LONGING FOR THE CALIPHATE WHILE LIVING IN THE STATE
AN AGENT-STRUCTURE ANALYSIS OF THE APPEAL OF HIZB UT-TAHRIR TO MUSLIMS IN THE WEST

A thesis submitted by

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ABSTRACT

This project investigates the appeal of the group Hizb ut-Tahrir, primarily focusing on its Australian and British branches, and serves as a contribution to recent scholarly debates on why non-violent (vocal) radical forms of Islam still attract segments of Muslim communities in the West. This thesis places emphasis on a topic still neglected by the current literature: vocal and radical Islamists. Such groups advocate for the caliphate and for the implementation of shari'a but also reject violence as a tool to achieve these goals. This thesis questions the common opinion that terrorism stands out as the final manifestation of the multi-faceted process of radicalisation. This account of Hizb ut-Tahrir points out how an Islamist group can remain vocal and radical for over six decades, while continuing to expand around the world, recruiting new members and impacting the ideology of new groups. Unfolding the discourse through the structure/agent debate, this project uncovers the dual nature of Hizb ut-Tahrir, acting both as an agent (vis-a-vis the national political authorities and its competitors) and as a structure for its members, providing a specific system of values and a group identity, which not only assures the group new recruits in the contemporary Western context but also long-term memberships. Employing methods of semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and thematic analysis, this project uncovers the specific elements of Hizb ut-Tahrir that make it appealing for some segments of Muslim communities in the West. In particular, this project identifies four main factors that make Hizb ut-Tahrir appealing to some segments of Muslim communities in the West: Hizb ut-Tahrir’s evolution into a transnational organisation, Hizb ut-Tahrir’s ideological premises used to challenge the West at the political and social level, a set of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s unique features that make the group different from the plethora of Islamic revivalist groups advocating for the caliphate today,
and Hizb ut-Tahrir’s role as a structure creating a strong system of meanings and identities for its members. Studying the main ideological tenets of vocal radicals like Hizb ut-Tahrir fosters a deeper understanding of both intellectual and violent forms of Islamic activism in the West, since they share the same ideological tenets but give voice to their claims in very different ways. Without denying that radicalization is the basis for any sort of violent ideological expression, this thesis argues that radicalisation and terrorism are not always necessarily intertwined.
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is comprised of original work, which has been submitted towards the completion of a Doctorate of Philosophy. Where required, due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other materials used. Furthermore, this thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of tables, figures, and bibliographies.

Name of Author: Elisa Orofino

Signature: __________________________ Date: May, 29th 2018
This thesis represents a major achievement for me, one which has been paved by many sacrifices but also by uncountable joys. I thank God for giving me the strength and persistence to complete this PhD journey on time and making possible this significant milestone in my life. But I also want to thank a number of wonderful people who played an essential role during my PhD experience. First and foremost, my supervisors, the brilliant academics and skilled researchers Abdullah Saeed and Sow Keat Tok, who have always supported me with their encouragement and valuable advice and have always shared their outstanding expertise with me.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The minds of the Muslims have been consumed by the present day situation, and can only conceptualize the system of government through the depraved democratic regimes foisted upon Muslim countries.

Taqiuddin An-Nabhani (1998, p.1)

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis, addressing the core elements of this research project. This chapter elucidates the importance of the research problem, clearly stating the research question and sub-questions of the thesis. After discussing the central argument of the thesis (and its related considerations), this chapter provides information on the background of this research project, specifically on Hizb ut-Tahrir (the “Liberation Party”) and its establishment in Britain and in Australia. Besides framing the historical conditions fostering the establishment of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s cells (first in Palestine and then in the two Western countries under analysis), this chapter elucidates the current status of Hizb ut-Tahrir (henceforth, HT or the Hizb) both in Britain and in Australia, focusing on the most prominent local figures and their activities.

Before focusing on the research method, this chapter also elucidates the use of the most recurrent terms in this study (both in English and in Arabic). The
methodology section provides details on the participants included in the study, the research locations and the methods applied, while stressing the main obstacles the author faced in the field. Detailed information on the interviewees’ profiles are then offered in the *ad hoc* section on the participants’ demographics. This is followed by the analytic strategy, providing information on how the author analysed the data gathered during the fieldwork. The theoretical framework section then explains the relevance of constructivism to this study and the importance of the “agent-structure” debate for the analysis of HT as both an agent and a structure.

Finally, the outline of the structure of the thesis reveals the aims and scopes of each chapter. As an outcome of this research project, the understanding of the factors attracting Muslims in the West to radical expressions of Islam will be enhanced, especially with respect to radical Islamist groups that remain non-violent, operate legally in their territories, and continue to attract new members through the power of their ideas.

### 1.1 Main Research Question and Central Argument of the Thesis

This study aims to answer the following key question: *why are segments of Muslim communities in the West attracted to radical expressions of Islam espoused by Hizb ut-Tahrir?* The term radical does not have a negative connotation *per se* when referring to revivalist Islamic groups; instead, it denotes the need to go back to the roots of the religion, and advocate for the application of *shari’a* within a divinely inspired political setting, namely, the caliphate.

While many other Islamist groups support the caliphate and the application of *shari’a*, HT exhibits specific characteristics that make it different from other groups. For instance, some of HT’s radical expressions of Islam are conveyed
through HT’s political attitudes. HT recognises the caliphate as the only legitimate system and therefore rejects any form of Western political organisation, including the Westphalian division of the world into nation states.¹ For this reason, the group forbids its members to take part in political life and discourages any form of active citizenship, such as voting or running for public office. While a number of young Muslims might find HT’s ban on particular forms of expression of opinion via political channels quite constraining, many others are attracted to this form of dissent.

The expressions of Islam espoused by HT within the social realm mostly concern the group’s prescriptions to live detached from the *kuffar* (unbelievers) in terms of leisure activities, relationships, intellectual preferences, dress code, and religious practices. The central argument of this thesis is that HT provides young Muslims in the West with an arena where they feel safe and fulfilled and can fight against a broken system (the Western one), while following an alleged core religious obligation (working towards the re-establishment of the caliphate) without engaging in violence.

The main argument of this thesis entails several considerations. First HT provides its members with an ideology that pushes them towards specific religious, social, and political views defined as “radical” (Sinclair, 2010, p. 25). Furthermore, HT’s focus on the intellectual dimension in the West attracts young Muslims who are open to revolutionary ideas and are outraged about the perceived injustices motivating many terrorist groups, but who disapprove of using violence to achieve their aims.

¹ The Westphalian nation-state system refers to the product of the set of principles that have given rise to the concept of the “modern state”, emerging after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. These principles—the Principle of Territoriality, the Principle of Sovereignty, and the Principle of Legal Equality—serve as the founding pillars of contemporary democracies (Spruyt, 2000).
Secondly, HT’s presence in over 45 countries worldwide highlights its ability to adapt to specific local characteristics and political conditions. While maintaining a global stance—advocating for the caliphate and for a separation from kuffar—each HT branch tailors its approach to the country in which it operates, implementing the central leadership’s guidelines in the most effective way in the local context. For instance, differences in the group’s attitude towards local authorities (in terms of boldness and criticism) are determined by how each branch can best maximise its political opportunities without being banned.

This ability has strengthened the image of the group as a reliable and long-standing actor and has consolidated its role as an intellectual champion of Islam for many young disenfranchised Muslims in the West. Finally, this thesis argues that HT stands out as a sui generis actor within the arena of Islamist groups, differing from many other groups in terms of political attitude, intellectual rigour, detailed methodology, and internal structure. As highlighted by the interviews the author conducted with current members, HT’s ideology and methods are highly structured and unlikely to change. They are based on a well-defined body of literature, made up of 14 books mostly written by the founder Taquiddin An-Nabhani.

