laughing. They admitted to be mocking each other still using this terminology when communicating via text messages (Interview with Respondents C and J, 2009).

On the organisational level, successful frame alignment means that members begin to think and feel according to Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and self-understanding. This means adopting certain behaviour, argumentation and emotions. So far, we have looked at how new members are recruited to Hizb ut-Tahrir and what Hizb ut-Tahrir has to offer. On the organisational level, Hizb ut-Tahrir offers answers to religious and political seeking as well as argumentative and rhetorical training. Moreover, it offers a palette of emotions: purpose, direction, confidence, exclusiveness and importance. These emotions are tied closely to Hizb ut-Tahrir's history and the prevailing self-understanding: the organisation understands itself as important and central to future societal and regime changes in the Muslim world. This understanding becomes internalised when members in Denmark and Britain today experience that they are able to recruit new members and that the lines of argumentation they have been taught work. Every time a new member is successfully recruited, the members responsible feel that they are one step closer to re-establishing the caliphate. Thus, the promise that the caliphate will be established one day is experienced on a smaller scale regularly.

The organisational and ideological content and the related behaviour and emotions are more easily controlled than the highly subjective and individual experiences on the

personal level. On a personal level, what members gain from membership is both rational and emotional. The interaction between the organisational/ideological level and the personal level will be subject to further scrutiny in the following sections.

## **5.2 Cadre Party, Social Movement and Tribe**

In 2003, when Journalist Malene Fenger-Grøndahl and I were conducting interviews with members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark, we also came across a small number of former members and other individuals who had been loosely affiliated with the party. One individual who knew a number of people who had become members explained the attraction of Hizb ut-Tahrir as follows:

What is attractive about Hizb ut-Tahrir is the community they offer their members. Many of the members are together almost all the time. They eat together, they hang out together and they discuss Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology all the time. It is an extremely massive influence. (Interview, 2003, translated from Danish: see Sinclair et al. 2003:140)

Taking this observation as a starting point, I would like to ask how "community" is to be understood. How do we characterise Hizb ut-Tahrir? is it a political party, a social movement or a tribe? And moreover, what does Hizb ut-Tahrir offer members through existing organisational, ideological and social elements? In Hizb ut-Tahrir's Danish and British branches today, we find elements of a cadre party, a social and religious movement and a tribe. Consequently, Hizb ut-Tahrir is a hybrid that bridges a variety of elements from different types of organisations. Hereby, Hizb ut-Tahrir also meets a variety of different member expectations. As touched upon already, some will appreciate the political content, the ideology, the organisational structure and functionality orientation. Others will be drawn by the social dynamics and the homeliness offered.



According to the official party thinking, Hizb ut-Tahrir is a party qualified to lead the masses to salvation, a group that can make right all the wrongs of the world. They use the following quotation from the Qur'an to underline this self-understanding and self-chosen position:

Let there be among you a group that invites to the good, orders what is right and forbids what is evil, and they are those who are successful [TMQ 3:104]<sup>lxxxii</sup>

Behind this understanding lies inspiration from the traditions of cadre parties. Examples of such parties are typically found in the Marxist-Leninist tradition but are also well-known from the Middle East. In Turkey, Kemalist parties still show remnants of cadre parties, as does the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.<sup>lxxxii</sup> It is characteristic for the thinking in cadre parties that an elitist vanguard takes on the responsibility of educating the masses and leading them to a better and more just system of government. As touched upon in the discussion of Taji-Farouki's work in chapter two, Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology is also marked by a strong equality ideal, an Islamic third way, which could be ascribed to inspiration from Leninism and similar socialist thinking. Roy has argued that the socialist inspiration as well as the underlying self-understanding of the party is revealed in the choice of name. *Hizb* is Arabic for "party" and indicates a radical approach compared to the other commonly used name for Islamist groups *jama'at* meaning society or organisation (Roy, 1994: 63). Rather than opening a discussion concerning any possible radical context in Hizb ut-Tahrir's aims and methods, I would merely agree that in the case of Hizb ut-Tahrir, the name emphasises socialistic sources of inspiration. But more importantly, it emphasises the seriousness with which the party branches approach their self-appointed assignments.

Hizb ut-Tahrir understands itself as a political party, whose ideology is Islam. And undeniably, as analysed by Taji-Farouki (Taji-Farouki 1994 and 1996) there are elements in the structure and the ideology typical for a political party of the 1950s. It has a well-defined ideology, it has a political agenda of societal change, it is occupied with social justice and it is state oriented. It is not, however, a typical political party,

due to the fact that all information concerning members and internal affairs such as finances are kept secret and it advocates dissociation from existing political systems, organs and processes (elections for example). Albeit a party name, as opposed to branches of other political parties, Hizb ut-Tahrir's Danish and British branches are closed communities. Although dependent on continuing recruitment as any generational organisation would be, the secrecy and the hierarchical structure mean that engagement with the public is under strict control and surveillance by superior committees and individuals. Thus, Hizb ut-Tahrir is not a political party according to the common use of the term in a Danish or British context.

To quote Giddens, then a social movement can be defined as "collective attempt to further a common interest, or secure a common goal through collective action outside the sphere of established institutions" (Giddens, 2009: 1010). As we saw in chapter two, Snow and Benford apply this definition: social movements "frame, or assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (Snow and Benford, 1988: 198). According to these broad definitions, Hizb ut-Tahrir incorporates elements of a social movement in its striving towards political change through collective action, in the shape of the organisation itself primarily, but subsequently in the shape of the united and mobilised *ummah*.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> However, in terms of the selective and exclusive attitude towards obtaining full membership, Hizb ut-Tahrir deviates from a social movement. Here the tendency is not to reject people who are not completely in line with the thinking in the group (for instance with regard to ideology, theory and cause), because working outside the established institutions means having to make the most of any support and resources (Collins in Goodwin et al, 2001: 32). If we take this information and compare to Hizb ut-Tahrir, it is obvious that Hizb ut-Tahrir with its differentiation between full members and the rest is not interested in support from just anybody. Or rather, not everybody qualifies to become a member.<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

The differences mentioned make it difficult to understand Hizb ut-Tahrir as a social movement. However, there are several elements in the process of joining and features of group dynamics and the alternative approach to political change that can be compared to those of a social movement. Regarding the recruitment process, the current and former Hizb ut-Tahrir members interviewed for this dissertation describe a process that resembles that of other social movements with religious connotations. Wiktorowicz argues that successful recruitment to radical Islamist organisations depends on the “process of persuasion” (Wiktorowicz, 2004: 1). He lists four phases in this process: At first there is a cognitive opening, an interest in a type of movement or a particular movement which is followed by or combined with religious seeking (as seen in the case of Respondent C). Hereafter, the phase of frame alignment is initiated and this is best observed when it is completed. Finally, socialisation in the organisation takes place. This final phase of the process is a fact when an individual feels as one with the community and when other social circles have been substituted with the social activities and fellowship in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Clearly, the strong sense of community and belonging in Hizb ut-Tahrir is part of the attraction, and this is a significant characteristic not only of social movements but also religious movements, according to Collins (Collins in Goodwin et al, 2001: 27). Collins differentiates between social movements and religious movements by saying that members of a social movement go there “to be seen and be part of the attraction like you would go to a popular café” (Collins, 2001:27). This attraction is combined, in a religious movement, with the reward members find in believing that their activities are pleasing to God. The core of Collins’ analysis of both social and religious movements is collective emotional energy (Collins, 2001: 29).

The underlying argument when analysing emotional energy is that the process of approaching a social or religious movement is emotional from the outset. Some individuals seek excitement while for others it is a moral quest. When first encounters with the group have been made – in the case of Hizb ut-Tahrir when contact with members and a study circle has been established – the individual experiences a “positive flow” (Collins in Goodwin et al, 2001: 29). To some this is a short experience.

Their interest in the movement and its cause is superficial and after the initial emotional boost, they lose interest. Others become deeply motivated and take on solitary and routine assignments for the movement. For bystanders, the attraction can be very difficult to spot, but for insiders, the reward consists of belonging to a group and working for a morally defined cause. For the group of deeply motivated followers, the individuals identify with the cause completely; they feel the case. This differs only slightly from the process described by Wiktorowicz as leading to frame alignment and socialisation in the group. At this point in the individual member's relation to the movement, there is no difference between the movement's cause and rationales and those of the individual. The member feels at one with the group.

The emotional energy involved when joining a group can be divided into four phases marked by 1) group solidarity, 2) enthusiasm and confidence, 3) attachment to symbols and finally, 4) feelings of morality. The fourth and final step is characterised by disassociation with those who are not part of the group. Outsiders or opponents are perceived of as "unworthy, evil or inhuman" (Collins in Goodwin et al 2001:28). The process and the phases described here, match the dynamics found in Hizb ut-Tahrir – only in Hizb ut-Tahrir the negativity at the fourth and final phase can also be a starting point for potential recruits' interest in Hizb ut-Tahrir. As Discussed in chapter four, the demonization of the West is commonly used by Hizb ut-Tahrir in rhetorical outputs of all kinds. However, the initial attraction and taking ownership of symbols (all of my respondents had taken ownership of Hizb ut-Tahrir's black flag and as seen in chapter three, several also related to other party symbols, such as specific quotations from the Qur'an etc.) matches respondents' accounts. Finally, the dichotomy between right and wrong, friends and foes, following party sympathies is indeed characteristic of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Thus, although by no means an ordinary social movement, there are several key dynamics in terms of involved emotions that justify the comparison with social movements.

Let us now turn to another sociological approach, namely that of Maffesoli. Maffesoli also stresses the importance of emotional ties and belonging in his analysis of

dynamics in groups in the post-modern world. According to Maffesoli, any type of voluntary participation in a community has to do with a basic human desire to belong to a group. Maffesoli's argumentation is founded on the idea that the dominant mechanical structures of the modern world organised human beings in contractual groups. However, in the post-modern world, the mechanical structure of the modern world has been superseded by a more complex and organic structure. In post-modern sociality human beings are no longer characterised according to their function in society but rather by the role they play in "affectual tribes" (Maffesoli, 1996:6).<sup>lxxxv</sup> By the use of the term "affectual tribes" Maffesoli is not implying that the world of today is marked by tribes in the traditional anthropological sense. Quite on the contrary, Maffesoli's tribes are short-termed and shifting. Maffesoli's argument is that the masses become tribalised in the post-modern world and that this tribalism is connected with certain quality of vitality expressed in the collective. Hereby, Maffesoli breaks with the understanding that modernity is equal to a loss of community and belonging. Instead he states that the modern experience of fragmentation and individualisation has resulted in greater creativity in the post-modern era. It should be noted that Maffesoli does not speak of creativity but rather *pouvoir* (power) as characteristic for the modern era, and *puissance* as characteristic for the post-modern era (see translator's comments: Maffesoli: 1996: 1 and 31)<sup>lxxxvi</sup>. All human beings wish to belong to a group and if the societal structures change, group formations change accordingly. Thus, Maffesoli argues that individuals living in mass societies form new tribes for longer or shorter periods. At the core of these new tribal formations is the longing for home; individuals long to belong, according to Maffesoli. An example of a so-called tribe could be a group of commuters that meet on the same train every morning and begin to relate to each other and hence identify as a group. In this example, the place the tribe is identified through the setting. They meet in the same place, on board the same means of transportation at specific times. In other examples of Maffesolian tribes, it is visible markers that a group is identified by. Hizb ut-Tahrir could serve as an example here.

Hizb ut-Tahrir members have a free choice concerning clothes and appearance within certain specific limits formulated by the founder. Female members wear the *jilbab* (a long outer garment) and a veil, male members wear trousers and shirts. There are no formal guidelines concerning colours in the party literature, however, at party events in Denmark, members have been wearing black and white since 2004-05 (interview with the Danish Media Representative, 2009). Hizb ut-Tahrir considers these two colours symbolic as the black flag represents *jihād* and the white flag represents the caliphate (Interview with Respondent A, 2009). At events with many people present, the branch has found it most practical that members stand out and are visible in the crowd. Since 2001, members have been wearing badges with the Party logo, but the demand for visibility has resulted in uniform- like clothing. Thus, women wear black *jilbabs* and white veils, men wear black trousers and white shirts. A British respondent explained that she was always able to recognise a party member anywhere based on the person's appearance. She would recognise a female member by the *jilbab*, the style with which the veil was tied and sometimes also the colours and the quality of material and fabric. Likewise, a male member would be dressed nicely without standing out from the crowd (interview with Respondent C, 2009).

Hizb ut-Tahrir can be characterised as a tribe in the Maffesolian sense with regard to the visible markers defining who belongs to the community and who does not. Members of the group are also easily recognised by the way they engage in discussions and debate, their argumentation and their self-assertive behaviour. If a Hizb ut-Tahrir member is present at a public debate or meeting, you are seldom unaware of this for long. The person will identify him or herself through the way he or she participates and argues. However, a central aspect of Maffesoli's idea is that the tribes of today's societies are short-lived and marked by individuality. He sees them as egalitarian communities that create a feeling of solidarity in its members. While the feeling of solidarity and the wish and desire to be one with the group is definitely present for members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, the fixed organisational structure and hierarchy as well as its long history makes it difficult to characterise it as a tribe. The structure and the hierarchy are remnants of past times, of a society marked by modernity where

individuals had functions and groups were contract based. However, considering that members of Hizb ut-Tahrir today are living in what Maffesoli terms the post-modern world, these individuals can be said to be influenced by prevailing desire and will to form groups. As Maffesoli explains, the desire for homeliness, continuity and rootedness can overflow any rigid structure:

There are times when these fundamental uses and customs are rejected, or at least relativized, through historical movements. Modernity belongs to this class of events, tending to erase or minimize all of the effects and contingencies of rootedness. At times, however, rootedness returns with a vengeance. Things such as territory, space, and symbolic values again make sense (Maffesoli, 2004: 204).<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

Maffesoli explicitly mentions the return of the importance of territory, space and symbolic values which is highly relevant to this analysis. Despite the historical background, it is not the Middle Eastern Hizb ut-Tahrir of the 1950s that members in Denmark and Britain relate to, today. On the contrary, in the Danish and British branches today, members experience a new sense of rootedness as they relate emotionally to Hizb ut-Tahrir ideology and to their group. Furthermore, they experience a new sense of homeliness as they practice the caliphate and dress and behave like party members.

Hizb ut-Tahrir can be seen as a hybrid organisation. At the outset, it is an organisation rather than a movement due to its history, ideology, political content and fixed, hierarchical structure. As an organisation, Hizb ut-Tahrir offers its members a purpose and a goal, an elitist self-understanding and behavioural guidelines. However, Hizb ut-Tahrir also embraces elements of a social movement and an affectual tribe. Due to its tightly knit community based structure, Hizb ut-Tahrir also offers its members a brotherhood, a religious community and a home. If viewed as an affectual tribe, Hizb ut-Tahrir offers sociality and homeliness. Both the behavioural guidelines and the

visible identity markers are important as they signify to the surroundings that Hizb ut-Tahrir members are part of a successful community and that they have found a home.