Before they are officially members, new recruits are students (daris) trained for up to two years on HT’s main ideological tenets to ensure that they possess sufficient understanding of the group’s fundamental beliefs. Therefore, a shared knowledge base among members of all hierarchical levels ensures inner coherence and prevents internal division within the group. The high level of cohesion within HT is a badge of honour for HT members, who are proud of being of “one mind” globally.
Many other Islamist groups—such as ISIS or Boko Haram—promote themselves as righteous alternatives to the Western system, which from their point of view is deeply connected to two great enemies of Islam, namely Christianity and capitalism. This is also the case with ISIS, whose violent methods and internal divisions discourage many young Muslims from taking part in their activities. Conversely, HT stands out as the ideal cohort for all those young Muslims who feel disenfranchised from the country they live in, who reject their parents’ background, and are looking for an autonomous fulfilling identity (Lynch, 2013, p. 245). Since most of HT’s members are wealthy and educated people, the research presented here suggests that the discomfort is not only due to economic hardship or the experience of social exclusion. Instead, HT’s appeal to young Muslims is very much related to the emotional sphere - to the need to feel part of something important and revolutionary that aims to protect Muslims globally.

1.1.1 The Sub-Questions of the Thesis

Related to the main research question and the central argument mentioned above, four sub-questions underpin this research:

1. How has HT’s evolution into an “organisation-like” actor contributed to consolidating its presence in the world over the past 60 years?

2. How does HT challenge Western political and social structures?

3. What are the unique features of HT compared to other Islamist groups?

4. How does HT create meanings and identity for its members, fostering long-term loyalties?

Each of the sub-questions is explored in a specific chapter and together they contribute to answering the main research question. The sub-questions are also useful for exploring several aspects of HT, such as the group’s sources of
strength, along with its advantages over other Islamist groups in terms of ideology, recruiting, and global presence.

1.2 The Project Background

This thesis explores the role of “vocal radical Islamist groups” (Wali 2016, p. 102) and their capacity to attract new followers in Western states using HT as a case study. The term “vocal radical” is used to refer to all those Islamist groups presenting a strong anti-Western and anti-integration stance but not using violent methods. Although some scholars have recently conducted research on vocal radical Islamist groups (Maher, 2013; Høigilt, 2014; Wali, 2016, 2013; Peucker and Ceylan, 2017) a significant portion of the literature remains exclusively focused on violent Islamist groups such as ISIS and Al-Qaida (Celso, 2012; Chassman, 2016; Iqbal & Zulkifli, 2016; Jacoby, 2017).

While providing insights into how violent organisations operate, this literature is limited in its understanding of why radical expressions of Islam that do not promote or approve of the use of violent methods appeal to Muslims in the West. In fact, terrorism and violence are only a small part of a more complex radicalisation process that begins in the mind of the individual through the introduction of new ideas. Since engagement in violent activities is not a process that happens overnight, it is essential to take a step back and look at the attractiveness of vocal radical Islamist groups like HT—which still legally operates in most of the Western world as an intellectual organisation—in order to understand what drives Muslims towards anti-Western ideas and sometimes pushes them even further to participate in violent actions.²

² HT’s spokespersons often define their group as an “intellectual organisation” in order to differentiate HT from other violent Islamist groups (Badar, 2012, 2015; Doureih, 2017).
The choice of HT as a case-study is particularly relevant for this thesis and was determined by three main elements. First, the group exhibits a high degree of institutionalisation, which is evident in the clear division of roles, functions, and responsibilities in all 45 countries in which HT operates. Since its foundation in Jerusalem (1953), HT has experienced a rapid expansion, evolving into a well-structured organisation able to resist bans and persecutions (Taji-Farouki, 1996). Furthermore, the organisation’s focus has not changed over the years: it was founded by a group of Palestinian Islamic scholars as a protest-for-justice group, engaging in an intellectual fight for the rights of Muslims to free them from their oppressors globally, and this continues to be its main goal more than six decades after its constitution (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2016).

The second reason HT is an appropriate choice as a case study involves the nature of HT’s ideas, which centre around the re-establishment of the caliphate (khilafah or Islamic state), accompanied by the group’s strong anti-Western rhetoric, which frames the Western system as an enemy to defeat. The combination of these two elements served as a prompt for the author to further investigate this kind of organisation, defined as an “Islam ideological vanguard” (Hanif, 2012, p. 202). Undoubtedly, HT stands out as one of the oldest Islamic revivalist groups advocating for the caliphate, still active at the international level, and its ideological tenets have certainly influenced a multitude of pan-Arabic protest groups with strong anti-Western stances that came after HT.

The third reason is related to the second one and concerns the power of HT’s ideas. Even if HT leadership has always rejected violence and has presented the group as an intellectual hub, HT’s ideas might have sometimes served as a “conveyor belt to terrorism” (Baran, 2005, p. 11), fostering the creation of violent groups or personalities. This is the case of the proscribed organisation Al-
Muhajiroun, a group established by a former HT member in Britain (Omar Bakri), which openly supports violent methods. Also, the July 7/7 London bombers were identified as alleged members of a HT splinter group in Britain (Baran, 2005).

Most recently, another example of a violent personality emerging from HT is the young Sydney gunman. The 15-year-old attacker was allegedly a regular attendee of HT’s lectures where he apparently developed a strong hatred of national authorities and may have contributed to his decision to attack the New South Wales Police Force headquarters in Parramatta, on October 2nd 2015 (Mitchell, 2015). Given the global presence of the organisation and the on-going controversies related to the potential proscription of HT in many Western countries, the choice of HT as a case-study is very timely.

Today, HT is banned in at least 14 countries around the world, including many Muslim-majority countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan (Counter Extremism Project, 2017). The Hizb is also banned in Turkey, Russia, China, and Germany where it was deemed “anti-Semitic and dangerous” (European Court of Human Rights, 2012). Other countries like the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Australia have considered banning HT several times as a hub of “preachers of hate” but have not done so, apparently fearing a possible backlash of negative reactions from other Islamic revivalist groups who present themselves as mere intellectual groups.

1.2.1 Focusing on Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain and Australia

As data collected for this thesis is mostly based on fieldwork conducted in the UK and in Australia, the author here provides some background information on HT branches in the two countries, starting from the establishment of the first
cells in the two countries to their present-day status. The activities of HT Britain date back to 1986, when the first HT cell was established by the Welsh-Yemeni Abdul Kareem Hassan and the Palestinian Fuad Hussain (Hamid, 2016). Following the method of HT’s founder Taquiddin An-Nabhani—which consisted of recruiting a small group of educated people and then expanding the message to a broader public—HT Britain activities were initially based on small study-circles of students who would later work to bring HT’s da’wah (call to Islam) to others.

Rapidly, the number of HT Britain members grew along with group’s range of activities. While increasing the number of HT lectures and talks, the late 1980s also witnessed the establishment of Al Khilafah Publications, devoted to translating An-Nabhani’s main works into English to spread the message faster. HT Britain achieved great popularity during the 1990s under the leadership of the Syrian-born Omar Bakri who led the group until 1996. It was a time of great turmoil characterised by serious international crises—such as the Gulf War (1991) and Chechnya Wars (1994-96)—where many Muslims lost their lives. HT Britain used these events as prompts to build its campaigns against Western governments, depicting these states as colonial powers responsible for the hardship experienced by Muslims around the world.

Using such arguments—and presenting a detailed vision of the caliphate as an alternative model to Western democracy and capitalism—HT Britain was able to attract a significant number of members in the UK, including converts and individuals from Muslim households.³ As the activities of the Hizb increased and

³ Jamal Harwood was a famous convert and a prominent member of HT Britain. He converted to Islam in 1987 and, since then, has been promoted as a “white trophy Muslim” to highlight the effectiveness of HT’s ideology (Hamid, 2016, p. 42). For more information on Jamal Harwood see HT Britain website (http://www.hizb.org.uk/jamal-harwood/).
expanded on university campuses, HT Britain began to attract thousands of supporters. HT Britain associates were usually young Muslims (between 18 and 30 years old), and most were British citizens with a South-East Asian background.⁴

HT-sponsored *Khilafah* Conferences⁵ provide evidence of the massive support HT Britain experienced in the 2000s: the conference held in 2002 in London gathered 6,500 people, while the one in Birmingham (2003) attracted 7,000 individuals (‘Thousands attend Muslim Conference’, 2003). Since HT Britain has always had a controversial relationship with national authorities and has always denigrated and attacked them verbally, the possibility of banning the group became more and more plausible after the 7/7 London attacks. In 2005, the Blair administration began investigating the group, which was put under further scrutiny after well-known senior members left the Hizb and started to openly criticise the organisation.⁶

For these reasons, HT Britain adopted a new approach, one that was less direct and based more on “self-victimisation”, characterizing itself as a mere intellectual group oppressed by the Western authorities in spite of their official support for freedom of speech. Today, some of the most prominent members of

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⁴ This ethnographic profile has remained unchanged.
⁵ The *Khilafah* Conferences are regular events held by HT branches worldwide. For example, HT America defined the 2017 *Khilafah* Conference as follows: “The *Khilafah* Conference is part of a global campaign carried by Hizb ut-Tahrir occasioned on the abolishment of the *khilafah*—the Islamic system of ruling— in 1924. It is a global call to Muslims worldwide to stand up and fulfil the obligation to resume the Islamic way of life, as decreed by Allah (swt), by re-establishing the *khilafah* on the path of our Prophet (saw)” (https://hizb-americain/2017-khilafah-conference/).
⁶ Well-known examples of former HT Britain members who left the organisation and then publicly attacked it are Rashad Ali, Maajid Nawaz, and Ed Husain. Together, they founded the Quilliam Foundation, a think tank devoted to fighting Islamist extremism in the UK. However, Quilliam Foundation is considered a very controversial actor even by some segments of the UK Muslim community not associated with HT Britain. Two other prominent former members of HT Britain are Shiraz Maher and Dawud Masieh. For more details, see Maher’s testimony on BBC News (Maher, 2007), Ali and Masieh’s profiles on Quilliam Foundation website (www.quilliamfoundation.org/People.htm), Husain and Nawaz’s biographical accounts on their experiences as “radical Islamists” (Husain, 2007; Nawaz, 2012).
HT Britain include Abdul Wahid (Executive Chairman), Taji Mustafa (Media Spokesperson), Nazreen Nawaz (Women's Media Representative), and Ibtihal Bsis (a senior member very active in the women’s section of HT Britain), all of whom are highly educated, politically minded professionals with the ability to think critically and have been actively involved in HT since the 1990s. These features are common to HT Britain’s Australian counterpart, where the three current front men are Wassim Doureihi, Uthman Badar, and Hamzah Qureshi. Doureihi was the spokesman for HT Australia until 2015 when he handed his role to Badar.

Wassim Doureihi continues to be a prominent member of the organisation and also a source of several controversies (Qldaah, 2014). Badar is an activist and a writer who frequently speaks at HT Australia’s events, including lectures, conferences, and rallies. Finally, Qureshi has recently taken over the role of spokesman for Uthman Badar, and was previously in charge of the media department of HT Australia. All of them hold a university degree and demonstrate an intimate knowledge of Islam. No studies in the literature have specifically addressed HT Australia, and thus the data collected during the author’s fieldwork was the main source used in this thesis to provide more details on the establishment of HT in Australia.

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7 Abdul Wahid is a doctor like Nazreen Nawaz, while Taji Mustafa is an IT professional and Ibtihal Bsis is a well-known barrister specializing in human rights. For more information on Wahid’s and Mustafa’s profiles see Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain website (http://www.hizb.org.uk/people/). For more details on Nazreen Nawaz see Bano’s article on BBC News (Bano, 2010) and for more information on Ibtihal Bsis see Prevent Watch website (http://www.preventwatch.org/armanaz-chambers/).

8 Given the vibrant activity of HT Australia on social media, more information on Doureihi can be found on his personal Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/WassimDoureihi.1/?ref=br_rs). The same can be said for Uthman Badar (https://www.facebook.com/uthbadar/) and Hamzah Qureshi (https://www.facebook.com/hamzah.qureshi.39).
While there is no official date, Uthman Badar pointed out, during his interview with the author, that HT Australia might have been established in the early 1990s by some HT Indonesian members who settled in Australia. Another clue to HT’s establishment in Australia can be found in Reza Pankhurst’s recent book *Hizb ut-Tahrir: The Untold Story of the Liberation Party* (2016). He points out that in 1975 some HT members travelling from the Middle East (to avoid persecution) recruited 35 people in Sydney who responded to the Hizb call. While these two versions are separated by 15 years, it is likely that HT activities began in Australia in the late 1970s, but the organisation was not formalised until the 1990s.

According to Pankhurst, An-Nabhani initially denied the association of the Australian cell with the HT’s central administration, but it later became fully recognised as “Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia”. If the first decade and a half was a period of adjustment and of recruiting, the early 2000s witnessed a flourishing of activity for HT Australia, especially in Sydney neighbourhoods with the highest Muslim density.⁹ HT Australia held its first *Khilafah Conference* in 2007, despite several obstacles from national and local authorities, such as Sydney council’s cancellation of the event. The conference presented the caliphate not only as a religious obligation for every Muslim but also as the panacea for all problems of the *ummah* (global community of Muslims).

Since then, the activities of the Hizb have expanded and have led to the formation of other cells in different cities, such as Melbourne; yet, Sydney has remained the HT headquarters for Australia. While no HT associate is allowed to say how many members the organisation currently has—and no official estimates are available—it is likely that HT Australia has more than 2000 members. This

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⁹ These areas are Lakemba, Bankstown, Auburn, and Wiley Park.
number has been estimated from attendance to the *Khilafah* Conferences, which usually goes above a 2000 people. The majority of current HT Australia members are Australian citizens, most of whom have Lebanese ancestry, followed by Pakistani ancestry. HT Australia members also tend to be young, in the range of 20-35 years, with an even distribution of men and women (Uthman Badar, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).

As in the UK where HT’s women section is very active, in Australia, HT women are strongly committed to the organisation and produce a significant amount of online content on the *khilafah* and other controversial topics, such as femininity in Islam, marriage, and the role of Muslim women in the West.\(^\text{10}\) Nawaz and Bs’s Australian counterparts are Atika Latifi (an Indian-born scholar) and Reem Allouche (a primary school teacher), two of the most active women in the Australian branch of the organisation. As with HT Britain members, Latifi and Allouche recently have been at the centre of a significant controversy that was sparked from the posting of a video commenting the passage 4:34 of the *Qur’an* (Hizb ut-Tahrir Channel, 2017).

In their discussion, the two HT Australia women pointed out how it is fair for the husband to “correct the wife” when she misbehaves by striking her with a small stick in a mere symbolic way. While Latifi and Allouche promoted this prescription as a “beautiful blessing” to preserve the family unity, Australian authorities were alarmed by the possibility that such declarations might encourage domestic violence in Muslim households.\(^\text{11}\) Over the years the authorities have threatened to ban the organisation multiple times, and as a

\(^{10}\) For more information on HT Australia women’s section, see the Facebook page Women of Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia (www.facebook.com/womenofhtaust/).

\(^{11}\) The video was quickly condemned by the Australian Federal Minister for Women, Michaelia Cash, who called the video “abhorrent”. Also, local police commissioner Mick Fuller expressed his serious concern about the video, stating “men need to take responsibility and not receive encouragement to behave violently” (Olding, 2007).
result HT Australia has adopted the same stance as its British counterpart, portraying itself as a “victim” of Western oppression. These arguments are often articulated during HT Australia talks and can be found in the great number of online publications on social media and on the official websites; the arguments frame Western authorities as enemies with a hidden agenda of destroying Muslims by attacking Islam and their religious tenets (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia Media Office, 2016; Huq, 2017).

While using local issues to get the attention of national public opinion, HT Britain and Australia share a common rhetoric with two goals: to attack the capitalist system and the concept of democracy (exposing inability of these models to solve social problems and assure a good life for citizens) and to present Islam through its history as the solution (by pointing out the outstanding achievements of Muslims over the centuries and the good quality of life under the caliphate). Finally, both HT Britain and HT Australia aim to create, through the group’s preparatory ideological work, a large cohort of Muslims that support the re-establishment of the caliphate in the Middle East.