### **5.3 Emotional and Religious Rationales**

As a rule in social movement theory, emotions are analysed as a motivational factor in connection with joining. For instance, Wiktorowicz argues that experienced grievances will motivate an individual to seek out and join an organisation with a solution to such grievances. After conducting interviews with members of al-Muhajiroun in Britain, he explained: “virtually all members who were interviewed recalled a point in their lives where they felt they had no purpose in life and lacked a sense of belonging” (Wiktorowicz 2004a: 17). I discussed the matter with a respondent, who posed the rhetorical question: “If the grievances explain why people become radicalised then why aren’t more people radicalised?” (Interview with Respondent E, 2009). This appears to be a very relevant question to pose. Grievances are used to mobilise members to work for the cause and are, in the case of Hizb ut-Tahrir, closely connected with the general understanding of Muslims as victims. This line of argumentation is related to Mandaville’s understanding of members of Islamist organisations being more adrift and torn between cultures and norms than others. In both Wiktorowicz’ and Mandaville’s rationales there is the idea that some people are more prone to be inspired by radical thinking and join a radical organisation. As we saw in chapter four, there are negative emotions at play in Hizb ut-Tahrir, too. There is no denying that. Respondent D stated that as a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir “you hate everything and everybody” (interview with Respondent D), while Respondent C explained that she used to think that “the West was out to get us” (Interview with Respondent C, 2009). However, as I argued in chapter four, this is not necessarily an exhaustive explanation behind members’ rationales for joining and remaining active. Negative experiences, grief, pain and occasional disorientation are all part and parcel of being human, it is a general condition. It is what one does with these experiences that shape an identity. What is remarkable is that recruitment to and membership of



Islamist organisations tends to be explained with reference to moral, political, economic or emotional deficiencies or grievances. Could it not be the case that people join because they would like to?

So far, I have touched upon a variety of emotions involved in Hizb ut-Tahrir seen from a member perspective. The combination of the elitist party soldier and the social involvement in the group provide members with a strong sense of confidence and belonging. Life as a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir is an empowering experience, as Respondent A phrased it:

What happens in Hizb ut-Tahrir is a kind of empowerment in that all experienced frustrations and problems are turned to something people find worth fighting for. They make people believe that working for their political visions is the same as serving God. (Interview with Respondent A, 2009).

This former member found that Hizb ut-Tahrir transformed negative experiences and emotions into something positive. The description of the experience in Hizb ut-Tahrir as empowering is central in that this feeling was shared by several respondents. When Respondent C talked about gaining confidence enough to embark on discussion with anyone, this can be seen as an expression of empowerment, too. Or when Respondent E described study circles as a forum where you feel you are provided with answers for all possible questions, this too, can be seen as creating a feeling of empowerment. Hizb ut-Tahrir provides answers, inspires confidence and individual members feel empowered.

The feeling of empowerment is also strongly attached to the religious rationales prevalent in Hizb ut-Tahrir. When I asked a former member in Denmark if as a member he believed that the re-establishment of the caliphate was pending, he answered:

Yes, I did. We all did. Hizb ut-Tahrir operates on deeper psychological levels. Because if you look at Hizb ut-Tahrir's statements about the caliphate in a rational and logical

manner these are easily dismissed as utopian. However, in Hizb ut-Tahrir there are other factors at play: religion and the question of belief. For example, they would argue that God has helped the Prophet before by sending an army of 70,000 angels and that he would do that again. In saying so, they are really saying, "Believe it! We are going to succeed!". In the party there is an understanding that the costs may be great but that Hizb ut-Tahrir will survive and succeed if everybody sticks together and remains strong in the faith (...). I believed firmly in the caliphate. God and the Prophet had promised us a caliphate, and I shared the understanding that life was a test and that perseverance would be rewarded. We would be first in line on judgment day (Interview with Respondent A, 2009).

Thus, among members there is a strong belief that God is on Hizb ut-Tahrir's side. The role of religion depends on individual interpretation, but in the organisation, the idea exists that fulfilling the political goal also means fulfilling God's plan for humanity. Although highly subjective and emotional, there are also clear rational reflections behind the religious motivation among members.

Wiktorowicz argues that religion and religious rationales are a given part of the rational actor model which is commonly applied in social movement theory. Members do not just end up in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Rather, they choose the socialisation in Hizb ut-Tahrir's community over many other communities and tribes and part of the reason behind this is that negativity (negative emotions, frustration etc.) is turned into positive emotions (empowerment, political motivation, belonging, confidence etc.) linked to religiosity. As Respondent A explained in the above quotation, in Hizb ut-Tahrir members believe that working for the party is the same as serving God (Interview with Respondent A, 2009). However recognisable with relation to both the study of social movements in general and Hizb ut-Tahrir more specifically, what is

remarkable is the linkage to God. In Hizb ut-Tahrir the individual member is taught to think of party activities as services to God. Working for the party means practising the religion and pleasing God. Al-Nabhani successfully invented and implemented an understanding whereby working to establish the caliphate in Hizb ut-Tahrir was *fard* (a religious duty) (Taji-Farouki 1994:374-75).<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

Wiktorowicz has studied Islamist activism in Europe and the Middle East from a rational actor perspective, and he argues that it is of vital importance that we take seriously the ideologies at hand. Concerning al-Muhajiroun, he explains:

Al-Muhajiroun's ideology outlines an *exclusive* strategy to salvation, which entails a number of costly and risky behaviours. Any deviations from this strategy mean that an individual will not enter Paradise, thus eroding tendencies towards free-riding. For those who accepted the movement ideology and sought salvation, a refusal to engage in high-cost/risk activism was tantamount to violating self-interest, because it meant that they would go to Hell (Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler, 2006:296-97).

In discussions with former members, I have found the same to be applicable to Hizb ut-Tahrir. Respondent E, for one, stated quite bluntly, that it had taken him a year and a half to leave Hizb ut-Tahrir, because he feared going to hell. This fear, he explained, was quite literal: "I thought I would burn up in hell if I broke with Hizb ut-Tahrir's political interpretation of Islam" (Interview with Respondent E, 2009). He developed the points about how he became increasingly unhappy with the party activities and the behaviour he met in the party. At the same time, he started learning more about his religion and began to see that Hizb ut-Tahrir was "going about it in a wrong way" (Interview with Respondent E, 2009). He continued:

Actually, it started when I got a month off from work and found myself watching party conferences on TV – watching

politicians from Labour and The Conservative Party I realised how many visions and ideas there are about how to do things and that politicians and everyone else are entitled to open debate and to speak their opinions freely – essentially it made me see that it is good to debate. Hizb ut-Tahrir isn't interested in healthy debate at all. In Hizb ut-Tahrir you are only allowed to ask questions, never to raise comments or criticism and once you start noticing this it becomes very clear that people giving talks or running debates or circles are repeating points from written material or points made by other members before them without realising what they are saying or without being able to explain things properly. People in study circles often don't understand their own party's culture. At the same time, I was reading party literature again and started interpreting things differently. Then, it became obvious to me that things aren't so clear cut as Hizb ut-Tahrir would want you to think they are (Interview with Respondent E, 2009).

Hence, the rational actor, Respondent E, was making up his mind that Hizb ut-Tahrir did not possess all the answers. But he was fighting against another rational voice in his head telling him that as a Muslim deviating from his faith, he would risk going to hell. "Join the group and engage in risky and costly activism and receive eternal salvation as part of the saved group" as Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler explains the involved logic (Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler, 2006: 318). Although the rational actor is part of a saved group, it is nonetheless the actor as an individual who is responsible for pleasing God. This means that a Hizb ut-Tahrir member will consider the value of attending a party event or a demonstration in terms of God's recognition and appreciation of this participation rather than the overall success of a given event or demonstration. It is not the party's success that is the focus of the rational actor – it is

his or her own participation and following salvation (Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler 2006: 316).

Although religion is used as part of the motivational and political framework in Hizb ut-Tahrir (God is on our side, we will succeed), according to the rational actor model, religion is really a question of individual contracts with God. It is a question of individual salvation because man faces God alone on judgment day.

Now, if we return to the dilemma faced by Respondent E, he found himself in a situation suddenly doubting Hizb ut-Tahrir but at the same time thinking that defecting from Hizb ut-Tahrir meant the risk of going to Hell. The only solution for Respondent E was to discard the idea that Hizb ut-Tahrir was about religion. After being dissatisfied with Hizb ut-Tahrir membership for over a year, he decided that Hizb ut-Tahrir was about politics as opposed to religion. As seen here:

(...) I met people who were practising but didn't call for the state, which opened my eyes. Hizb ut-Tahrir ignores morality because you can't politicise good behaviour. You can't write a new text with a political perspective on how to be a good Muslim – that example has been set once and for all by the Prophet and it is not about politics but about being a decent human being and it is about religion. Hizb ut-Tahrir isn't about religion in the sense of faith or good behaviour, Hizb ut-Tahrir is about politics. Once, a colleague suggested that we should pay a visit to an ill friend because he was ill which is basic, decent Muslim behaviour – a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir would never have suggested that. But I didn't realise that until years later when I was leaving the party. When I started doubting the party ideology and activities, I rediscovered my religion and a religious perspective on everyday life. It took me a year and a half of

doubting before I left and after that I was still *detoxing...*  
(Interview with Respondent E, 2009).

Respondent E solved his dilemma through comparing Hizb ut-Tahrir behaviour to the behaviour of other Muslims and decided that Hizb ut-Tahrir is not about morality or the greater good, it is about politics. Thus, eventually, he defected from Hizb ut-Tahrir without losing his faith and his religion. The rational voice telling him that Hizb ut-Tahrir was wrong, won over the rational voice telling him that Hizb ut-Tahrir engagement was equal to serving God. No one could have helped Respondent E decide which rationale to trust and to choose because it is a matter of personal and individual belief. The entire religious dimension of Hizb ut-Tahrir is based on individual members' understanding that Hizb ut-Tahrir facilitates their relationship with God. The individual dimension is most strongly expressed in the idea of judgment day where each believer faces his or her creator individually.

Here, we have seen examples of some of the emotional and religious rationales at play on the individual level in Hizb ut-Tahrir. It feels good to join Hizb ut-Tahrir and to be active with other members, because negativity is transformed into positive energy. Former members described feelings and experiences that can be characterised as empowerment. Furthermore, although Hizb ut-Tahrir uses religious argumentation in the ideology and in the presentation of their political goal, ultimately, the religious content is based on individual interpretations and expectations of judgment day. Members are taught to believe that God is on the party's side, but according to the rational actor model, salvation is obtained through individual action and participation. Thus, Hizb ut-Tahrir is understood as facilitating a way of pleasing God through participation in party activities, but when all scores are settled, the responsibility falls back on the individual member. Thus, Hizb ut-Tahrir provides emotional templates, but the responsibility of adding content and value to these templates falls back on the individual member.

## 5.4 Leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir

After conducting two separate interviews with two individuals who had left Hizb ut-Tahrir at approximately the same time, the degree of individuality was puzzling to me. From a bird's eye view individuality is negated in Hizb ut-Tahrir. However, if seen from a worm's eye view – that is from the perspective of former members – Hizb ut-Tahrir is all about individual motivation and personal religious rationales. The two former members were married, and they had attended party events separately or as a couple and later as a family. Their affiliation had lasted years: He had been a member for twelve years, had sat on editorial boards and been involved in the manufacture and distribution of publications. She had been a member for ten years, had been a trusted member with responsibilities in the women's department and had given talks throughout the country. However, they had never discussed leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir with each other, and they both claimed that their simultaneous departures were coincidental (Interviews with Respondents B and C, 2009). The fact that their departures had not figured on the family agenda, been discussed over dinner or come up in conversations with common friends indicates the type of bonds present in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Thus, while the political framework of Hizb ut-Tahrir is set, the content is open to individual interpretation.

Defection is met with different responses depending on how it is carried out by the involved individual. Respondent J questioned the ideology and the method of the party and was expelled and denounced. Although he had been a trusted member who had sat on committees and had been sent abroad to work for the party, his questions were not embraced (Interview with Respondent J, 2008). Respondent C, on the other hand, had also worked for the party for a decade, but when she left it was a gradual process. She started doubting Hizb ut-Tahrir argumentation after she had been away on *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). She travelled to Saudi Arabia with a group of British Muslim women who were not in Hizb ut-Tahrir. When she found them to be very decent people and good, pious Muslims this confused her somewhat. She began to think that being a good Muslim did not necessarily imply being in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Slowly she started applying a more selective strategy towards Hizb ut-Tahrir activities and only

went to some party events. When the leadership of the women's group realised that she was detracting herself from the work, they sent a representative to her private address. "She came to my house!" as Respondent C said raising her voice (Interview with Respondent C, 2009). The confusion of places and roles was too much for my Respondent. She did not appreciate having the Media Representative come round to her home uninvited even if the purpose was to try and persuade her to stay in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Shortly after the visit, party representatives stopped approaching her and she was left to do what she found right. Eventually she left Hizb ut-Tahrir completely.

When her husband left, he had gradually reduced his engagement over a couple of years. He became less and less satisfied with some of the other people involved in Hizb ut-Tahrir. He found them backward and stupid. After being very active for about eight years, he became less and less involved and finally stopped after twelve years of engagement. When he defected, he was not met with strong protest from the party. Neither was he met with demeaning reactions from the party nor attempts to convince him of doing otherwise. Despite the fact that he had been involved for such a long time and trusted with responsibilities, he left with hardly any reaction from the party. Before leaving, he admitted that his dissatisfaction with the organisation and behaviour of other members had increased up to a point where he had been insulting other members publicly, Thus, perhaps some fellow members were happy to see him go (Interview with Respondent B, 2009).

Thus, it is neither the nature of engagement nor the length of time of the involvement (all three mentioned here had been trusted members for ten to twelve years) that determines how the departure of a member is met. Considering that only the Respondent who questioned the ideology was met with a strong negative response by the party on his leaving, the answer must be that it is the individual member's relationship with the organisation that determines the reaction. If a member questions the ideology, he or she faces the risk of expulsion. If, on the other hand, a member withdraws from the social activities, he or she will typically be approached by party representatives asking for incentives. In this manner, it is possible to argue that



members who leave silently are free to go without much debate or commotion. On the other hand, members who question the hierarchy, the power structure and the ideology are frozen out and “punished” by way of tarnished reputation (Interview with Respondent J, 2008). This was departure from Hizb ut-Tahrir seen from the organisation’s own perspective. If seen from a member perspective, Respondents A, C, E and J have all expressed how they miss people still involved in Hizb ut-Tahrir. It is not the political analysis and arguments, the organisational framework or the religious aspects they miss. It is people. Thus, it is the fear of going to hell and the people left behind that makes it difficult to leave (Interviews with Respondents A, C and E 2009 and J 2008).