1.3 Notes on Language and Terms

This thesis uses a number of terms—sometimes interchangeably—that require prior clarification. First, the term “Islamist group” is used throughout the thesis to refer to specific groups reacting against modernity, colonisation, and the failure of political leaders in the Middle East. These groups advocate for a revival of Islam in all fields (political, economic, social, and religious), stressing the need to go back to the roots of the religion and its holistic implementation as a din, i.e. a way of life. These actors are usually defined as “radical Islamist groups” or “Islamic fundamentalists”; in this thesis these terms will be used as synonyms.
Both terms (radical and fundamentalist) highlight the quest for Islamic authenticity by looking back at its beginning: Islamic roots and fundamentals.

Islamic fundamentalism is a widespread phenomenon and includes several groups, movements, organisations, and ideologies willing to implement an Islamic social order and often an Islamic state. For an extended account of Islamic fundamentalism see James Piscatori’s contribution to The Fundamentalism Project (Piscatori, 1991). Given its goal of re-establishing the caliphate, its segregation from non-believers, and its will to go back to the roots of Islam, HT is referred to as a radical Islamist group in this dissertation. Also, this thesis often refers to HT as a “radical vocal Islamist group” (Wali, 2016, p. 102), using Wali’s definition as a starting point to stress the characteristics of such groups; while advocating for the re-establishment of the caliphate and the holistic implementation of shari’a, radical vocal Islamist groups reject the use of violence and reject the legitimacy of the caliphate established by the violent ISIS.

While arguing that HT is a non-violent Islamist group, the present thesis also stresses HT’s evolution into a transnational organisation and therefore uses the terms “group” and “organisation” interchangeably referring to HT. With regard to the West, the author often uses the expression “Western system” to refer to the political, social, and economic setting rooted in the Greco-Roman civilisation first developed in Europe, but then exported through colonisation to other nations, such as Oceania and the Americas (Kurth, 2003). The Western system is often mentioned in the thesis as HT’s main enemy, as the group aims to ideologically destroy it and replace it with an Islamic system. Hence, with the term “Western states” or “the West” the author refers to all those states that have implemented such a system, based on democracy, capitalism, and various forms of liberalism, mostly social and economic.
As a final note, a number of Arabic terms regularly occur in this thesis. For this reason, the author has provided below a list of the most common words for the reader’s convenience. The Arabic terms are used in this thesis as they are used by HT, and the translations here provided are based on HT’s understanding of such terms. In particular, the transliterations here provided are in line with the ones used by HT and with the ones available in the English versions of the books written by HT founder, Taquiddin An-Nabhani.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Term</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Al-fikr ul-mustaneer</strong></td>
<td>Enlightened thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Al Qada</strong></td>
<td>Judiciary system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Al-Wasatiyyah</strong></td>
<td>Middle ground or centrum</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Amir of Jihad</strong></td>
<td>Commander of jihad</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Aqeedah</td>
<td>“Matters of faith”, creed. The revealed truth Muslims hold with firm conviction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>As-sira’ al-fikri</strong></td>
<td>Ideological struggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Da’i</strong></td>
<td>A person who invites others to Islam</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dar al-Islam</strong></td>
<td>Land of Islam</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dar al-Harb</strong></td>
<td>Land of war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dar al-Kufr</strong></td>
<td>Land of unbelief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daris</strong></td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Da’wah</strong></td>
<td>Call to Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dawlah</strong></td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Din</strong></td>
<td>Faith, way of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiqh</strong></td>
<td>Islamic jurisprudence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hadarah</strong></td>
<td>Civilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Halal</strong></td>
<td>Licit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Halaqaat</strong></td>
<td>Study circles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Haram</strong></td>
<td>Forbidden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Hizbis**
Members of Hizb ut-Tahrir

**Jihad**
Struggle

**Khalifah**
Caliph

**Khilafah**
Caliphate, Islamic state

**Kafir, Kuffar**
Unbeliever, unbelievers

**Majlis al-Ummah**
Assembly of the ummah

**Majaal**
Area suitable to start re-establishing the caliphate

**Masul**
HT country head

**Mu’awin Tafweedh**
Deputy assistant

**Mu’awin Tanfeedh**
Executive assistant

**Mushrif**
HT local supervisor, in charge of leading a study circle

**Mutamad**
HT regional leader

**Naqib**
HT leader in rural and urban areas

**Qiyaadah**
Leadership

**Sallallaho Alaihe Wassalam (SAW)**
Peace (of Allah) be upon him, referred to Prophet Mohammad

**Shari’a:**
Islamic law

**Subhanahu wa ta’ala (SWT)**
Arabic expression to glorify God when mentioning his name. Literally “Glory to Him, the Exalted” or “Glorious and Exalted is He”.

**Sunnah**
Verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds and sayings, silent permissions (or disapprovals) of Prophet Muhammad

**Surah**
Chapter of the Qur’an

**Tilawa**
Recitation

**Ulama**
The community of Muslim scholars

**Ummah:**
Global community of Muslims

**Wilayaat:**
Provinces

**Wulah**
Governors
1.4 The Research Method

The research method used by the author in the present study was a mixture of theoretical studies and empirical data gathering within a qualitative research design. The main methods for data collection were content analysis, focus groups, observation, and interviews. The author analysed HT’s main ideological assumptions in the literature to date, the writings of its founder An-Nabhani, and the accessible material on official websites. The author also conducted fieldwork in London and Sydney—the locations of the headquarters of the Hizb in the two countries—between October 2015 and May 2016. Participants were contacted through official channels (by emails to the media office in the UK and Australia), and the circle of contacts was then broadened through snowballing methods. The author also attended HT-sponsored events in both countries, including talks, lectures, and conferences.

Overall, the author examined 14 relevant books that together constitute HT’s adopted literature. The author relied on English sources translated by the official channel of the group, namely Khilafah Publications. These translated sources are available on HT websites and constitute the ideological pillars of the group. The author focused on two HT branches located in English speaking countries (the UK and Australia), where members use English as their primary language and where HT carries out its activities entirely in English. Therefore, Arabic was not required for content-analysis or interviews in this study, especially since only a few interviewees showed even basic knowledge of Arabic.

The author also attended 13 events, conducted three focus groups, and interviewed 16 current members of HT Australia along with two prominent characters of London’s Muslim community who were not affiliated with HT.

12 For an overview of the books that make up HT’s adopted literature, see “The books of Hizb ut-Tahrir” on the website Daily Islam (www.daily-islam.com/2016/01/the-books-of-hizb-ut-tahrir.html).
Britain. Although the sample was small, the sixteen interviews with current HT members allowed for an in-depth analysis of their experiences within the organisation, providing insights into the factors that drive them towards the group and make them want to stay.

Therefore, sixteen is a relevant number and a remarkable achievement for the author given her non-Muslim background. Previous studies on HT with more than 16 interviewees were mostly conducted by male researchers, most of whom were former members or supporters of HT (Hamid, 2016; Wali, 2013). Besides the reluctance of the Hizbis towards a Western person outside their group, some other challenges faced by the author mainly concerned the interviewees demographics, the restricted access to some of the group’s activities and the absence of official and reliable data concerning the number of HT members in the UK and in Australia together with the shortage of information regarding the establishment of the first cells in both countries.

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13 The two prominent members of the London Muslim community not affiliated with HT Britain are Salman Farsi (Media & Communications Officer at the East London Mosque, which is one of the most important mosques in the UK and is located in the borough of Tower Hamlets where HT is very active) and Aysha Al-Fekaiki (one of the leaders of the Muslim Student Union at the London School of Economics, an alleged HT recruitment pool for young intellectuals).

Below is a detailed list of the events attended by the author during fieldwork in London:
- **SOAS-Nohoudh Muslim Integration Conference 2015: Engaging with the Discourse**. SOAS Centre of Islamic Studies, November 6, 2015
- **After the Paris Horror... Don't let the Racists Divide Us. No to Islamophobia. Defend Civil Liberties**. University of East London, November 23, 2015
- **Brainwashing and Hidden Persuasion?: A Workshop on Models of the Mind and De-radicalisation**. Russell Square, Birkbeck College, December 3, 2015

And in Sydney, at the KCA Centre in Lakemba
- **Australia and the Exceptional Treatment of Muslims?** Public Lecture, March 1, 2016
- **92 Years since the Caliphate: Part 1**, Talk, March 5, 2016
- **2016 International Women’s Day: What are we Really Celebrating?** Talk, March 12, 2016
- **92 Years since the Caliphate: Part 2**, Talk, March 13, 2016
- **Rajab Event**, April 9, 2016
- **Yemen: The Latest Battleground for America’s “New Middle East”**, Event, April 11, 2016
- **Muslims - Modern Victims of Europe’s Anti-Semitism**, Event, April 25, 2016
- **Raise the flag of Rasulullah**, Event, May 2, 2016
- **Ansar High Tea**, Event, May 22, 2016
With regard to the demographics, male perspectives were fairly limited in the final analysis, given that only four men were interviewed. The almost exclusive female-focus of the project was a result of the gender segregation between males and females within the group. The author had greater accessibility to female members, while she could not directly approach HT male leaders and obtain individual interviews with them. Instead, the author had to go through their wives; once approved by the wives, the author could interview the husbands who were male leaders. Trust-building was essential in this phase, and it took months and constant attendance of HT-sponsored events both in London and Sydney.

However, sometimes, even with their wives’ approval, male leaders were not willing to be interviewed by the author. For instance, once the author interviewed the official spokesperson, the other male leaders were reluctant to be interviewed. Apparently, they considered the declarations of the official spokesperson enough and thought more interviews would be a waste of time. Nonetheless, while having restricted access to HT’s male leadership, the author’s gender was a significant advantage for examining the women of HT; as a woman, the author could participate in women-only gatherings, sponsored both by HT and its sister organisations (such as Ansar Sisters for Revival).

Thus, the author had a privileged position for observing the activities of women in the group and the ways they operate, a topic on which very little is known. The author had the chance to analyse HT women’s roles, having a direct access to their activities as da’i (a person who calls others to Islam), teachers and public speakers. This privileged access as a woman gave the author a new insight
into female Islamic activism in non-violent groups such as HT.\textsuperscript{14} Another challenge faced by the author during fieldwork was the prohibition on participation in HT’s *halaqaat* (study groups). These study groups are attended exclusively by HT members or *daris* (students, members-to-be) who are all devout Muslims. Being a Muslim is an essential condition for attending these regular meetings. Despite numerous requests by the author, HT members did not allow her to attend.

Nevertheless, this refusal allowed the author to have a unique experience with one of HT’s *da’i*, which was again due to the author’s position as a female Western researcher. In fact, before attending *halaqaat*, the author was told “you need Islam first” by some of the women of HT Australia. Therefore, the author was invited to have a talk with one of HT’s female *da’i*, who tried to persuade her to convert to Islam. This experience provided the author with a unique insight into HT’s recruiting methods for individuals who do not come from Muslim households or have a Muslim background.

The author was able to observe how HT leaders try to persuade *kuffar* to embrace Islam, a topic that is still relatively unexplored, but which merits further research given the presence of Western converts in HT branches throughout the world. Finally, the author had to face two more challenges deriving from the lack of official data on both the numbers of HT members in the British and Australian branches and from the shortage of historical records for the establishment of those branches. The author overcame these two obstacles mostly by interviewing the official spokespersons, monitoring the official numbers of participants to the recent *Khilafah* Conferences in the two countries and exploring different sources.

\textsuperscript{14} A “*da’i*” is defined as “one who invites people to the faith, to the prayer, or to Islamic life”. Oxford Islamic Studies Online (http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e478?hi=0&pos=8).
of HT-related literature to historically frame the establishment of the first cells in Britain and Australia.

Data for this research were also drawn from 400 HT online textual posts (from the official websites of HT Australia, HT Britain, HT Central Media Office and from Facebook) and 83 visual posts from YouTube, Facebook and from HT official websites gathered between October 2015 and May 2017. In-group interviews were essential for answering the main research question of this thesis. Interviews were conducted in London (October/December 2015) and in Sydney (February/May 2016). Insights from HT members, who fully espouse the organisation’s main tenets, were essential for understanding the reasons for HT’s appeal to Muslims in the West today. Working with small sample (fewer than 20 participants) proved to be fruitful and confirmed the positive aspects highlighted by the scholarship supporting this technique (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). The small sample allowed the author to conduct in-depth interviews and to explore the respondents’ feelings and perceptions regarding specific themes or situations, serving the main purpose of generating data: “to give an authentic insight into people’s experiences” (Silverman, 1993, p. 91).

To respond to the main research question of this thesis, participants were encouraged to tell their stories of how they came to join the group and what led them to embrace such a big change in their lives. At the same time, the interviews were not mere reports of experiences, but were conducted as a dialogue, where the respondent was encouraged to focus more on a specific theme relevant to this study. Secondly, a small sample highlights the specificity unique to an individual’s experience. Thus, an individual is not seen as a mere element of a sample with certain characteristics but becomes a case per se (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). In particular, a case is defined as a state arising in a particular
environment with whom the individual is constantly in contact and interacting
and is “seen as events arising either in agency (what they do) or in structure, i.e.
what they endure” (Abbott, 1992, pp. 64-65).

Therefore, an in-depth interview with a few individuals allows the
researcher to understand their relationships with environmental contingencies,
as well as the reasons behind their choices and the constraints they face. In
Australia, participants were first approached at public HT events, mostly at the
KCA Centre and the University of Western Sydney (Milperra), where the author
attended some lectures on the Qur’an. This circle of contacts was then broadened
through snowballing methods. In Sydney the initial wariness of HT Australia
members was overcome by establishing contacts with women activists, who then
introduced the author to the local male leadership. Conversely, in London, none
of the HT members contacted or approached during public events agreed to have
an individual interview.15

In the UK, the author conducted observation by attending HT-sponsored
events and by interviewing Muslims of HT’s out-group. Individual interviews
with members of the in-group were therefore conducted only with current
members and leaders of HT Australia.16

1.5 Participants’ Demographics

Four key elements emerged from the fieldwork regarding the interviewees’
profiles. The first was the age of recruitment: while 9 out of the 16 interviewees

15 In particular, during the event Citizens Not Subjects: Empowering communities (held in
London in November 5th, 2015), the author approached two iconic members of HT Britain: Abdul
Wahid and Ibthial Bsis. After After introducing herself and explaining the reasons for her
academic interest in HT, both HT Britain senior members agreed to give their personal contacts
to the author for a future individual interview. Nevertheless, they never answered the author’s
calls. Presumably, the occurrence of the Paris attacks shortly after (November 13th, 2015) fostered
a stronger suspicion of outsiders, fearing further stereotyping as “dangerous radicals” not only by
the media but also by academia.

16 To respect interviewees’ privacy, pseudonyms were used instead of real names. The only
exceptions were Uthman Badar, Wassim Doureihi, Ibthial Bsis, Nazreen Nawaz, and Taji
Mustafa, who are official spokespersons and prominent members of HT Australia and Britain.
were over 30 years old at the time of the interview, they had all joined HT in their early 20s, suggesting HT's ability to proselytise young Muslims in Western states. Secondly, all interviewees were Australian citizens, either through birth or having migrated at a very young age. Despite the fact that most of the interviewees were born in Australia, they generally described Australia as a foreign land where they were forced to live while they worked for the re-establishment of the caliphate.
The third element emerged from the analysis of the participants’ demographics, was the fact that many shared similar education and professional profile. Although the distribution between males and females was not even, with more female (12) than male (4) interviewees, all interviewees were highly educated, holding university degrees and working in professional roles as teachers or graduate researchers (8), doctors (2), entrepreneurs (2), and activists (1). The remaining three interviewees were stay-at-home mothers at the time of the interview, but they also had completed university degrees. Their ethnic background was diverse, representing the composition of Muslims in Australia with most of Lebanese background (6), followed by Pakistani (5), Indonesian (2), Turkish (1), Serbian (1) and Indian (1).
Observation conducted during HT events revealed that only a few attendees were non-Muslims and there was only a slight minority of Western converts. The main HT hub in Sydney is the KCA Centre in Lakemba where the group regularly organises lectures, workshops, talks, and social events. During the fieldwork, the author observed that each event was followed (or in some cases anticipated) by the Maghrib prayer.\textsuperscript{17} Children were welcome and played at the back of the hall while the parents focused on the speaker. Gender segregation was evident once inside the conference room: men sat at the front, while women sat at the back where they could attend to their children.