The organisation’s protection of itself taking the shape of informal social control and punishment is typical for both hierarchical parties and social and religious movements. What is interesting in the case of Hizb ut-Tahrir is that it is referred to as an acting subject by members and former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Members and former members alike always refer to Hizb ut-Tahrir as the acting subject. When discussing the group, they never name individuals (apart from the odd mention of the founder al-Nabhani) a Mushrif, a committee leader, a Media Representative or anyone superior in the hierarchy. Rather, it is always Hizb ut-Tahrir who says and does. It is Hizb ut-Tahrir who expels. This is the same with regard to states. States are typically referred to as acting subjects who do, think and interact. This could be seen as an example of how strong the organisational and ideological aspects of Hizb ut-Tahrir are. Members do not think of other members as individuals. Rather, they see the organisation as a whole. This perception is matched by the fact that there has never been any cultish celebration of any leaders of Hizb ut-Tahrir, which, according to Taji-Farouki (Taji-Farouki 1996) is one of the organisation’s strengths. The fact that a leader has never been a focal point may partly explain why the identification between members and group is so strong. According to the understanding in the ideology and among members, no individual member is crucial for the political goal, the re-establishment of the caliphate. Similarly, no other member is important for the individual’s relation to God. However, it is not the group that is the narrator.

Seemingly, any kind of individuality becomes subordinated in Hizb ut-Tahrir. But if one looks closer, there is a strong degree of individuality present in Hizb ut-Tahrir despite the social control and hierarchy. It is individuals who desire to belong to the group and form networks. In this light, the group should be understood as a network of individuals. In chapter three, I argued that the party ideology does not sell itself but all recruitment depends on individual's primary and secondary relations (friends and family) and trust. What I argue here is a prolongation of that. My interviews with former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir have shown that membership of Hizb ut-Tahrir is determined by what is invested in it and by expectations to the outcome. The content of the work and one's place in the hierarchy is determined by subjectivity and relativity. There is a very high degree of relativity at play in Hizb ut-Tahrir despite the ideology and despite some members' search for the absolute. The ideology outlines a structure and a caliphate ideal but everything between here and now and the caliphate depends on the individual members. What Hizb ut-Tahrir provides is an organisational structure and an ideological framework. In study circles, members are taught that they can accomplish anything and win any discussion because God is on their side. And once God is introduced, the frames become aligned, the emotions flow, anything can happen. It is an empowering experience according to Respondent A. The absolute answers that pleased Respondent B initially were answers that he provided himself through his belief in the ideology and wish to be part of the group.

Members who leave Hizb ut-Tahrir do not necessarily change their minds about everything, nor do they become apostates from Islam (Interview with Respondent J, 2008). On the contrary, many have explained that only after leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir have they found God (Interviews with Respondents A, C and E). Likewise, it is popular to state, that Islam has been hijacked by Islamists, al-Qaeda etc. as seen in much anti-extremism literature (for instance from the Quilliam Foundation). The problem with this type of argumentation from an academic perspective is that it is impossible to validate belief. There is no such thing as right or wrong Islam. However, what seems to be the case in Hizb ut-Tahrir is that the interaction between the political cause and the religious belief are so intertwined that it quite understandably takes time for former

members to erect a new belief system after leaving. Also, the motivation for joining is in many cases religious, and as we have seen here, it can take individual members up to ten or twelve years to reach the understanding that Hizb ut-Tahrir is more about Hizb ut-Tahrir than it is about religion.

## **5.5 Summary**

The religious aspects are easily downplayed in studies of Hizb ut-Tahrir, because the political aspects of the ideology are so dominant. Furthermore, because Hizb ut-Tahrir shares structural and organisational features with cadre parties and group dynamics with social movements there is a risk of ignoring the religious aspects of the organisation. For instance, Roy claims that Hizb ut-Tahrir is moving in neo-fundamentalist directions meaning that the religious content is reduced to random and sketchy quotations from the Qur'an (Roy 1993). This, I find, is not the case. The political and the religious content of Hizb ut-Tahrir depends on what level is analysed. On the organisational and ideological level, the political content is dominant. However, with regard to the personal member level, the religious content is very important. It is due to religious seeking that many members get involved in the first place and due to the rationales concerning salvation that they stay involved for so long. Thus, the religious aspects of Hizb ut-Tahrir should not be disregarded.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology is holistic and activism is a way of life. The political goal is inseparable from the deity. Moreover, the ideology can be practiced and signalled to the surroundings. At party events, in the street, amongst colleagues or strangers, Hizb ut-Tahrir is something you are and something you do. Although the desire to form "affectual tribes" may be subconscious, there are strong tribal patterns present in Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain today. The negativity that is often brought forward in connection with Islamism and other extremist ideologies is not an issue for members on a day-to-day basis. In their closed Hizb ut-Tahrir community, they are sheltered and safe. They are at home.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion: The Caliphate as Homeland

The present dissertation has investigated Hizb ut-Tahrir members' notions of home and belonging. The point of departure was the puzzle: what is the relationship between Hizb ut-Tahrir's transnational ideology and representation and the very different national branches? The puzzle presented itself when I, after having studied Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological material and rhetorical outbursts, conducted interviews with members in Denmark and Britain in 2003. At this point, I understood the ideological reasoning and the logic behind the harsh rhetoric, but I failed to understand the remarkable differences between the Danish and British branches. Three years later, when I got the opportunity to conduct research for this dissertation, I returned to the puzzle and started investigating what had happened in the two national branches over the years: why were the two branches so different? And why do they prioritise political issues differently? The answer to both questions is: because they operate in two different countries. The political debates and strategies for handling minority issues have developed differently in Denmark and Britain and different events have taken place (for instance the Cartoon Controversy in Denmark and the terror attacks on 7 July 2005 in the British capital) and Hizb ut-Tahrir's branches have responded accordingly.

Danish and British members of Hizb ut-Tahrir had explained to me that Hizb ut-Tahrir was a party with a "universal ideology" which is part and parcel of the holistic worldview prevalent in the party. At the same time, I took into consideration that other scholars described Hizb ut-Tahrir as transnational which is accurate as a descriptive term for Hizb ut-Tahrir with its 43 branches worldwide. However, in the academic literature on Hizb ut-Tahrir, "transnational" was not merely used as a descriptive term for an organisation with representation in more than two countries. It had normative and essentialist connotations – "transnational" was used to indicate that Hizb ut-Tahrir was successful, that it was expanding with new branches and that

its political goal would be realisable (Taji-Farouki 1996, Baran 2004, Mandaville 2001). The initial puzzle lead to the following questions: how do observers come to understand the organisation as transnational if the majority of activities are limited to one specific national context? How do the national and the transnational elements of the ideology and the activities interact? How do members make sense of themselves and their activities in an organisation that ignores all national and ethnic differences in their aim to unite all Muslims when their party activities are so clearly shaped by their local and national context? Do members think of the future caliphate as “home” or are they at home in Denmark or Britain?

Thus, the core idea of my research, springing from the initial puzzle, has been related to members’ notions of belonging and home. These two concepts have been discussed from a member perspective. I have aimed at investigating members’ notions of home as a question relating to homeland, state and caliphate and as a question of belonging to a community. The answers indicated by my research follow here.

## **6.1 Transnational Elements in Hizb ut-Tahrir**

The first research question was: how do observers come to understand Hizb ut-Tahrir as transnational if the majority of activities are limited to one specific national context?

The explanation is closely linked to Hizb ut-Tahrir’s ideology and members’ self-understandings. Hizb ut-Tahrir’s ideology is based on, among other things, specific understandings of the Islamic caliphate and *ummah*. The Islamic caliphate is believed to have been one system of rule throughout history and Hizb ut-Tahrir firmly believes that the state can be reintroduced in a Muslim country. In the prevailing perception of the caliphate, Hizb ut-Tahrir disregards any historical, political, financial or geographical challenges just as existing differences between Muslims in terms of ethnicity, language, traditions, orthodoxy and practice are to be surmounted. The thinking in Hizb ut-Tahrir is that the caliphate can and will unite all Muslims, and that the global Muslim congregation, the *ummah*, will soon choose to immigrate to the

caliphate. Subsequently, the idea is that once Hizb ut-Tahrir has managed to erect the caliphate, a synthesis between the state and all Muslims will be a reality. This thinking is communicated to a wider audience in Hizb ut-Tahrir's written material, at party events and online.

Another factor uniting Muslims according to Hizb ut-Tahrir lies in the self-understanding adopted by members. As discussed in chapter four, this relies on a reversed Orientalism and the belief that everything Muslim is superior to anything non-Muslim. Furthermore, in Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology, Muslims are regarded as victims. Seen in a historical perspective, Muslims and Muslim countries were victims of colonisation according to Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is followed by an understanding of all current wars and conflicts taking place in Muslim majority countries as victimising Muslims. Finally, seen in a minority context, Muslims are regarded victims of discrimination and harassment politically, economically and socially.

Considering the ideological concepts of caliphate and *ummah* and the image of Muslims as victims, what Hizb ut-Tahrir creates in the minds of members and followers is identification based on an idea of Muslim fraternity and unity. The organisation successfully creates an understanding of a Muslim, global community which, in academia, is often understood as an expression of transnationality. Furthermore, Hizb ut-Tahrir's various branches have been very skilled and efficient in their use of available technologies in order to spread their message. The organisation's many branches run approximately 100 different web pages with party material and calls to Muslims to join the struggle against repression and the work towards the re-establishment of the caliphate.

Previous studies of Hizb ut-Tahrir have primarily built on the party's ideology and self-representation in party literature and online. Hereby, there has been a tendency to reproduce Hizb ut-Tahrir's own understandings and worldview. The discussion of transnational and national tendencies in Hizb ut-Tahrir based on a comparison between ideological connotations and members' practice have shown that the reality of Hizb ut-Tahrir is more nuanced than previous studies would have us think. For

instance, Roy describes Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology as neofundamentalist meaning ahistorical, deterritorialised and deculturalised and its members as living in a dream world (Roy 2004a). According to Roy, Hizb ut-Tahrir members have lost all connection with reality, including an understanding of historical events and developments, territorial ties, state affiliations, culture, norms and traditions. Also, Roy finds that Hizb ut-Tahrir's references to the Qur'an are so fragmented and random that it is meaningless to talk about it as Islam. Hereby he says that religion has been emptied of content in Hizb ut-Tahrir. However, this is not the case according to my findings. Rather, it seems that the religious content of Hizb ut-Tahrir has been transferred from common interpretations of the content of the Qur'an and other canonical texts to individual member's own perceptions of salvation and deity. Put simply, the religious content of Hizb ut-Tahrir has shifted from Islam as such to Hizb ut-Tahrir's own ideology. By hinting thus, Roy draws on Taji-Farouki's research concerning al-Nabhani's invention of new meaning to old Qur'anic concepts, and he uses these findings to ridicule Hizb ut-Tahrir members. His analysis is valuable in the sense that Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology is ahistorical and the political ideals, the unification of *ummah* and the re-establishment of the caliphate, are clearly utopian. They serve the purpose of creating an imagined community and are not likely to be transformed into political reality. However, Roy's conclusion concerning Hizb ut-Tahrir members and other neofundamentalists as essentially rootless does not correspond with my findings. Although Hizb ut-Tahrir members are idealists they are also very progressive and knowledgeable about given political realities and strategies for implementing their ideas.

Another scholar basing his arguments on case studies of Hizb ut-Tahrir is Mandaville. Mandaville's normative study of Muslim diasporic settings leads him to argue that the migrants forming imagined communities with others in similar situations are somehow freed from state logics. Thus, Hizb ut-Tahrir's utopian caliphate and the aim to unify the *ummah* fit perfectly into the image of an organisation in-between states and cultures; an organisation challenging minority-majority power relations in Western Europe and creating an alternative. Mandaville would say that Hizb ut-Tahrir is

showing new ways of negotiating identity and religion and without supporting the political content of the organisation and the mindset, he would be fascinated by the challenge posed to states. Thus, Mandaville sees potential in the alleged rootlessness that Roy fears.

In short, observers come to understand Hizb ut-Tahrir as transnational due to studies of its ideology and self-representation in literature and online. Based on studies of both ideology and members' activities, I have found that the characterisation of Hizb ut-Tahrir as transnational provides an insufficient explanation of the organisation's activities. It is not wrong to understand Hizb ut-Tahrir as transnational but this characterisation is insufficient.

## **6.2 The Interaction of Transnational and National Elements in Hizb ut-Tahrir**

The second question was: how do the national and the transnational elements of Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and activities interact?

What I found to be the case in Hizb ut-Tahrir was that transnational and national tendencies co-exist. In spite of Hizb ut-Tahrir's holistic ideology and self-representation, I distinguished four levels of analysis. I found that on the ideological level and on the media-related level, Hizb ut-Tahrir can be characterised as transnational. The ideology disregards any national boundaries or differences and seeks to unite all Muslims in a caliphate regardless of ethnicity, language, traditions, orthodoxy etc. Also, on the media-related level, Hizb ut-Tahrir has proved to be very efficient in terms of distributing its message online and through written publications. However, despite internet presence being transnational by definition, by studying usage and updating of the international party web pages, it became clear that the internet as a communication channel is used more in national than transnational terms. Concerning the remaining two levels of the analysis, the organisational and the practical level, both of these proved to depend on national agendas and structures. For



instance, according to Hizb ut-Tahrir's organisational structure, with, at the top of the hierarchy, the international leadership committee, under which the following administrative level consists of national committees. Thus, today Hizb ut-Tahrir operates within state borders under national leadership committees. The party rationale behind this division is based on language differences and factual differences between states that make it necessary for Hizb ut-Tahrir to respond accordingly. The latter is reflected on the practical level. When asking members and former members about their party-related activities, I learned that only a very small minority of members are involved in any kind of travelling or activities that could be labelled "transnational". The vast majority of members would be engaged in activities in the local area or country: distribution of leaflets, giving talks, attending meetings etc., based on knowledge of their audiences' specific surroundings and interests.

Consequently, the argument is that there are transnational as well as national tendencies in Hizb ut-Tahrir; only they are present on different levels of the organisation. Thus, if one analyses the ideology of Hizb ut-Tahrir, the conclusion can be made that Hizb ut-Tahrir's own understanding of being "universal" is matched by the term "transnational" applied by academics. Among members, there are notions of identification with Muslims throughout the world which should be seen not as a sign of transnational activities, contact or communication, but rather as a result of the successful implementation of the ideology. In chapter three, I also make the point that due to members' attachment to their own country and the dominant role of web pages run separately from the international party web page, Hizb ut-Tahrir's Danish and British branches seem to be experiencing a nationalisation process. It seems to be the case that the Danish and British branches are increasing a focus on their own contexts and audiences in order to continue successful recruitment. This development is backed by a strategy document from the international leadership to the British committee from 2005 stating that party activities in the British Isles should take into consideration that Muslims born in Britain are likely to stay there. Thus, in 2005, Hizb ut-Tahrir's international leadership acknowledges that Hizb ut-Tahrir is no longer a Middle Eastern organisation addressing Middle Eastern Muslims in Europe, it is

becoming a Danish and a British organisation, too. Due to the fact that the various branches of Hizb ut-Tahrir are developing in different directions, comparative one to one analysis cannot be implemented. Instead, researchers must take place and context into consideration when studying this and other Islamist organisations.