After each talk, the organisers allowed time for questions and answers (Q&A), and all guests were invited to participate. Usually 60–70 people attended the events, all wearing traditional Islamic clothes.\textsuperscript{18} There were only a couple of women who did not wear the veil or who appeared in more Western attire (such as jeans), and they were usually invited to the talk by someone else.

1.6 The Analytic Strategy

Data was initially analysed through a word frequency query on NVivo, a software program for coding and analysing text (QSR International 2011), which served as a basis for developing the thematic analysis. The latter is defined as a tool “for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 8). It allows the researcher to uncover concepts embedded in the data, and it is suited for those projects aimed at identifying new elements by means of interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998). Interpretive schemes are a

\textsuperscript{17} The Islamic prayer held at sunset.

\textsuperscript{18} Women were all wearing the veil and many of them also wore the abaya (the cloak for women that is worn over other clothing when in public), while many men were wearing the thobe, i.e. an ankle-length robe, usually white.
key feature of thematic analysis, which allows the researcher to combine analysis of the frequency of a theme with analysis of the entire subject under investigation.

The author considered all themes that emerged from the interviews and organised them hierarchically into nodes, according to their relevance to the research question of this thesis. Finally, thematic analysis served as a useful tool for analysing HT’s appeal to young Muslims in the West since thematic analysis takes individuals’ interpretations to be essential for explaining their conduct, activities, and views. By exploring the interviewees’ answers to questions about how they perceived and internalised the group’s ideology, thematic analysis helped explain how this new worldview became central to their lives.

1.7 The Theoretical Framework: Constructivism and the “Agent-Structure” Debate

The theoretical lens through which the author analyses the data is constructivism, a meta-theoretical label that has been applied to a great variety of disciplines, ranging from philosophy and pedagogy to sociology and international relations. Constructivism is the most suitable theoretical framework for this thesis because it takes into account the agents’ background, knowledge, and interpretative schemes as core elements shaping their vision of the world and their preferences. As a result, constructivism can help explain individuals’ choices, orientations, and attraction to particular groups. Starting from the assumption that identity is a social construct, the author explores how HT constructs values and principles for its members and consequently shapes their identity and understanding of the world.
Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman first applied constructivism to sociology in the 1960s, introducing the approach into the social sciences. Their work, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Berger & Luckman, 1966) represented a turning point in understanding human agency and the structure that underpins it. In the *Treatise*, they argue that people, both as individuals and members of a group, play a vital role in the construction of facts, which are made-up, explored, and established by means of social interaction.

As a result, constructivists see social construction as a continuous iterative process driven by peoples’ shared understandings and knowledge. Constructivists consensually maintain that, in the social world, the knowledge of an individual is not mechanically acquired but “actively constructed within the constraints and offerings of the learning environment” (Liu & Matthews, 2005, p. 387). The learning environment is constituted of both the people around the individual and of the system of laws, regulations, conventions the individual is continually exposed to.

Vygotsky, one of the main contributors of social constructivism, argued that individuals are learners acculturated into a specific community conveying a specific knowledge, which is transmitted through the constant interaction between the individuals and their environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky has greatly theorised about the learning processes of individuals within a group (Vygotsky 1978, 1985), arguing that individuals learn concepts and construct meanings as a result of their interaction with other individuals and with their environment (Vygotsky, 1994).

Therefore, the social context becomes essential because it is where people construct their knowledge and shape or reshape their mental models through
social interaction. From this perspective, the “group” is regarded as a relevant ideal arena, where the individual is exposed to a system of beliefs and new concepts which, through guidance provided by teachers or by more experienced peers, (s)he ends up internalizing. Through the speech, the use of symbols, images and practices, the learning environment provides the individual with newly acquired concepts and information over time (Eggen and Kauchak, 1999; McInerney, 2013; Woolfolk, 2001).

As a result, from a constructivist perspective, the social reality perceived by the individual is the outcome of the interaction between the “agent” and the “structure”. In particular, the agents are the individuals exercising their agency, which is the power of individuals “to think for themselves and act in ways that shape their experiences and life trajectories” (Cole, 2017, p. 1). The environment in which the individual exercises this agency can be considered as part of the structure, which is understood as the ensemble of rules, conventions, institutions, procedures, and resources the individual is subject to, which are able to constrain but also enable his/her actions (Giddens, 1984).

The relationship between the agent and the structure has been the focus of a central debate, the agent-structure debate, among scholars generating three main positions: “structural functionalism”, “methodological individualism” and “mutual constitutionalism” (Tan, 2011). Scholars supporting structural functionalism are convinced that structures play the pivotal role in shaping social reality as perceived by agents, who then perform their agency as a mere result of what the structure, having the power of external coercion, has determined (Durkheim, 1933, 2014; Walle, 2008).

This sort of supremacy of structure was strongly criticised by those scholars supporting methodological individualism, who considered the agent as the major
player in the process of the construction of social reality (Arrow, 1994; Heath, 2015; Hodgson, 2007; Lukes, 1968; Weber, 1978). From this perspective, agents are the ones who construct and reconstruct their world through their behaviours, preferences and rational choices. In between the theorists supporting the supremacy of structure and those advocating for the supremacy of agents, another group of experts has adopted a milder position known as mutual constitutionalism.

Advocates of mutual constitutionalism are convinced that the structure and the agents are mutually constitutive entities whose continuous interaction shapes their main characteristics. Major thinkers of this group are Talcott Parsons, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, and Anthony Giddens. While Parsons (1949) saw the relationship between structure and agents as non-problematic, considering both equally relevant in shaping the social world and expanding the focus to the purposes, ends and motivations of social actions, Berger and Luckmann (1966) were strongly persuaded that the relationship between structure and agents was a loop, whereby society (as the structure) forms the agents, impacting their behaviours, and the agents create the society, modelling it with their preferences, actions, and choices.

This interdependence between the structure and the agents was further analysed by Anthony Giddens in his *Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (1984). In particular, Giddens focused on the “duality of structure”, defining it both as a means and as a result of reproduction of social practices. Giddens grounds his claims on the premise that structures exist both inside the agents (in terms of memories, rules, frames) and outside them as an expression of social activities. Therefore, there is a continuous interaction between structures and agents, since social structures depend on agents’
practices and knowledge, but agents’ interests and preferences are influenced by structures at the same time.

The theoretical stance considering structure and agent as mutually constitutive is particularly relevant to this thesis, which explores HT as both a structure and an agent according to the subjects the group interacts with. HT serves as a structure because it creates a system of meanings, symbols, and concepts, which shape a strong identity for its members, binding individuals to the group and fostering the development of long-term loyalties. When analysing HT’s role as a structure, this thesis innovatively compares HT with transnational corporations, organisations which also create meaning for their members (employees), promoting new corporate identities and fostering long-term membership.

HT’s success is very much related to its capacity to act as a structure which constructs and conveys a precise culture of artefacts with shared meanings. In line with Vygotsky’s assumptions on learning processes (1978, 1986), HT members (and daris, members to be) are continuously exposed to the organisation’s culture, values and beliefs once they start interacting with local cells. The learning process mostly takes place within halaqaat (study groups) in which participants are instructed by a teacher (Mushrif) on the main ideological tenets of the organisation and on the adopted literature of the Hizb. The internalised knowledge gains a new interpretation based on the listener’s own personal values and experiences.