This was the case when Eickelman and Piscatori (1996) stated that organisations with global outreach and many national and local branches had to be studied in the light of this dialectic. Organisations do not have to be characterised as global, transnational, national or local. They have the potential of covering all categories all at the same time. And only by keeping this perspective in mind can research be performed meaningfully. This argument has proven very valid and the realisation that transnational and national tendencies are combined in Hizb ut-Tahrir has been rewarding in the present study.

Hizb ut-Tahrir has branches all over the globe and is active online. This, however, is not the same as being a transnational, deterritorialised or deculturalised organisation. On the contrary, according to my findings, while Hizb ut-Tahrir is transnational in terms of its ideology and media activities, there are strong nationalisation tendencies on the organisational and practical, member-oriented levels. Thus, future studies of Islamist phenomena would benefit from combining theoretical and empirical research. Failure to do so means taking the risk of reproducing the Islamist narrative.

### **6.3 How Members Navigate in the Transnational/National Dialectic**

The third question raised following the initial puzzle concerned how members make sense of themselves and their activities in an organisation that ignores all national and ethnic differences in their aim to unite all Muslims when their party activities are so clearly shaped by their local and national context?

This question can be answered in two ways indicated by the empirical findings analysed and discussed in the present dissertation. One answer relies on the analytical perspective, with reference to members' notions of home and belonging; the other with reference to the relationship between Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological template and members' party-related activities. However, as the first answer is strongly related to the next and last question (members' notions of home), I am going to discuss the findings concerning member rationales based on the relationship between ideology and activities first.

Although there is an assumption that all individuality is negated in Hizb ut-Tahrir membership, this does not seem to be the case. Rather, the individual member is responsible for making sense of both the political and the religious content within Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological worldview. Having a holistic ideology, Hizb ut-Tahrir is both political and religious, depending on what level of activities you study. The framework – the ideology, the organised and instructed party activities and the emotional templates – are highly politicised but members' rationales are individual and to a large extent marked by religious rationales. In this way, Hizb ut-Tahrir appeals to many different types of members and provides answers to a variety of questions. However, although Hizb ut-Tahrir is often referred to as primarily a political organisation due to the stringent focus on the ideology and the implementation of the state, I found that in statements by former members religious rationales were a very important motivational factor concerning membership.

When al-Nabhani published the ideological material and the draft constitution in the early 1950s forming the backbone of Hizb ut-Tahrir, he strategically integrated Qur'anic concepts into the political framework. Thus, he formulated a political project

with religious connotations. The use of the concept *fard* (religious duty) is an example of this. Due to al-Nabhani's efforts, members of Hizb ut-Tahrir today are convinced that working for the establishment of the caliphate is a religious duty. What is at stake here is that a religious concept has been emptied of its original meaning and given political meaning defined within the frames of Hizb ut-Tahrir's logic. Hence, the result is that Hizb ut-Tahrir members do not practise Islam in mosques or with other Muslims, rather they practise Islam according to Hizb ut-Tahrir's political template. As we saw, the emotional motivation for this, the victimisation of Muslims and the homelessness, are the emotional equivalent of the political template. What is important to note is that the actual content, for instance religious rationales concerning salvation and the fear of judgment day, depend solely on the individual member's conviction. As mentioned, although the first impression of Hizb ut-Tahrir may indicate that membership negates individuality, this is far from the case. While every successful event, every new member, every talk to a new and interested (young) audience are understood as signals that the caliphate is near and that God is on Hizb ut-Tahrir's side, ultimately, the relationship with God is defined individually.

Inspired by Mandaville, Winther and Maffesoli I found that the negativity often connected with Islamism and other extremist ideologies does not correspond with Hizb ut-Tahrir members' daily experiences. In their closed Hizb ut-Tahrir community, members feel safe and protected knowing that God is on their side. They are convinced of God's support because they feel how near the caliphate is in every party-related activity. Thus, party activism provides both political and religious answers and the feeling of belonging to a community. Membership of Hizb ut-Tahrir is experienced as empowering.

In terms of the amount of attention Hizb ut-Tahrir has received over time from the media and from academia, Hizb ut-Tahrir is a successful organisation. However, it does not have many members and it has not yet reached its political goal of establishing the caliphate despite having worked towards the same goal since 1953. So how come it still manages to recruit new members and survive? What is the attraction? In this

dissertation, I have sought answers in the dialectic relationship between Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and members' party-related practice and I have found that the attraction of Hizb ut-Tahrir lies in its ability to provide a political and emotional template open for individual members' interpretation and adding of content. All religious content is the result of individual members' personal rationales. Thus, members negotiate meaning and self-understanding between ideology and practice, between template and content. However, in the end, Hizb ut-Tahrir is a success because it offers members a home and a dream; because it feels good and makes sense.

#### **6.4 The Caliphate as Homeland?**

The fourth and final question posed in the introduction was this: do members think of the future caliphate as "home" or are they at home in Denmark or Britain?

According to the official and ideological understanding in Hizb ut-Tahrir, the caliphate is a rational project, whereas a homeland is the place of birth with which one has a special emotional bond. Put differently, Hizb ut-Tahrir uses a dichotomy similar to the one between state and nation in their differentiation between caliphate and homeland. With this in mind, I asked former members about their understandings of home and homeland while they were members and after leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir. The answers showed that the caliphate is a highly emotional matter according to members. Not that Hizb ut-Tahrir erects any emotional template for what kind of emotions members should have towards the caliphate. On the contrary, members know how to feel about the caliphate based on how Hizb ut-Tahrir describes the West: the caliphate's Other. In Hizb ut-Tahrir, members think of Muslims as victims of Western colonisation and repression. The West is regarded uninhabitable for Muslims and members unite in a common condemnation of the West. In the process, the caliphate is established as everything the West is not or has failed to accomplish. What exactly this implies is left to the individual member's personal interpretation. Some

respondents talked about the caliphate being a perfectly just state, others about a flawless social system. Drawing on Mallki's analysis of Burundi refugees, I found that Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology turns members into voluntary refugees who long for a lost homeland.

The following discussions of connotations of roots, home and belonging lead to the use of Cresswell's and Winther's concepts introducing practice as analytical perspective. Winther argues that home is not merely a question of addresses, walls and furniture, but rather that it depends on "feeling at home" which relies on "homing strategies". Seen in this light, Hizb ut-Tahrir members can be understood to turn the elusive caliphate ideal into a place that they practise and live in every party activity. Striving for perfection in a party event and in public behaviour as a party representative are perceived as showing the world what the caliphate would be. The internalisation of the caliphate in activities and behaviour would also be rewarding in itself for the involved members as it would mean that the realisation of the caliphate seems closer and more realistic. We also saw former members describing how certain behaviour was expected of Hizb ut-Tahrir members. By a combination of behaviour and attitude towards party activities – striving for perfection – Hizb ut-Tahrir members feel that they act according to how they would as pious Muslims in the caliphate. Consequently, the caliphate is not a distant or utopian ideal, but rather it is part of their everyday party-related activities.

So, do members think of the caliphate as their future home? Yes, they do. The caliphate is perceived as the perfect state and as a former member phrased it "home would be when the caliphate is re-established". In the meantime, longing for the caliphate is not equivalent of not being at home in Denmark or Britain. These countries are recognised by the party as members' homelands, and although members distance themselves from these homelands, they nevertheless acknowledge after leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir that their European homeland had been home all along. Based on this, we can conclude that "home" has several meanings. Home is a question of practicalities (homing strategies, language, geographical distance to relatives etc.) and it is

ideological (home represented by the caliphate could never be in the West). Although Hizb ut-Tahrir would deny it, the latter is highly emotional. The political aim, the state, may appear to be a rational project, but it is also (and not least) a question of members' emotions and a tool for identification.

Apart from the caliphate as a home being practices in party events and activities, I also found that belonging to a study circle or any other party related social circle can be considered finding a home. As discussed in chapters four and five, rootlessness and the nomadic are not necessarily a condition for individuals today. "At times (...) rootedness returns with a vengeance", Maffesoli argued (Maffesoli 2004: 204), and this could be said to be the case with Hizb ut-Tahrir, too. Both in terms of engagement in party-related activities which assure a sense of the caliphate as homeland, but also with regard to the more basic belonging to one or more social communities provided by Hizb ut-Tahrir.

## **6.5 Suggestions for Future Research**

Questions concerning community orientation and individualisation are also relevant when turning to Islamic fundamentalism. Looking at contemporary research on Islamism, I would suggest that future research further investigate the religious content of Islamist organisations. It would be interesting to see political and religious elements analysed and discussed as part of wider sociological research on secularism, religious fundamentalism, re-organisation and individualisation. It is possible to argue that underneath al-Nabhani's strong emphasis on the need for religious aspects in political ideologies lies a secular understanding of religion as al-Nabhani's thinking is based on rationality. Consequently, various expressions of religious reorganisation and processes of individualisation in a secularisation context would be of interest in future studies of Islamic fundamentalism.

If we briefly look at contemporary narratives on religious fundamentalism, religious reorganisation and religious individualisation, it is apparent how such aspects could

contribute to the study of Islamism in the future. Concerning fundamentalism, the reasons for individuals' turn to fundamentalism is typically explained in social or personal terms. The social explanation is that when people's traditional ways of life are disrupted and they seek new identities to match new circumstances. According to this understanding, fundamentalism "allows one to express opposition to change while making some kind of change possible" (Spickard 2003:10). This understanding matches the one presented by Roy (Roy 2004a), Mandaville (Mandaville 2001) and partly by Wiktorowicz (Wiktorowicz 2005), too. According to the personal explanation, the individual finds protection against lawlessness in fundamentalism. Fundamentalism provides answers (political and religious) and in the case of Hizb ut-Tahrir, it provides a complete system of guidelines for a way of life. Hence, following the personal explanation, fundamentalism provides identity and rules. This understanding matches what some of my respondents expressed, as well as Wiktorowicz's statement based on his study of al-Muhajiroun members. In many ways, the combination of social and personal explanations for the rise of fundamentalism has been reproduced in this dissertation.

What I would like to propose, therefore, is that Islamic fundamentalism be studied as part of a continuing religious reorganisation as well as part of increasing religious individualisation. People join and leave congregations all the time and decisions to join or leave are frequently connected to the needs of the individual believer (Spickard 2003: 11). Seen in this light, Hizb ut-Tahrir is successful because many members remain for a very long time. Churches, congregations and religious movements compete for audiences and members and research has shown that fundamentalist Christian churches in the United States of America tend to mention their own social qualities before theological aspects when they produce commercial articles in order to win the attention of potential new members. That is to say, religion is expressed in terms of community with plenty of space for local manifestations. Based on this observation, Spickard emphasises the return to localism and the importance of religious belonging in connection with improving our understanding of contemporary religious fundamentalism (Spickard 2003: 12). With regard to religious



individualisation, this narrative emphasises the choice of the individual. The understanding present here is that whereas religion used to be defined by churches and organisations it is today up to individuals to pick and choose and customise their own set of beliefs. Consequently, religious diversity increases both between churches and within them (Spickard 2003:14) – and it would be interesting to find out if this is the case within Islamist organisations, too. The reorganisation and the individualisation narratives would contribute with rewarding perspectives in future research projects in light of the present study of Hizb ut-Tahrir.

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- i The terms Islamist and Islamism are used throughout this dissertation to signify what is elsewhere termed Islamic fundamentalism. For a detailed account of Islamic fundamentalisms see Piscatori's contribution to *The Fundamentalism Project* (*The Fundamentalism Project*, vol. 4, *Accounting for Fundamentalism*, The University of Chicago Press, 1994, page 361-373) in which the rise of Islamic fundamentalism is explained as a reaction to modernity as well as to the failure of political leaders in the Middle East. Thus, Islamic fundamentalism is understood as a broad term covering very different politically motivated movements, groups, organisations and ideologies aiming at implementing a kind of Islamic social order or, in some cases, an Islamic state. In this dissertation, Hizb ut-Tahrir is referred to as an Islamist organisation because of its ideology and political goal, the re-establishment of the Islamic caliphate. In work by Olivier Roy, "political Islam" signifies what is here labelled Islamic fundamentalism or Islamism (Roy 1993 and 2004a), whereas "Political Islam" in work by Mandaville signifies all kinds of political activities involving Muslims (Mandaville 2001 and 2007).
- ii See for instance the Routledge series entitled: *Routledge Research in Transnationalism* which contains volumes touching on broader globalisation and migration themes as well as specific studies of various diasporas.
- iii Maffesoli's work is influenced by Nietzsche's philosophy and appreciation of the Dionysian. In the present dissertation, I am merely interested in Maffesoli's introduction of "tribes" and what this concept brings to the study of a contemporary Islamist organisation.
- iv The German branch was established in the 1960s, the British branch followed in the early 1980s (Taj-Farouki 1996:171)
- v There is no official census or statistics on religion carried out in Denmark. Religion was introduced as identity category in the British 2001 census (Nielsen, 2009: 366).
- vi 27 September 2009 in Nørrebrohallen, Copenhagen.
- vii These numbers are not equal to the number of Muslims as there is no count of religious affiliation in Denmark.
- viii See for instance Geddes's analysis of the Blair administration's contribution to British multiculturalism (Geddes 2003:44)

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ix For a detailed analysis of recent Danish integrations policies, see Oestergaard and Sinclair 2008.

<sup>x</sup> "Ummah" is also spelled "umma" (as seen in work by Mandaville for instance). However, as the spelling "ummah" is more commonly used in English literature, this is what is used throughout this dissertation.

<sup>xi</sup> It would be more correct phonetically in an English text to write "al-Muhajiroon", but I have chosen to use to most common spelling of the name of this organisation: "al-Muhajiroun".

<sup>xii</sup> The majority of what has been published on Hizb ut-Tahrir the past decade has been produced by centre-right think tanks and focuses on security issues addressing primarily policy makers (Cohen 2003, Baran 2004a and 2004b, Swick 2005, Whine 2004, 2006a and 2006b, Ahmed and Stuart 2009). Of these Baran is the one most widely read and the core of her argument and contribution to the analysis of Hizb ut-Tahrir is the understanding of Hizb ut-Tahrir as a "conveyor belt for terrorists". According to her analysis, Hizb ut-Tahrir's "renunciation of violence is only superficial" and the group is preparing the Muslim masses for violent take-over of power. (Baran, 2004b: 11). The work by Whine is generally less accurate. For instance, it is claimed that Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark produced a "hit list" of prominent Jews and that the Danish spokesperson was jailed as a consequence hereof (Whine, 2006a: 6), but the existence of the list was never confirmed (*Kristeligt Dagblad*, 19 and 21 August 2002) and there were no sanctions subsequently. The Danish spokesperson was imprisoned later, in 2007-08, for distributing leaflets threatening Jews and the Danish Prime Minister. However, Whine has interesting points about Hizb ut-Tahrir changing tactics according to local circumstances (Whine, 2006: 1). Swick's work is highly influenced by Baran and Whine (11 out of 45 references are to work by Baran or Whine or chapters in reports edited by Baran). Despite using Baran and Whine too uncritically (for instance, Swick repeats Whine's point concerning the alleged "hit list"), she has interesting discussions regarding how bans of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Central Asia and ban discussions in Europe (the focus is on UK but she claims that Hizb ut-Tahrir was banned in Denmark in 2002, which, of course, was not the case) has "brought the Party to the forefront" of security and integration debates in Europe (Swick, 2005:14-15). Cohen's work states quite simply that Hizb ut-Tahrir poses a threat to U.S. interests in Central Asia due to its anti-American ideology and call for jihad against American troops in Central Asia (Cohen, 2004: 2), and Ahmed and Stuart's report discusses possible policy measures to limit Hizb ut-Tahrir's outreach and activities in Britain (Ahmed and Stuart, 2009: 117-140).

<sup>xiii</sup> Taji-Farouki refers to Hizb ut-Tahrir as "Hizb al-Tahrir" in the title of her book. In this dissertation I shall be using only "Hizb ut-Tahrir" as this is the spelling and pronunciation used by the party.

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<sup>xiv</sup>The spelling of the name of the founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir varies. I use the spelling used by Suha Taji-Farouki (1994,1996), but refer to him as "al-Nabhani" in the rest of the document.

<sup>xv</sup>In Arabic, the event is referred to as *al-Nakba*, the catastrophe, which reveals the degree of despair generated in the Arab world by the new state. At the same time, the appellation bears witness to the near mythical status the event and the year 1948 have been given in Arabic: in 1948, all meaning and hope died out (Shlaim, 2000: 28).

<sup>xvi</sup>See for instance al-Nabhani (1953) *The System of Islam* ("Nidham ul-Islam") page 71, translated to English by Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain in 2002: <http://www.khilafah.dk/boger/sysislam.pdf> (last accessed 10 July 2009).

<sup>xvii</sup>Al-Nabhani faced difficulties having his political party recognised by the authorities in Jordan in the beginning of the 1950s despite the newly revised constitution in which the forming of parties was permitted. The Jordanian Interior Ministry assessed that the underlying ideology did not concur with the new legal foundation of the Jordanian state and that the political aim of replacing Middle Eastern states with a caliphate could be seen as a threat for Jordan as a state (Taji-Farouki, 1996: x-xi and 7). Furthermore, there was a fear in Jordan that Hizb ut-Tahrir's politics would create religious segregation in the population. After having applied for recognition of a party twice and a movement after that, the individuals responsible for the project were imprisoned in March 1953. This, however, did not mean that the activities stopped. During 1950-54, the party opened offices in Damascus, Amman and Beirut in addition to the existing office in Jerusalem. At the same time, the Muslim Brotherhood was approved as a movement in Jordan and on the West Bank based on two things primarily: firstly, the political goal of the Brotherhood was less dominant than the religious and social activities of the movement, and secondly, in the application the movement activities were described as agreeing with Jordanian legislation. In other words, the Muslim Brotherhood did not appear to be a challenge to the Jordanian state. The fact that the Muslim Brotherhood received the official recognition as a movement reveals two characteristics about Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Nabhani: al-Nabhani was not prepared to choose a pragmatic toning down of the political goals in order to secure the official approval, and had, as opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood, no social or other visions to offer apart from the general political goal, the re-establishment of the caliphate. For a short and concise characterisation of the strategy and ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s see Esposito (1999:129-135).

<sup>xviii</sup>The 1960s and 1970s were marked by a lot of activity in Hizb ut-Tahrir, which resulted in, among other things, three attempted coups d'état in Jordan (1968, 1969 and 1971). In the same period, Hizb

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ut-Tahrir was accused of similar attempts in Syria and Iraq and as a consequence of this the party was banned in these countries (Taji-Farouki, 1996: 27-28, 154). According to Taji-Farouki (1996) the resistance to Hizb ut-Tahrir in Syria, Turkey and Iraq was strong. Hizb ut-Tahrir's interest in these countries is explained by the fact that the party found all three countries to possess the necessary military and financial resources to form the point of departure of a caliphate. The party was never banned in Lebanon, but was not recognised as a political party until recently either. Since the 1950s, Hizb ut-Tahrir has maintained its political work in an ill-defined grey zone in Lebanon. It has been able to publish and distribute material but has avoided public activities on a grand scale. Between the late 1950s and the 1970s it published a weekly called *al-Hadarah* (Civilization), and since 1987 it has been distributing a monthly publication called *al-Wa'i* (awareness) (Imad, 2009: 156). In contrast to this, there was an apparent softening in approach towards Hizb ut-Tahrir on the part of the Middle Eastern regimes over a period of ten years from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. This involved permission to host meetings and open party offices. It can be seen as a continuation of this more tolerant approach to the party that it was granted an official license in Lebanon in 2006, which enables it to host public events (Imad, 2009:156). Hizb ut-Tahrir has increased activities in the West Bank in recent years, too. It has been argued by observers that the struggle between Hamas and Fatah has left the West Bank wide open for Islamist activists, and the Hizb ut-Tahrir has been successful in gathering "*tens of thousands of supporters [in] the streets*" of West Bank cities. *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 22, 2008. Article by Ilene R. Prusher downloaded from: [www.csmonitor.com/2008/0122/p01s03-wome.html](http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0122/p01s03-wome.html) (last accessed 29 June 2009). Other articles discuss Hizb ut-Tahrir's growing influence in the West Bank. See for instance: [www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/932087.html](http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/932087.html) from December 2007. For a discussion of Hizb ut-Tahrir's role in connection with the power struggle between Hamas and Fatah, see: Schanzer, Jonathan (2008) *Hamas vs. Fatah: The Struggle for Palestine* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), p. 189. Since the middle of the 1980s, the party has been active in and outside the Middle East. Thus, the death of the founder al-Nabhani in 1977 did not have severe consequences for party activities. This is explained by Taji-Farouki with reference to two circumstances, the first being that al-Nabhani's texts very quickly obtained canonical status among members and sympathisers, ensuring a consistency in the party's thinking, expressions and work in general up till this day (Taji-Farouki 1996:192), and the second being that the person taking over the lead after al-Nabhani was 'Abd al-Qadim Zalloom who was involved in the process of forming Hizb ut-Tahrir since the very beginning in the early 1950s (Taji-Farouki 1994: 371). Accordingly, the death of al-Nabhani did not result in major changes for people involved in party activities at the time.

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<sup>xix</sup>The generational differences have been characterised as “defensive Islam” and “assertive Islam” by the Danish Professor and Arabist Jørgen Bæk Simonsen (Simonsen, 2001: 171-183) translated from “defensiv islam” and “offensiv Islam” by the author. “Offensiv” could have been translated into “pro-active” but the choice fell on “assertive” as “pro-active” has a management sound to it. “Defensive Islam” is religious practice understood and explained on the basis of specific traditions from a Muslim majority country. “Assertive Islam” is religious practice formed by the need to find answers suitable for life as Muslims in Muslim minority countries in the West.

<sup>xx</sup>With the term “imaginary ummah” Roy is implicitly referring to Anderson’s notion of “imagined communities” (Anderson 1983 (2006))

<sup>xxi</sup>Roy’s definition of Islamism: “What I call ‘Islamism’ is the brand of modern political Islamic fundamentalism that claims to re-create a true Islamic society, not simply by imposing sharia, but by establishing first an Islamic state through political action. Islamists see Islam not as a mere religion, but as a political ideology that should reshape all aspects of society (politics, law, economy, social justice, foreign policy, and so on)” (Roy, 2004a: 58).

<sup>xxii</sup>In *Skakmat. Politisk Islam: Et alternativ for de muslimske lande?* (Eirene, 1994) (In English: *The Failure of Political Islam*, I.B. Taurus, 1994), Roy analyses how Islamist groups are organised and he points at three forms of groups with political action at the top of their agendas. The first one is the Leninistic model which implies a group of people understanding themselves as an avant-garde aiming at taking over power while denying other parties’ right to exist. An example of such a party is the Afghan Hizb-i-Islami (Roy, 1994:63). Hizb ut-Tahrir would be an equally illustrative example of such a group because both its understanding of the necessity of an elite taking responsibility and leading the masses and the denial of other groups’ party programmes and goals is present. Roy also mentions parties building on a Western model, which within the frames of a system with more parties and ordinary suffrage seeks to meet its political goals. The Turkish Welfare Party is an example of this kind of party. Finally, a third kind of association is mentioned, namely religious associations who seek influence indirectly through the establishment of popular and elitist discussion fora rather than direct participation in the political system. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt may have been an example of this kind of association in the mid-1990s, however, the interplay between the Egyptian state and the Brotherhood could be said to take different forms up through the 1990s and in the new millennium (Hee 2009). The Pakistani *Jama’at-i Islami* is another example of a political organisation seeking indirect influence through primarily religious activities. Due to the uncertainty concerning what kind of means and goals any given Islamist organisation might have, Olivier Roy operates with the rule that moderate groups often call themselves *jama’at or jamiat* (association or

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movement), whereas more radical organisations tend to use the term *hizb* (party) (Roy, 1994:63-65). Thus, the name Hizb ut-Tahrir indicates a certain radicalism which in a European context is matched with the group's refusal to share details about their activities, member numbers and the like, as well as the fact that the party explicitly recommends its members not to take part in democratic processes such as elections. Having said that, Hizb ut-Tahrir is not a party according to prevailing European understandings of "political party" as it does not strive for influence through typical political channels and it does not want to take office. However, "party" is not a protected title in either Britain nor Denmark. This discussion will be touched upon briefly in chapter five.

<sup>xxiii</sup>Please note that Mandaville's optimistic account was published prior to 11 September 2001, whereas Roy published *Globalized Islam* in 2004.

<sup>xxiv</sup>Appadurai's theory about global flows following the patterns of 5 so-called "–scapes": ethnoscapescapes, mediascapescapes, technoscapescapes, financiescapescapes and ideoscapescapes is explained in *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (University of Minnesota Press, 1996). See chapter 2 for an introduction.

<sup>xxv</sup>Mandaville's definitions of diasporic is as follows: "By 'diasporic' I am referring simply to those Muslims whose families have moved between sociocultural contexts separated by considerable distance during the past two or three generations or those Muslims who have spent significant periods of time outside their countries of origin, be it for reasons of education, labour or political exile." (Mandaville, 2001: 110).

<sup>xxvi</sup>To give another example, in his 2007 volume, Mandaville compares Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Qaeda as two examples of radical Islamism. Radical Islamism is then defined as having a political goal (Islamic state/caliphate) and emphasising violent struggle (jihad) as the primary or exclusive method for securing political change (Mandaville, 2007: 239). As I see it, a comparison of Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Qaeda based on these parameters makes little sense.

<sup>xxvii</sup>Among other scholars within the SMT tradition, Wiktorowicz draws on Benford and Snow (1988, 2000), Clark (2004), Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta (2001), Hafez (2003), McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996), Melucci (1996) and Wood (2003). In connection with the present dissertation, I would especially highlight the importance of Benford and Snow (1988), Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta (2001) and McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996). Benford and Snow provide a very good frame-based analysis of movements taking this definition as its point of departure: "They frame, or assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize

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potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists” (Snow and Benford, 1988: 198). In McAdam, McCarthy and Zald’s *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (1996) the frame concept, which of course stems from Goffmann (1974), is modified to fit the analyses of political structures in social movements. Thus, Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta stand out with their suggestion to shift the focus of the study of social movements away from asking “how” movements are structured and operate, away from strategy and tactics, towards looking at motivation and “why” in terms of emotions comprising a key motivational factor for individuals in movements. The main arguments are that feelings and emotions should be seen as part of a rational actor strategy rather than opposed to this, that emotions are collective as well as individual and finally that emotions are not entirely undisciplined (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001: 16). This approach has inspired the analysis in chapter five. For a recent SMT inspired and framing-based analysis of Islamism in the shape of Saudi exile opposition groups in Britain, see the dissertation by Hove (Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies, SDU, 2009).

<sup>xxviii</sup>Wiktorowicz uses “Islamic activism” throughout his work without defining neither “Islamic” nor “Muslim” (or any possible difference in the connotations between the two). According to the Danish Language Advisory Committee, the meaning of both terms is “having to do with Islam”, however, the committee suggests that “Islamic” is used to cover content that relates specifically to the religion Islam and “Muslim” when relating to people or things from Muslim majority countries. See the article here: <http://dsn.dk/arkiv/nfs/2002-4.htm#islamisk> (last accessed 18 January 2010). Hence, I would be inclined to talk about “Muslim activism” as opposed to Wiktorowicz’s “Islamic activism” not least considering his point about avoiding any kind of essentialisation of organisations that happen to be run by Muslims.

<sup>xxix</sup>Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler analyse the rational basis for engaging in a high-risk organisation, based on case study of al-Muhajiroun, and argue that spiritual incentives play an important role here. If someone is convinced of al-Muhajiroun’s ideology the rationale behind activism is to he or she is performing a religious duty through membership and thus to avoid going to hell (Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler, 2006: 296-97). They argue: “Rational-choice studies of rebellion have argued that individuals assess the prospects for success when deciding whether to participate; but in the case of radical Islam, this outcome may be less important. At the individual level, the primary objective is not the establishment of an Islamic state or the success of a demonstration. These are only ways of fulfilling obligations to God, which, in turn, is the only way to achieve salvation. In terms of personal calculations, the very act of participation in itself produces the payoff in the hereafter.” (Wiktorowicz and Kaltenthaler, 2006: 316).



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<sup>xxx</sup>Herbert is a Philosopher working for the United States Department of the Army in Germany. In the article mentioned he introduces the concept of plasticity by which he is referring to the flexibility involved when Islamists inhabit seemingly incompatible identities. Currently, he is writing a book on Hizb ut-Tahrir with special reference to the organisation's inclination to violence drawing on work by Baran (2004a and 2004b), Sinclair (2008b), Taji-Farouki (1996) and others.

<sup>xxx</sup>This publication is still available from the Danish web page: <http://www.khilafah.dk/boger/Ht.pdf> (last accessed 26 January 2010)

<sup>xxxii</sup>Hizb ut-Tahrir claims that the ideology is strictly non-violent which former members have disputed lately due to the fact that Hizb ut-Tahrir does not deny that the future caliphate will have an army and will strive to be an imperialistic force – in excess, Hizb ut-Tahrir may aim at overthrowing existing regimes through outnumbering despots, governments and parliaments, but once Hizb ut-Tahrir's caliph is appointed and the structure of the caliphate is in place, the Islamic state will seek to extend its territory through military means either via military coups or through warfare (see for instance Ahmed and Stuart, 2009: 13).

<sup>xxxiii</sup>For a detailed account of the history of the caliphate see *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. IV, Leiden: Brill, 1978: 937-953.

<sup>xxxiv</sup>This passage has already been published in an article in *Journal for Muslim Minority Affairs* discussing two Danish Muslim organisations' perception of the concept of *ummah* (Sinclair, 2008).

<sup>xxxv</sup>Soja and Cresswell talk about lived space and thirdspace as synonymous but as Homi Bhabha uses thirdspace to discuss hybrid identity, I will use lived space in this context in order to emphasise place over identity.

<sup>xxxvi</sup>All former members functioning as respondents are identified with letters in order to assure their anonymity. The letter "I" is not used as to avoid confusion with the pronoun "I".