Therefore, in HT, individuals interact with one another within a specific social context (the organisation), negotiating meanings, comparing their understandings, and eventually conforming their previous beliefs with HT-sponsored ones. At the same time, the organisation has the role of “motivating
and supporting creative processes, maintaining an environment that is appropriate for innovation. In other words, the organisation has to mobilise tacit knowledge created and accumulated at the individual level” (Guizzardi, 2006, p.38). HT’s role as a structure is dual: once the individuals (agents) have internalised the HT-sponsored set of beliefs, values and codes of conduct, they effectively become part of the organisation. Agents become the main contributors to the life of the organisation itself by conveying HT’s ideological tenets and rules to others, by tailoring HT activities to the local context and by carrying out specific tasks aimed at the survival of the organisation over time, such as HT-specific da’wah, seminars, conferences and protests.

Besides its role as a structure towards its members, HT behaves as an agent in relation to national systems, challenging Western governments in terms of legitimacy, accountability, and rule of law. As an agent, HT strongly rejects the “capitalist ideology” (An-Nabhani, 2002, p.38) and the world order deriving from it. Since the early days of its foundation (in 1953), HT has performed the role of a collective agent vigorously opposing Western expansion in Muslim-majority countries as the new dominant structure. In fact, in HT’s view the West is an oppressive structure aimed at annihilating Muslims around the world through specific frames and cultural models (An-Nabhani 1998; 2002).

Frames are intended as “clusters of rules which help to constitute and regulate activities, defining them as activities of a certain sort and as subject to a given range of sanctions” (Giddens, 1984, p.87). Therefore, they suggest to agents what activities are appropriate and acceptable, differentiating them from those which are not appropriate and hence to be avoided. HT, as a collective agent, vigorously claims the incompatibility between the Islamic concepts of halal and haram and Western secular laws, inviting Muslims around the world to reject
Western frames and Western-sponsored cultural models based on individualism, female emancipation, consumerism and secularism (Awad, 2016; Badar, 2015).

Across time (more than six decades) and space (over 45 countries around the world), HT agency has not changed, continuing its ideological fight against a structure (the Western system) the organisation identifies as anti-Islamic and dangerous for Muslims (An-Nabhani, 1998; Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2002; Huq, 2017). HT performs the role of agent also towards its allies and competitors (other Islamist groups), competing for power and resources both at the global level and at the local one. When analysing HT’s agency, the author again compares the organisation with transnational corporations in order to foster a better understanding of HT’s evolution into a highly institutionalised actor in terms of internal structure, global and local strategy, and its capacity to adapt to different national contexts.

1.8 Outline of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis follows the agent-structure debate: given the dual role of HT as a structure (towards its members) and as an agent (towards Western political authorities and other Islamist groups), this thesis explores both positions in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of HT’s appeal to Muslims in the West both as an agent and as a structure. Following the present Introductory Chapter, Chapter Two offers a review of the relevant literature and provides the reader with a critical assessment of the reasons for the radicalisation of Muslims in the West and the specific literature on HT, illustrating what has been revealed about the organisation so far and what is yet to be studied. Therefore, Chapter Two contextualises the present study in current scholarly debates, helping the reader to understand what research gaps it intends to fill.
After reviewing the relevant literature, the following four chapters are organised as follows: Chapters Three and Four explore the role of HT as an agent within Western political systems. In particular, Chapter Three analyses the evolution of HT into an “organisation-like” agent and shows how HT was able to expand globally, attracting new members while retaining old ones. Chapter Three analyses the evolution of HT into an organisation by comparing the group to transnational corporations, focusing on three specific variables, namely the transnational character of the organisation, the organisational structure, and the pivotal role played by the general environment in impacting the performance of an agent in a particular local context.

Chapter Three explains how HT has not deviated from An-Nabhani’s idea of the ‘Aqeedah (doctrine), which refers to the bond between the Hizb and its members. This bond is what gives the group a stable structure and connects the individual ideologically and emotionally to the group. However, what HT has changed over the years is the very nature of its organisational structure, which has become more multidivisional or M-Form. Chapter Three illustrates how HT’s adoption of a multidivisional structure (in that many branches around the world observe the guidelines of the headquarters but at the same time have the autonomy to choose the most adequate local implementation strategy) represented an optimal compromise between centralisation and local autonomy, which allowed rapid expansion of the group and a high level of coordination among the branches.

Therefore, Chapter Three answers the first sub-question of the thesis concerning how HT’s evolution into an “organisation-like” actor, showing that it is flexible enough to meet local needs while still strongly connected with central leadership. This structure has contributed to the group’s presence in over 45
countries around the world, where it has adapted to different political and social
contexts, while keeping its distinctive features, such as its continuous support for
the caliphate. Furthermore, Chapter Three stresses that the highly
institutionalised structure of the Hizb and its global presence are powerful
elements for attracting new members and for presenting HT as a reliable, long-
standing, Islamist group that stands out among the wide plethora of competitors.

Expanding the analysis of HT’s role as an agent, Chapter Four answers the
second sub-question of the thesis, elucidating how HT challenges Western
political and social states. Drawing from interviews and HT’s main publications,
the author first examines HT’s ideological premises for challenging the West, and
then considers the group’s concept of da’wah. While the da’wah usually refers to
a call to Islam to be carried out by Muslims to those who are not Muslims,
Chapter Four stresses HT’s vision of da’wah as a call to embrace the group’s
vision of Islam also for all Muslims who are not part of the group.

Furthermore, the analysis of the three ideological premises identified in
Chapter Four (the West as an enemy, the incompatibility between the West and
Islam, and an everlasting battle between Islam and the West) and identification
of the two main fields (the political and the social one) in which HT openly
challenges Western states reveal that HT vigorously promotes the caliphate as an
alternative to the Western model. By examining members’ personal experience,
the author identifies HT’s arguments against the Western system and, in turn,
reveals the aspects of HT’s rhetoric that particularly appeal to Muslims in the
West who are current members.

In particular, Chapter Four identifies three main claims used by HT
members to challenge the West politically: the illegitimacy of the Westphalian
state model, the backlashes of Western foreign policy over the decades, and an
alleged Western hidden agenda against Muslims. At the same time, Chapter Four explores the ideological foundations of HT’s challenge to the West in the social field by analysing HT’s two main claims: the alleged problems of living in countries that allow maximum expression of personal freedoms and the backlashes arising from the alleged “lost femininity” in the West.

Chapter Five continues the analysis of HT’s role as an agent, exploring the organisation’s agency in relation to two other similar Islamist groups. Thus, Chapter Five answers the third sub-question of the thesis, revealing the unique elements that make HT more appealing than its competitors to some Muslims in the West. Chapter Five analyses HT as an agent in comparison with the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), which are HT’s main competitors as all three groups are very similar in terms of ideology, main claims, and global expansion. By conducting a comparative analysis using three main theoretical agency variables: reflexive monitoring, the rationalisation of action, and the motivations for actions (Giddens, 1984, p.5).

Chapter Five reveals the core elements of HT that make the organisation unique vis-à-vis similar groups and push some segments of Muslim communities in the West to choose HT over these other groups. In particular, HT’s uniqueness is determined by the group’s specific method, its detailed vision of the future caliphate, and its rigidity over time. These elements are described in Chapter Five as HT’s “winning cards”, since they allow HT to differentiate itself from its competitors. Moreover, they also provide a sense of stability and reliability for its members, who are committed to reproducing the group’s established routine actions, which generate ontological security.

Finally, in Chapter Six, the author investigates the role of HT as a structure for its members. By comparing HT to transnational corporations, Chapter Six
answers the last sub-question of the thesis examining HT’s ability to create meanings and a new encompassing identity for its members. This chapter specifically argues that the acculturation process to which HT members are exposed facilitates the adoption of specific terminal and instrumental values. Over time, the individual’s exposure to these values impacts the individual’s critical thinking and behaviours, which gradually conform to HT’s main tenets.

Innovatively, this chapter analyses the foundation of HT’s critical reasoning regarding faith—An-Nabhani’s ideas in the chapter “The Way to Belief”—providing the reader with an insight into how HT operates as a structure and creates a system of primary beliefs that work as a basis for all other thoughts and concepts the person might have. Finally, the chapter shows how the long-term loyalty of HT members is mostly determined by the concepts of “self-efficacy” and “positive intergroup differentiation”, which make individuals choose the Hizb as the best option for giving voice to their collective political positions and for complying with their religious obligations.