<sup>xxxvii</sup>In the Spring of 2003, Malene Fenger-Grøndahl and I conducted interviews for the book *Hizb ut-Tahrir i Danmark: Farlig Fundamentalisme eller uskyldigt Ungdomsoprør?* (In English: *Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark: Dangerous Fundamentalism or Innocent Youth Rebellion?*), Aarhus University Press, 2003.

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<sup>xxxviii</sup>To this day, I have never conducted an interview with a representative from the Women's department in Denmark. I have talked to several female members at party events but they have directed all queries of substance to the official Media Representative.

<sup>xxxix</sup>The present spokesperson, Taji Mustafa, is of Nigerian descent, he is the son of Christian-Muslim parents, the leader Naseem Ghani is a convert of Bangladeshi-British descent. However, the ethnicity of the new leading representatives has not had any major consequences for the branch's political focus which is still on South Asia. Thus the branch's main political focus is determined by the ethnic background of the majority of members.

<sup>xl</sup>Before 11 September 2001, Hizb ut-Tahrir got positive media coverage in Denmark based on what was perceived to be a social profile of activities in the beginning of the last decade, but this changed overnight after 11 September 2001. Prior to the 11 September 2001 terror attacks, observers noted that group members were achieving remarkable results in terms of engaging former gang members in socially burdened areas of Copenhagen in their work and activities. In an article in the Danish daily newspaper *Politiken* from 9 September 2001 called "Leaving criminality with Allah" (in Danish: *Med Allah ud af kriminaliteten*, my translation) former juvenile delinquents explained how Hizb ut-Tahrir had showed them a way out of the criminal environment. In the article "Ali" states: "Almost everyone here has been to prison. Now we have started to relate to Islam. Khilafah [the interviewees refer to Hizb ut-Tahrir as Khilafah throughout the article] has helped us move on" (Rahbek and Benner, *Politiken*, 9 September 2001, page 3). Suddenly, after 11 September 2001, Hizb ut-Tahrir was perceived as a local Danish variant of al-Qaeda. Seemingly, the Danish branch enjoyed the ping-pong match with the Danish political centre-right parties. In 2001, immediately after the launch of the War on Terror in Afghanistan, Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark held a big conference under the headline: "An Attack on one Muslim is an Attack on all Muslims." In 2002 the branch handed out leaflets threatening Jews and later, in 2004, leaflets threatening the Danish Prime Minister for the Danish involvement in Iraq were distributed. Up until 2008, each and every party event in Denmark was met with the question of the possibility of a ban by politicians from the centre-right wing of the Danish parliament. Recently, in 2007 and again in 2008, this choir was joined by the leader of the left wing party, *Socialistisk Folkeparti*, who suggested that Hizb ut-Tahrir should "go to hell" (my translation, see link: <http://gorzelak.wordpress.com/2008/02/20/villy-s%C3%B8vndal-jeg-bad-faktisk-hizb-ut-tahrir-ga-ad-helvede-til-pa-vores-landsm%C3%B8de-i-sommeren-2007/> link last accessed 1 April 2010).

<sup>xli</sup>Following the German ban in January 2003, the Danish Public Prosecutor carried out the first of two investigations of the possibility of a ban according to Danish legislation. The Danish constitution

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states: "Organisations that seek to obtain their goals through violent means, instigate violence or similar punishable impact on individuals of other convictions, can be dissolved by law" (§78,2, my translation), and thus far the conclusion has been (the results of the second investigation were released in the Summer of 2008) that there could be found no constitutional justification for a ban.

<sup>xiii</sup>In June 2007, Hizb ut-Tahrir took part in a meeting where the majority of Arab mosques in Copenhagen were represented. The agenda of the meeting was a discussion of the challenges and dangers faced by Danish Muslims – including the battle against crime amongst Muslim youth alongside more general minority related issues. Moreover, Islamisk Trossamfund (The Islamic Congregation, a Muslim Brotherhood offshoot) and Hizb ut-Tahrir organised a demonstration against Jyllands-Posten, in connection with the daily newspaper re-printing the Muhammad cartoons in February 2008. The fact that Hizb ut-Tahrir's Danish branch got a new spokesperson in the Winter of 2008/09 may partly explain the shift of strategy. The new person to hold the post, Chadi Freigeh, who has been a member since 1999/2000, is easier to get hold of and seems more forthcoming in regard to answering questions about his organisation than his predecessor. However, the new and more open style of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark may have had negative consequences seen from the party's perspective. Because in September 2009, when Hizb ut-Tahrir held its annual conference in Copenhagen, the public eye in the shape of journalists and photographers were conspicuous by their absence. The conference was on the global financial crisis and was held on 27 September 2009 in *Nørrebrohallen*. There were between 750-900 people present (approximately 250 women and 600 men). These numbers are an estimated guess based on a head count in the women's section (all events are gender segregated) and the fact that the women's section only constituted one third of the floor of the venue. Based on regular participation in party events and conversations with former members, my assessment is that member numbers have stagnated in both Denmark and Britain. One tabloid paper ridiculed the press release announcing the conference, referring to the events as *Det seneste gisp* ("The Latest Gasp", my translation) and calling the party *Gisp Prut Tapir* ("Gasp Fart Tapir", my translation. Source: Ekstra Bladet 24 September 2009). The reaction from Hizb ut-Tahrir Scandinavia has been an analysis available from [www.khilafah.dk](http://www.khilafah.dk) claiming that the party is subject to discrimination by the Danish media. And since this event, the Danish branch has focused solely on themes relating to Muslims in Denmark on their web page and in their written publications, for instance the increase in converts to Islam in Denmark, the problems concerning a future purpose-built mosque in Copenhagen etc. Clearly, Hizb ut-Tahrir's Danish branch is eager to win the attention of Danish Muslims by commenting on issues very close to home.

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<sup>xiii</sup>The British anti-terror legislation has been tightened substantially since 2001 and politically the aim is to break with London's reputation as a safe haven for Islamist organisations – a place from where they were free to work – referred to as Londonistan by critical voices in Britain as well as internationally (see, for instance, Phillips 2006). Since 2001, several Islamists have been imprisoned, extradited to legal proceedings abroad, placed under house arrest or denied the right to return to the British Isles. As a consequence of bans of Islamist organisations following the new legislation, more organisations use front names which make it increasingly difficult to keep track of who is who. For example, *al-Muhajiroun* (The Emigrants) front groups The Saviour Sect (also known as The Saved Sect) and *al-Ghurabaa* (The Strangers) were banned in 2006, more front groups namely *Islam4UK* and London School of Sharia were banned in 2009 and in 2010, *al-Muhajiroun* itself was banned. The leader, Omar Bakri Mohammed, is in Lebanon prohibited from entering Britain. Bakri's right hand man, Anjem Choudari, remains in London. To my knowledge, Choudari still gives interviews and talks but the mentioned front names are no longer in use. I met and interviewed Choudari in London in June 2008. During this interview it was claimed that Choudari could arrange interviews with Hizb ut-Tahrir members in London for me, something that never materialised. However, not until 2005 did British politicians call for the prohibition of Hizb ut-Tahrir. The terror bombs on London's transport system on 7 July 2005 had major consequences for all Islamist organisations operating on British soil in that the perception of Islamism changed. Apart from the National Union of Students' (NUS) ban on Hizb ut-Tahrir activities on campuses, Hizb ut-Tahrir were free to work without any great degree of criticism from the British public prior to 2005. However, in August 2005, following the 7 July 2005 attacks then Prime Minister Tony Blair declared that "the rules of the game are changing" (5 August 2005) and the Labour government proposed a ban on Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain. On 5 August 2005, Prime Minister Tony Blair said: "We will proscribe Hizb ut-Tahrir and the successor organisation of Al Muhajiroun" (See: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/aug/05/july7.uksecurity5> last accessed 22 October 2009). Although a ban has not been implemented in the British Isles yet, the change of attitude did have consequences for the British branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir. The introduction of new anti-terror legislation, stricter immigration laws, a more negative and suspicious focus on Muslims, the launch of several anti-radicalisation and prevention programmes in a variety of public sectors (local councils, polices etc.) targeting Islamism and radicalised individuals and groups are some of the new initiatives affecting Hizb ut-Tahrir's possibilities to manoeuvre.

<sup>xiv</sup>As mentioned in the previous endnote, Hizb ut-Tahrir was not prohibited under Blair's rule of government. However, the ban discussion was reopened during the parliamentary election campaign in 2009-10 where Conservative candidates expressed a wish to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir (see speech by Chris Grayling proposing the ban here:

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[http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2009/10/Chris\\_Grayling\\_A\\_no-nonsense\\_approach\\_to\\_crime\\_and\\_disorder.aspx](http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2009/10/Chris_Grayling_A_no-nonsense_approach_to_crime_and_disorder.aspx) (last accessed 26 January 2010)

Although the conservative Party secured the Prime Minister post in the May 2010 election, it does not seem likely that a ban will be implemented due to protests from the other part of the present coalition government, the Liberal Democrats. The unlikely prospect of a ban does not mean that Hizb ut-Tahrir will be getting less attention from the public. In the British Isles, Hizb ut-Tahrir is still drawing a lot of attention to its activities mainly due to the fact that more and more former members are speaking up and are taking part in the public debate. For instance, in November 2009 the centre-right think tank Centre for Social Cohesion published a report of Hizb ut-Tahrir in which information from former members provoked a debate on Hizb ut-Tahrir receiving public funding to run schools under front names (Ahmed and Stuart 2009, See Centre for Social Cohesion's press release here: <http://www.spittoon.org/archives/3880> last accessed 26 January 2010). As a result of this attention, the British branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir has been more careful in terms of what kind of public attention it receives, who represents the branch publicly and how its message is delivered since 7 July 2005.

<sup>xiv</sup>While Dr. Waheed was the Media Representative of the British branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir, he was known to take part in public meetings and give plenty of interviews. Moreover, the British branch ran several internet homepages of which [mindspring.eu.com](http://mindspring.eu.com) was dedicated to dialogue between group members and intellectual non-Muslims. The homepage contained the usual Hizb ut-Tahrir material and propaganda but the wrapping was new and inviting. Prior to 2005, Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain was also known to make use of the British Press Complaints Commission (PCC) in cases where they have felt misrepresented in the press with newspaper apologies and official corrections as the result. In most cases, Hizb ut-Tahrir complained of being referred to as militant. However, filing complaints against newspapers and winning cases through the PCC did not provide the wanted attention in the appropriate Muslim circles and was thus found redundant (Interview with Respondent J, 2008). All the initiatives launched between 2002 and 2005, "1924.org", "mindspring.eu.com", the magazine *New Civilisation*, the use of complaining through the PCC and so forth have either been toned down or are not maintained anymore. Waheed's credo concerning membership of Hizb ut-Tahrir being much less important than influencing as many people as possible through all available channels seem to matter to a lesser degree today. The 2004 university campus ban and the national political proscription debates seem to have had the consequence that Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain is focusing on their own activities such as the 2008 campaign "Stand for Islam" and responding to the veil debate, the Gaza conflict etc. all within party logic and rhetoric. According to former members of the British

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branch, the current Chairman, Naseem Ghani, strongly believes in the need to carry the ideology in one's heart as opposed to in public on a banner (interview with Respondent J, Summer 2008). My assessment is that these changes are due to pragmatic considerations in the branch. The political climate has changed post 7 July 2005, Dr. Waheed's public relation strategy is no longer appropriate and he himself has been degraded from Media Representative to Media Advisor (according to a former member, Respondent J, his appearance was too scary to remain Media Representative in post 7 July 2005 Britain, interview, 2008).

<sup>xlvi</sup>The document "Strategies of action in the West" (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2005) was given to me by a former member of the British branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir in both an Arabic and English version. The translation to English was done by freelance journalist David Patrikarakos. As I don't read Arabic, a colleague of mine from the Arabic department compared the contents of the two documents and approved of the somewhat sketchy English translation. It is an interesting document as it is rare to get hold of internal party documents meant for members only. Hizb ut-Tahrir's Danish and British branches have proven efficient in maintaining control over information and communication with the public.

<sup>xlvii</sup>Here, one might add that the party's work towards the re-establishment of the caliphate has been directed primarily towards Muslim countries since its beginning in the early 1950s. It has never been the goal to replace existing European countries with an Islamic caliphate, however, if the majority of the population in a European country were to convert to Islam and demand their country turned into a caliphate, Hizb ut-Tahrir would be pleased to guide and supervise (author's interview with Danish spokesperson, 2003).

<sup>xlviii</sup>Interviews with three converts, all former members, two in Britain, one in Denmark carried out in 2008 and 2009.

<sup>xlix</sup>I was given this document by a former member of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain. Since then, the document has been circulated among Hizb ut-Tahrir's critical institutions and journalists. Thus, it seems that the person circulating the document is eager to distribute what material he has left from his time in the organisation, but also that he is distributing it through the same channels that he would use, had he still been a member promoting party ideas.

<sup>l</sup> Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark published the magazine *Khilafah* until 2002 and continues to publish articles on the homepage [khilafah.dk](http://khilafah.dk). Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain still publishes its version of the *Khilafah* magazine and moreover tried launching the magazine *New Civilization* in 2004 aiming at addressing an intellectual audience. The first edition of *New Civilization* was distributed at the annual Labour

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conference in 2004 (interview with former member in Britain, 2009), but the production of the magazine ceased after only 5 issues. Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain also launched a life-style magazine called *Salam* around the same time which did not last either (Mandaville 2007: 270). Activities like these are known from all other branches of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Western Europe.

<sup>li</sup> Nawaz told his story to the Danish daily *Berlingske Tidende* 28 October 2007: <http://www.berlingske.dk/kultur/afhopperen-fra-hizb-ut-tahrir> (last accessed 19 October 2009). However, members of the Danish branch claim that Nawaz' role in Denmark is greatly overstated (interview with Author, 2009).

<sup>lii</sup> Information about activities in South East Asia from discussions with Ph.D. Fellow at the Australian National University, M.M. Nawab, in London, June 2009.

<sup>liii</sup> Al-Mas'ari of CDLR joined Hizb ut-Tahrir as a student in Germany in the 1960s (Taji-Farouki, 1996:170).

<sup>liv</sup> Bakri was born in Syria in 1958, and joined the party as a student in Cairo but fled to Lebanon in 1982 due to political persecution. After a stay in Saudi Arabia between 1979 and 1985, where the authorities clamped down on his activities on several occasions, he settled in London in 1986 (Taji-Farouki 1996: 180, O'Neill and McGrory 2006: 105-06). Here, he continued his involvement in Hizb ut-Tahrir and the British branch grew considerably from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s under Bakri's leadership. According to a former member who joined Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain while Bakri was still leading the activities, all members could fit into two cars in the beginning (i.e. in the mid 1980s), whereas it would take several busses to transport all members around the country 10 years later (interview with author, 2008). In 1996, it came to a break between Bakri and Hizb ut-Tahrir due to a disagreement over the group's public profile. Bakri and representatives of Hizb ut-Tahrir have very different opinions about who broke with whom, but in 2003, the then leader Jalaluddin Patel and spokesperson Imran Waheed hinted that it was Bakri's infamous demand that the British Queen should convert to Islam that decided the matter (interview with author, 2003). Shortly after the break, Bakri launched his own group, *al-Muhajiroun*, with functioning branches in Britain, Ireland, Lebanon, Pakistan and the United States up until 2004. Bakri also tried to establish a Danish branch in the beginning of this century without any success (See the Danish Daily *Kristeligt Dagblad* on al-Muhajiroun in Danmark from 27 August 2002: <http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/artikel/175071:Seneste-nyt--Al-Muhajiroun-usynlig-i-Danmark?highlight=skandi,last> accessed 30 June 2009). Al-Muhajiroun argued for the necessity to participate in fighting against the West and non-Muslims in Afghanistan, Iraq and other "Muslim hot spots" and in 2003 two members, who have also been said to have associated with Hizb ut-Tahrir, carried out a suicide bomb attack in

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Tel Aviv. Asif Mohammed Hanif and Omar Khan Sharif wrote history on 30 April 2003 when they were the first ever British citizens to carry out a suicide mission in Israel. Sharif's bomb did not go off as planned and he fled from the scene and was found dead later. Hanif's bomb went off - three people killed, 55 wounded (Wiktorowicz, 2005:1). In 2004, Bakri dissolved al-Muhajiroun, and all offices, activities and classes were closed down overnight and Bakri left for Lebanon (Wiktorowicz, 2005:213). In August 2005, Bakri was refused entry to Britain by the home Office Secretary, who argued that Bakri's activities and convictions were "*not conducive to the public good*" (See BBC's mention of the case here: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/4133150.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4133150.stm), last accessed 24 september 2009). For a detailed analysis of al-Muhajiroun based on field work and interviews, see Wiktorowicz, 2005. For further details about Bakri's activities and the British responses, see [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/4133150.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4133150.stm) and Melanie Phillips (Phillips, 2007: 83). Between 2004 and 2009 individuals affiliated with al-Muhajiroun were working under different front names, the most common of these were the Saviour Sect, al-Ghurabaa, and London School of Sharia. Both the Savior Sect and al-Ghurabaa were outlawed in July 2006 due to their support of terror organisations. In the Summer of 2009, al-Muhajiroun was re-launched in London by Bakri's right-hand man Anjem Choudary, only to be banned in January 2010 alongside London School of Sharia and the frequently used front organisation Islam4UK according to new legislation making it possible to ban organisations glorifying terror (Guardian, 12 January 2010, see full article here: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/jan/12/islam4uk-banned-alan-johnson-islamist>, last accessed 29 October 2009). Concerning the ban, the following information was published in a Quilliam Foundation newsletter on 29 October 2009: "Al-Muhajiroun front groups (essentially all run by the same few individuals) include Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, Islam4uk, Islamic council of Britain, Islamic Shari'a Court of UK, Society of Muslim Lawyers, London School of Shari'a, Salafi Youth Movement UK, Global Issues Society, Salafi Media, Islamic Dawah Foundation, Tayfatul Mansoorah, Mansoor Media, London Dawah, Londonistan1 and Path to Tawheed. Al-Muhajiroun re-launched themselves in June 2009 at an event which ended in violence and drew no more than 200 people." The mentioned event was a public debate between Douglas Murray of the Centre for Social Cohesion and Anjem Choudary. See this link to a Guardian article from 18 June 2009 for further information: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/jun/18/islamist-al-muhajiroun-meeting-chaos> (last accessed 29 October 2009). As the article explains, it was the event in June 2009 that resulted in calls for the government to ban al-Muhajiroun.

<sup>iv</sup>It has not been possible to have an exact date verified but judged by the dates of the volumes of the Danish Khilafah magazine, one can assume that it has been written in Danish since 1994 because volumes 4-8 dated 1998-2002 are accessible from the Danish branch's homepage. This author has



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never come across a copy from before 1998. In 2002, the magazine was replaced by a series of articles by a seemingly open group of writers. Leaflets signed "Hizb ut-Tahrir Danmark" have been distributed since 1996.

<sup>lvi</sup>Dr. Anne Sofie Roald who researches Muslim minorities in Norway and Sweden assessed that the number was around 35 in the two countries (5 in Norway, 30 in Sweden) and in any case less than 50 (discussion with author, 2005). There has been no reason to believe that the numbers have increased remarkably since then. Thus, "Hizb ut-Tahrir Scandinavia" is, in effect, "Hizb ut-Tahrir Denmark".

<sup>lvii</sup>Assessment of numbers and age group based on conversations with former members.

<sup>lviii</sup>2004: campus ban in Britain (NUS):

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2005/aug/08/studentpolitics.students> (last accessed 6 April 2010).

<sup>lix</sup>The Khilafah magazine is no longer published in Danish. Since 2002 articles have been made available from the khilafah.dk webpage. Apparently there is no fixed system behind the publication, the articles are merely uploaded when written, no fixed number monthly or quarterly as was the case with the Danish Khilafah Magazine for a number of years (it was published between 1998 and 2002). There is a body of approximately 10 people, both men and women, behind the articles.

<sup>lx</sup>The new English page (hizb-org.uk) does not link to other party web pages, whereas the Danish khilafah.dk links to both the official Danish party web page (hizb-ut-tahrir.dk) and to the following international web pages: hizb-ut-tahrir.org (the official international web page), hizb-ut-tahrir.info (the official media office web page), hizb.org.uk (English), alokab.info (Arabic/English), khilafah.com (English), khilafat.dk (Urdu), newcivilisation.com (English), Kokludegisim.com (Turkish), Islamdevleti.org (Turkish), turkiyevilayeti.org (the official web page in Turkish).

<sup>lxi</sup>Having said that, it is a well-known fact in the British public debate that Hizb ut-Tahrir operates under front names, still controls student organisations and furthermore, in the Autumn of 2009, it was revealed that Hizb ut-Tahrir is receiving government funding to run two primary schools as discussed in the report on Hizb ut-Tahrir from the Centre of Social Cohesion (Ahmad and Stuart, 2009).

<sup>lxii</sup>See Brandon: [http://www.socialcohesion.co.uk/files/1229624704\\_1.pdf](http://www.socialcohesion.co.uk/files/1229624704_1.pdf)

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<sup>lxiii</sup> Parts of this chapter will be published as the chapter "Hizb ut-Tahrir and Notions of Home" in the forthcoming edited volume *Lived Space: Reconsidering Transnationalism among Muslim Minorities*. Editors are Feldt and Sinclair, and it will be published by Peter Lang later this year. (2010)

<sup>lxiv</sup> See also Abu Uwais statement concerning the lack of religious knowledge and practice in Hizb ut-Tahrir here: [http://www.blogistan.co.uk/blog/articles/story\\_of\\_an\\_ex-hizbi](http://www.blogistan.co.uk/blog/articles/story_of_an_ex-hizbi) (last accessed, 26 April 2010)

<sup>lxv</sup> In the text, al-Nabhani uses "patriotic" and "nationalistic" interchangeably. I use only "nationalistic" for the sake of clarity.

<sup>lxvi</sup> English translation from 2002, published by al-Khilafah Publications in London. Text available here: <http://www.khilafah.dk/boger/sysislam.pdf> (last accessed 12 November 2009). The English translation uses "patriotism" and "nationalism" interchangeably.

<sup>lxvii</sup> See, for instance, the discussion of the chapter entitled "Molding [sic] the People into one Ummah" from this book in chapter 3 of the present dissertation.

<sup>lxviii</sup> Respondent G is a convert to Islam and was politically active in various radical parties before and after his time with Hizb ut-Tahrir. As the interview focused on his affiliation with Hizb ut-Tahrir these aspects were not elaborated to any great extent.

<sup>lxix</sup> See, for instance, "Quranen – Miraklet" and "Det arabiske sprogs vigtighed i Islam" both in *Khilafah*, vol. 8, 2002 or the more recent article from the Danish webpage *khilafah.dk*: [http://www.khilafah.dk/result.php?file\\_id=1416&category=html](http://www.khilafah.dk/result.php?file_id=1416&category=html) also on the privileged status of Arabic in Islam.

<sup>lxx</sup> An example of how Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark argues concerning the special status of Arabic: "(...) An example would be if one was talking to an Asian Muslim concerning the situation in Palestine, Chechnya. In this discussion there would be no shame in saying: "Brother, let us solve OUR problems first, before we worry about THEIRS. This feeling of belonging to a group due to race, tribe or area is an undeveloped feeling It stems from a need to feel safe. This need is a common human condition. It can be satisfied by being with people we feel attached to. It is similar to being in a strange place and be surprised by recognizing a familiar face. It is the same feeling that occurs when one is in a Masjid (Mosque) with Pakistanis or Africans and one sees one Arabic face in the crowd. This feeling is no different than what buffalos feel when they gather in a herd." (Source: "Profetens

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Sahaba: Tufail Bin Amru Ad-Dausi”, *Khilafah* årgang 6/7, September /Maj 2000-2001: 8, author’s translation).

<sup>lxxi</sup> Al e-Ahmad *Gharbzadegi* translated by Paul Sprachman. Delmor, NY: Center for Iranian Studies, Columbia University, 1982. In Farsi, the concept of *gharbzadegi*, Occidentosis or Westification, has two connotations, it means to be infected as well as to be infatuated.

<sup>lxxii</sup> In party material (both ideological material and other “non adopted” work and articles) the West is generally regarded as an entity, however, in country specific material, you will find specific countries and conditions described and criticised, for instance the Danish integration system.

<sup>lxxiii</sup> See Olivier Roy (Roy 2004a) *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (Columbia University Press) for a thorough analysis of the tendencies of deterritorialisation in Islam as a minority religion. Peter Mandaville characterises similar tendencies in his *Transnational Muslim Politics. Reimagining the umma* (Mandaville 2001) and brings up points about the formation of new worldwide political forums in the 2007 book *Global Political Islam* (Mandaville 2007).

<sup>lxxiv</sup> Peter Mandaville (Mandaville 2005): “Sufis and Salafis: The Political Discourse of Transnational Islam” in: Hefner (ed.) *Remaking Muslim Politics. Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, page 314. In the article. Hizb ut-Tahrir is regarded as a *khilafist* group due to its emphasis on the unity of the ummah, the future re-establishment of the caliphate and the categorisation of the West as “other”.

<sup>lxxv</sup> Mallki “National Geographic: the Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of the National Identity among Scholars and Refugees” in *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 7, No. 1, Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference, Feb. 1992, pp. 24-44. In the article, Mallki focuses on refugees rather than immigrants. These two categories are of course very different, in that immigrants are not necessarily forced out of their original homelands or regions as refugees are, and this could influence the ability or motivation to build homes in new settings. Nevertheless, in the present chapter Mallki’s concepts and points are discussed in connection with immigrants and descendants of immigrants.

<sup>lxxvi</sup> Erik Mohns’s (PhD scholar, Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark) current research in Palestinian camps in Syria shows a similar pattern: camp-dwelling Palestinian refugees and descendants of refugees in Syria are the only ones who demand a right of return and formulate this right into a political programme, whereas Palestinians who left the camps do not necessarily identify themselves as Palestinian anymore.

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<sup>lxxvii</sup> see Wiktorowicz 2004a and 2005 for a discussion of the importance of persuasion in social movements.

<sup>lxxviii</sup> I use “emotion” here (Latin: e’motio from emo’veve) because this concept implies movement and the awakening of feelings which seem to be precise in describing the energies and dynamics in Hizb ut-Tahrir.

<sup>lxxix</sup> Respondent J is a convert to Islam of Danish origin, and his experience of receiving special attention from Hizb ut-Tahrir is likely to be connected to his background. Another respondent, Respondent C, who is also a convert to Islam explained how she was often introduced as a convert when giving talks. She explained that Hizb ut-Tahrir used her to demonstrate to women who were born Muslim that they were not making enough of an effort to learn about their religion. She said: “People always wanted to hear why I converted which was used by the party to make me talk to normal Muslims. It was a way of manipulating for the sake of dawah [missionising]. I would tell my story and people would say things like I put them to shame because of everything I did as a Muslim. I got a lot of praise on this account. Can you imagine? People praising a hizbi!” (Interview with Respondent C, 2009).

<sup>lxxx</sup> Hizb ut-Tahrir has been known to be less strict with regard to behaviour than other Islamist organisations. For instance, smoking is allowed in Hizb ut-Tahrir, and my previous studies of the Danish and British branches showed that the rules concerning association between the sexes were very liberal in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Danish Muslims critical of Hizb ut-Tahrir explained then that the party could be seen as a marriage broker because male and female members were allowed to date as long as they were discussing future marriage (Sinclair et al. 2003)

<sup>lxxxj</sup> Among other places, the quotation can be found on English version of the international web page: <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/EN/> (last accessed 27 May 2010).

<sup>lxxxii</sup> For instance, the Turkish People’s Party involved in founding Turkey between 1923 and 1946, was a nationalist cadre with a modern agendas i.e. an example of how cadre parties are not necessarily communistic or Leninistic.

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Hizb ut-Tahrir advocates that the overthrow of regimes can be facilitated through central individuals in the military. Therefore, the mobilisation of collective action is not necessarily disconnected from established institutions, according to Hizb ut-Tahrir.

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<sup>lxxxiv</sup> There are examples of individuals supporting Hizb ut-Tahrir without ever joining or becoming full members (Interview with Respondent F, 2009). Also, the former Media Representative in Britain, Dr. Imran Waheed, was known to advocate that membership was secondary to support of the ideology. (Interview with Respondent J, 2008).

<sup>lxxxv</sup> In the introduction to the English translation of his book *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society* (1996), they are also referred to as “post-modern tribes” or “pseudo-tribes” (Maffesoli, 1996:x).

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> In the English translation of Maffesoli’s work, *puissance* is either kept and used in French or it is translated to “will to power”. The latter has a clear reference to Nietzsche, a source of inspiration in Maffesoli’s work that often surfaces. In the present context, I find it purposeful to leave out concrete Nietzsche references and thus use the French “puissance”.

<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Maffesoli’s organic and cyclical understanding of the development from modernity to post-modernity does not correspond very well with Giddens’ understanding of the concept of modernity. Overall, I find Giddens’ use of the concept more useful and precise. However, without dwelling on this discrepancy I find Maffesoli’s use of “rootedness” and “tribes” useful in the present analysis of Hizb ut-Tahrir.

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> See chapter two for an account of Taji-Farouki’s analysis of al-Nabhani’s thinking.

## English Summary

This dissertation studies the Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain. Based on interviews with members and former members of the group in these two Western European countries, the ways in which Hizb ut-Tahrir members delineate their community positionalities within the de facto transnational, diasporic spatial setting that Muslims occupy in Europe have been explored. The specific focus was on Danish and British members' understandings of "home," "homeland" and "belonging" within the parameters of Hizb ut-Tahrir's politico-religious ideology. The core question of the dissertation was: how can one understand the relationship between transnational elements in Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities and ideology and members' notion of home?

Due to its presence in over 40 countries, its early appearance on the internet and its consistent work towards the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate and the unification of all the world's Muslims in this caliphate, Hizb ut-Tahrir is often used to exemplify a modern, Islamist and transnational organisation. However, my studies of the Danish and British branches demonstrate that there is very little contact between these two neighbouring branches and that both members and former members are still oriented towards the homelands of their parents and grandparents. The differences between the Danish and British branches suggest that the main explanations came down to issues of ethnicity, national origin, and local politics. In Denmark, the majority of the members are of Arab origin; in Britain, they are of South Asian – mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi – origin, and this determines their political activities and rhetoric. In Denmark, there is a strong focus on the Arab world, and especially issues related to Palestine and Israel; in Britain, the focus is mostly on Pakistan and Kashmir. The different foci serve to address different audiences with specific interests. However, this commonsense realisation would appear to negate the understanding of Hizb ut-Tahrir members as belonging to a transnational organisation that seeks to unite all

Muslims in a caliphate. Subsequently, the questions posed were: how do observers come to understand the organisation as transnational if the majority of activities are limited to one specific national context? How do the national and the transnational elements of the ideology and the activities interact? How do members make sense of themselves and their activities in an organisation that ignores all national and ethnic differences in their aim to unite all Muslims when their party activities are so clearly shaped by their local and national context? Do members think of the future caliphate as “home” or are they at home in Denmark or Britain?

Against this background, the hypothesis was that Hizb ut-Tahrir is a transnational organisation on an ideological, organisational, practical and media related level. However, the empirical findings show very little evidence of transnational activities, and hence, necessitating distinction between physical and sentimental transnationalism, between practice and ideology.

The methodological approach has been a combination of theoretical studies and empirical data collection. The academic approaches serving as sources of inspiration for this work are a combination of a “historical-hermeneutical” approach (Taji-Farouki 1994 and 1996, Eickelman and Piscatori 1996, Kepel 1994, 1997, 2002, 2004, 2008, Roy 1994 and 2004, Mandaville 1999, 2001, 2005 and 2007) and a sociological approach (Wiktorowicz 2004a, 2004b and 2005). By combining the two approaches I aimed at producing a context-oriented and group-specific study with a specific attention to notions of and place and practice (Tuan 1977, Cresswell 2002 and 2004, Massey 2005, Winther, 2006). In terms of the study of Hizb ut-Tahrir, I have studied the organisation’s ideological text corpus as well as all written material accessible from the web pages in English, Danish, German and French. Secondly, I have analysed Hizb ut-Tahrir’s patterns of activity in Denmark and Britain since 2003. Moreover, I have interviewed members about ideological notions of the caliphate in Hizb ut-Tahrir compared to personal ideas of home and belonging and I have asked former members in the two countries about possible changes in their personal ideas of home and belonging after leaving Hizb ut-Tahrir

The first two chapters of the dissertation consist of an introduction, a research overview and methodological reflections. These two chapters are followed by three chapters (chapters three, four and five) discussing empirical findings. Chapter three discusses transnational and national aspects of Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and activities. Based on examples of transnational elements and national differences on four levels – ideological, organisational, practical and media- related – I argue that the transnational and national aspects are present simultaneously in Hizb ut-Tahrir. All activities reflect a dialectic use of the transnational and the national, and while both the Danish and British branches maintain the official party agenda with its many transnational connotations, they also develop specific references to national interests. The latter have been prevalent the past five years, so much so that it is possible to talk about nationalisation tendencies in the Danish and British branches.

Chapter four deals with Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological understanding of home and homeland. In the chapter, Hizb ut-Tahrir's official explanation concerning members developing a rational affiliation with the caliphate is questioned. Such rational affiliations form an opposition to the emotional affiliations one would have with a homeland, according to Hizb ut-Tahrir. This explanation and understanding are compared to statements by former members concerning how home is practiced by members and former members. For this purpose, I draw on concepts from cultural geography in analysing how members "do place" and "practice home" (Cresswell 2002 and Winther 2005). My argument is that Hizb ut-Tahrir members combine their ideology with their daily activities as party members. They identify with their political goal, the establishment of the caliphate, to the extent that they feel they are practicing the caliphate when they are engaging in party activities.

In Chapter five the focus is on the interaction between the ideological, organisational framework of Hizb ut-Tahrir and members' personal experiences. The chapter investigates the incentives for joining and, later on, for leaving and the dynamics at play in Hizb ut-Tahrir communities. In the chapter, I argue that Hizb ut-Tahrir is a hybrid between a cadre party, a social movement and a "tribe" (Maffesoli 1996). The



aim was to look for positive emotions and member rationales rather than explain membership by way of grievances and deficiencies. Accounts from former members indicate that while it is the organisational and ideological framework that attracts many new recruits, these do not explain why people stay in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Rather, it turns out that Hizb ut-Tahrir uses templates for emotions and self-understandings which members give content and meaning themselves. The religious content, for instance, is added by members according to their perception of salvation and reward in the hereafter.

By way of conclusion, the research questions are discussed based on the empirical findings presented in the relevant chapters. Here, I state the dissertation's three main contributions to the study of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the broader field of Islamism in Europe: 1) the combination of theoretical and empirical analysis. Failure to compare an organisation's self-presentation online and in ideological material may result in misleading conclusions, or, in the case of Hizb ut-Tahrir, in the researcher's reproducing the party's Islamist narrative; 2) the combination of the historical-hermeneutical and sociological approaches in a comparative study of an Islamist organisation. Due to this combination, the comparative study is both context-oriented and group-specific and it provides knowledge about the interaction between ideology and members' practice; 3) based on empirical findings, this study emphasises the importance of positive gains and religious rationales in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Depending on what level of analysis is chosen, Hizb ut-Tahrir can be defined as both a political and a religious organisation. However, the present dissertation shows that individual rationales connected to religion and the positive experience of belonging to a community should not be underestimated in future studies of Islamists in Western Europe.

## Dansk Referat

Denne afhandling studerer den islamistiske organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir i Danmark og Storbritannien. Baseret på interviews med medlemmer og tidligere medlemmer af Hizb ut-Tahrir i Danmark og Storbritannien, undersøges måderne, hvorpå medlemmer definerer deres fællesskab indenfor de eksisterende transnationale, muslimske diasporamiljøer i Europa. Mere specifikt er afhandlingens fokus på danske og britiske medlemmers opfattelser af "hjem", "hjemland" og "tilhørsforhold" indenfor Hizb ut-Tahrir politisk-religiøse ideologi. Afhandlingens centrale spørgsmål er: Hvordan skal man forstå forholdet mellem transnationale elementer i Hizb ut-Tahrirs aktiviteter og ideologi med medlemmers opfattelser af "hjem"?

Grundet Hizb ut-Tahrirs tilstedeværelse i over 40 lande, gruppens tidlige aktivitet på internettet og dens konsistente arbejde for kalifatets genetablering og foreningen af alle verdens muslimer i dette kalifat, bruges Hizb ut-Tahrir ofte som eksempel på en moderne, islamistisk og transnational organisation. Imidlertid viser mine studier af de danske og britiske afdelinger, at der er begrænset kontakt mellem disse to naboafdelinger, og at både medlemmer og tidligere medlemmer i højere grad orienterer sig mod deres familiers oprindelseslande end mod Hizb ut-Tahrir-medlemmer i andre lande. Forskellene mellem den danske og den britiske afdeling antyder, at forklaringer skal søges i spørgsmål om etnicitet, national oprindelse og national og lokalpolitik. I Danmark var og er størstedelen af medlemmer af arabisk oprindelse, hvorimod flertallet af medlemmer i Storbritannien er af sydasiatisk oprindelse – primært fra Pakistan og Bangladesh, hvilket er bestemmende for deres politiske aktiviteter og retorik. I Danmark fokuseres der således overvejende på den arabiske verden og især konflikten mellem Palæstina og Israel, hvorimod der i Storbritannien er et dominerende fokus på problemstillinger vedrørende Pakistan og Kashmir. De forskelligartede foci tjener det formål at adressere forskellige publikummers specifikke interesser. Trods det logiske og måske banale i opdagelsen af de to nationale afdelingers forskelle, problematiserer forskellene alligevel opfattelsen

af Hizb ut-Tahrir som transnational. Efterfølgende stilles de følgende spørgsmål derfor i afhandlingen: Hvorfor opfatter iagttagere Hizb ut-Tahrir som transnational, hvis størstedelen af aktiviteter begrænser sig til specifikke nationale kontekster? Hvordan interagerer nationale og transnationale elementer af ideologien og aktiviteterne i Hizb ut-Tahrir? Hvordan skaber medlemmer mening i deres aktiviteter i en organisation, der ignorerer alle nationale og etniske forskelle, når deres parti-relaterede aktiviteter så klart er påvirkede af deres lokale og nationale kontekster? Tænker medlemmer på kalifatet som deres fremtidige hjem eller er de hjemme i Danmark og Storbritannien?

På baggrund af disse spørgsmål er afhandlingens hypotese, at Hizb ut-Tahrir er en transnational organisation i forhold til ideologi, organisationens struktur, praktiske aktiviteter og mediebrug. Dog viser de empiriske data kun ganske få og begrænsede eksempler på transnationale aktiviteter, hvilket nødvendiggjorde introduktionen af en distinktion mellem fysisk og sentimental transnationalitet; mellem ideologi og praksis.

Den metodiske tilgang anvendt i afhandlingen er en kombination af teoretiske studier og empirisk dataindsamling. De akademiske tilgange, som har været inspirationskilder for arbejdet, er en kombination af en historisk-hermeneutisk (Taji-Farouki 1994 og 1996, Eickelman og Piscatori 1996, Kepel 1994, 1997, 2002, 2004, 2008, Roy 1994 og 2004, Mandaville 1999, 2001, 2005 og 2007) og en sociologisk tilgang (Wiktorowicz 2004a, 2004b og 2005, Maffesoli 1996). Formålet med at kombinere disse to tilgange er at producere et kontekstorienteret og gruppespecifikt studium med særlig vægt på opfattelser af sted og praksis (Tuan 1977, Cresswell 2002 and 2004, Massey 2005, Winther 2006). Studiet af Hizb ut-Tahrir baserer sig på organisationens ideologiske tekstkorpus samt alt tilgængeligt materiale på organisationens danske, engelske, tyske og franske hjemmesider. Desuden har jeg studeret udviklingsmønstre i Hizb ut-Tahrirs aktiviteter i Danmark og Storbritannien siden 2003 og interviewet medlemmer omkring organisationens ideologiske forståelse af kalifatet sammenlignet med personlige ideer om hjem og tilhørsforhold. Endvidere har jeg adspurgt tidligere medlemmer i de to lande, hvorvidt de har ændret opfattelse vedrørende hjem og tilhørsforhold efter at have forladt Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Afhandlingens første to kapitler indeholder en indledning, en forskningsoversigt samt metodiske overvejelser. Disse efterfølges af tre kapitler (kapitel tre, fire og fem) baseret på det empiriske materiale. Kapitel tre diskuterer transnationale og nationale aspekter af Hizb ut-Tahrirs ideologi og aktiviteter. Med udgangspunkt i eksempler på transnationale elementer og nationale forskelle på fire niveauer – det ideologiske, organisationsrelaterede, praktiske og medierelaterede – argumenterer jeg for, at transnationale og nationale elementer er tilstede samtidigt i Hizb ut-Tahrir. Alle aktiviteter afspejler en dialektisk brug af det nationale og det transnationale, og mens både den danske og britiske afdeling vedholdende refererer til partiets officielle dagsorden inklusiv alle dens transnationale konnotationer, udvikler de samtidigt specifikke referencer til nationale interesser. Sidstnævnte tendens har været markant de sidste fem år i en sådan grad, at det er muligt at tale om egentlige nationaliseringstendenser i de danske og britiske afdelinger.

Kapitel fire undersøger Hizb ut-Tahrirs ideologiske forståelse af "hjem" og "hjemland". I kapitlet bliver der sat spørgsmålstegn ved Hizb ut-Tahrirs officielle forklaring vedrørende medlemmers rationelle forhold til kalifatet. I modsætning til de rationelle overvejelser, der ifølge Hizb ut-Tahrir knytter medlemmer til kalifatet, står de følelsesmæssige bånd, et individ kan have til et hjemland. Denne opfattelse bliver sammenlignet med udsagn fra tidligere medlemmer omkring hvordan "hjem" opfattes og praktiseres af medlemmer og tidligere medlemmer af Hizb ut-tahir. I denne forbindelse anvender jeg kulturgeografiske begreber og analyserer, hvordan medlemmer "gjorde sted" og "praktiserede hjem" (Cresswell 2002 og Winther 2005). Herpå var mit argument, at Hizb ut-Tahrir medlemmer kombinerer deres ideologi med deres daglige partirelaterede aktiviteter. De identificerer sig med Hizb ut-Tahrirs politiske mål, genetableringen af kalifatet, i en sådan grad, at de føler at de "praktiserer kalifatet", når de involverer sig i partiets aktiviteter.

Kapitel fem omhandlede interaktionen mellem Hizb ut-Tahrirs ideologiske, organisatoriske ramme og medlemmers personlige oplevelser. Kapitlet undersøgte hvilke motiver, der ligger bag medlemskab og senere brud med organisationen. Jeg

diskuterer Hizb ut-Tahrir som et parti en social bevægelse og en "stamme" (Maffeosli 1996) og finder, at Hizb ut-Tahrir er en hybrid mellem disse. Formålet med kapitlet er at afsøge positive bevæggrunde for medlemskab snarere end at applicere de mere typiske forklaringer, der baseres på medlemmers oplevede frustrationer. Forklaringer fra tidligere medlemmer indikerede, at til trods for at det umiddelbart tiltrækkende ved Hizb ut-Tahrir ligger i ideologien og den organisatoriske struktur, og at Hizb ut-Tahrir på succesfuld vis stiller følelsesmæssige skabeloner til rådighed for identifikation og selv-forståelse, så fastholdes individer i medlemskab på grund af de vide muligheder for selv-fortolkning og egne, personlige bidrag og rationaler. Eksempelvis tilfører de individuelle medlemmer selv det religiøse indhold baseret på egne opfattelser af frelse og dommedag.

Konkluderende finder jeg, at afhandlingens bidrag til studiet af Hizb ut-Tahrir og islamisme i Europa i bred forstand består af tre ting: 1) Kombinationen af teoretiske og empiriske studier viser, at såfremt organisations selv-repræsentation på internettet og i ideologiske materiale ikke er sammenholdt med praktiske aktiviteter, er der risiko for at drage misvisende konklusioner og blot reproducere den islamiske narrativ. 2) Kombinationen af et kontekstorienteret og gruppespecifikt studium giver viden om, hvorledes en ideologi omsættes til praksis af medlemmer, og, som set her, eksempelvis kan skabe nye opfattelser af hjem. 3) Med udgangspunkt i empirisk data viser denne afhandling vigtigheden af at fokusere på positive elementer og religiøse rationaler i islamistiske organisationer. En organisation som Hizb ut-Tahrir indeholder både politiske og religiøse elementer, og nærværende studium demonstrerer, at man med fordel kan fokusere mere på individuelle forklaringsmodeller baseret på religion og det positive i at tilhøre et fællesskab i fremtidige studier af islamister i Vesteuropa.

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