All chapters contribute to answering the main research question of the thesis by exploring several aspects of the group as both an agent and as a structure. The results of the study are summarised in the concluding chapter where the research question and sub-questions are discussed in light of the empirical findings. Moreover, the final chapter highlights the main contributions of the dissertation to current knowledge, addresses the implications of this study, and suggests new avenues for research.
CHAPTER TWO

STUDYING THE APPEAL OF RADICAL ISLAM

I've always had my heart broken for Palestine and I wanted to do something to fight for my ummah and be close to my brothers and sisters around the world...this is why I started thinking the khilafah was the solution.

Ayda, Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia

The present chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature on the examining the appeal of radical Islam in the West and the agency of HT. Over the last few years, a significant number of scholars have conducted research on radical Islamist groups, increasing the understanding of their core aspects, such as structure, strategy, and recruitment practices (Costanza, 2012; Hamid, 2011; Kundnani, 2015; Skillicorn, Leuprecht, & Winn, 2012; Yilmaz, 2010). While the literature has elucidated the process of radicalisation that pushes some segments of Muslim communities in the West towards Islamist groups, one of the main problems with these studies is that they have almost exclusively focused on violent groups, such as ISIS or Al-Qaida (Celso, 2012; Chassman, 2016; Iqbal & Zulkifli, 2016; Jacoby, 2017).

While providing important insights into the operating methods of violent organisations, this literature is still limited in grasping how radicalisation begins. Terrorism and violent methods are just a part of a complex radicalisation process
that first lodges in the mind of the individual through the introduction of new ideas. Since engagement in violent activities is not a process that happens overnight, it is essential to take a step back and look at the attractiveness of vocal radical Islamist groups like HT to understand what drives Muslims towards anti-Western ideas and sometimes pushes them even further to participate in violent actions.

Given that those who engage in violent activities are a small percentage compared to the vast ummah in the West, more research is needed on vocal radical groups to shed light on those Muslims in the West who might agree with the ideological tenets of violent groups but who do not share their methods. Such individuals would be more inclined to participate in the activities of vocal groups like HT rather than engage in violent jihad. This chapter is relevant to the present study because it contextualises the topic of this thesis in the literature, points out what has been revealed in previous studies of radical Islamist groups and identifies the questions that remain unexamined.

In particular, this chapter highlights the gaps in the literature on radicalisation and the current state of research on HT. To address these gaps, this chapter begins by discussing the relevant literature on the controversial term “radicalisation”, presenting the positions of the most relevant scholars in the field and connecting them to the main approach of this thesis. The author then discusses the main factors pushing the individual toward radical views. These factors are split into the two broad categories of “agency” and “structural” factors of radicalisation.

These labels indicate the specific characteristics of the two categories: while agency factors address the inner dimension of the individual, the structural factors concern all the external inputs deriving from the people, constraints, and
opportunities impacting the individual. Lastly, the HT-specific literature is discussed, with reference to the main academic achievements in the study of this transnational group and the gaps this research project aims to fill. This thesis addresses the gaps identified in the relevant literature on radicalisation and HT first by questioning the generalisation that all radicals become terrorists. Using HT as a case study, this thesis shows that it is possible for a group to be radical without being violent and to expand globally, attracting new members. Moreover, this thesis sheds light on HT-specific elements that attract segments of Muslim communities in the West by analysing HT both as an agent and as a structure, clarifying the goals of the group and offering a new theoretical framework comparing HT to organisations.

2.1 Radicalisation: Framing the Concept

The main gap in the literature concerning radicalisation identified in this chapter is the controversial relationship between radicalisation and terrorism. A plethora of scholars see terrorism as the natural outcome of the process of radicalisation (Baran, 2005; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008; Moghaddam, 2005). The belief that all radicals sooner or later engage in violent acts has driven scholarship towards an almost exclusive focus on terror groups as the only kind of radical groups deserving scholarly attention. This attitude has led to the neglect of non-violent (or vocal) radical groups like HT whose role, agency and attractiveness is mostly confined to the footnotes of relevant literature.

Radicalisation is a relatively new field of study in Western scholarship; it is fewer than 20 years old and mostly associated with Islamism (Schmid, 2013). Thus, the literature on (de-) radicalisation is also quite recent. Prior to 9/11, the term was difficult to find in the press and academic articles, but it emerged with
great frequency between 2001 and 2007, a period characterised by brutal terrorist acts first in the USA and then in Western Europe (Sedgwick, 2010; Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). Radicalisation is a complex and multi-faceted process that lacks a universal definition.

Nonetheless, at the most basic level, radicalisation was defined as “the process whereby people become extremists” (Neumann, 2013, p. 874). The word “extremism” is often associated with violent acts, and takes for granted that once a person is radicalised (s)he will sooner or later turn to violence, hence to terrorism. This assumption is shared by a number of scholars who, over the years, have elaborated complex definitions and models. Some major instances are Fathali Moghadam’s (2005) “staircase” to terrorism, Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko’s (2008) “pyramid” to terrorism, and Zeyno Baran’s (2005) “conveyor belt” to terrorism. These models all share one basic assumption: radicalisation is a medium/long-term progression towards extremism, which generally culminates in violent actions.

All three accounts see radicalisation as a natural path towards terrorism characterised by an initial stage where feelings of deprivation, personal victimisation, and political and social grievances serve as inputs for violence. Different factors—such as social bonds, personal experiences of discrimination, and traumas—then determine the progression from “radical” to “terrorist”, which is not immediate for everyone, but (in the eyes of these scholars) it is very likely to happen. Whether they call it a pyramid, a staircase, or a conveyor belt, all four scholars see radical ideology as the beginning of a path that usually leads to violence.

This vision is in line with Peter Neumann’s definition of radicalisation as “what happens before the bomb goes off” (Neumann, 2008, p. 4). This definition
stresses the pivotal role of radicalisation as a necessary landmark on a path towards any form of extremism. More than once, Neumann has highlighted the fact that although all radicals do not become terrorists, all terrorists must first be radicalised (Neumann, 2008; 2013; 2016). Nevertheless, the presence of long-standing, non-violent groups holding a radical Islamist ideology (such as HT) tells us that the progression from a radical stance to violence is neither immediate nor obligatory.

It is a limitation of current literature to consider radical only those groups that have shifted from radicalisation to terrorism. This limitation leaves out long-lasting groups, such as HT, with a global presence and exercising their influence both on national authorities and on segments of Muslim communities in the West. In fact, the conception of radicalisation as a natural path towards terrorism appears narrow when considering groups such as HT, a non-violent global radical Islamist group, active since 1953. HT has not permitted significant differences of opinion among its members on sensitive topics and has a policy of expelling members who are sympathetic to violence and terrorism.\footnote{This was the case with Omar Bakri Mohammed, a prominent member of HT Britain in the 1980s and early 1990s. In 1996, Bakri began to think that HT was too moderate and soon came to despise the group’s attitude towards theological plurality and its non-violent attitudes regarding \textit{jihad}. Bakri thought that the relationship between \textit{iman} (faith) and action in HT was weak and tried to change it, but central leadership did not give him the chance to alter the specific characteristics of the group for his personal preferences. For these reasons, Bakri was expelled from HT Britain. After leaving the group that made him famous for being a passionate advocate for the rights of Muslims globally, Bakri founded Al-Muhajiroun, a group urging Muslims to use physical force to fight the West, by engaging in terrorist acts.}

The assumption that all radicals will become terrorists might prevents scholars from studying the radical challenge to the Western system put forth by those groups whose pressure is not exercised through violence but through the power of ideas. A small number of scholars have already started to consider radicalisation as a different process from terrorism, considering the option that
radicalisation does not always lead to terrorism. On this subject, Randy Borum clarifies that the term radicalisation—“the process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs”—differs significantly from other paths or actions linked to “the process of engaging in terrorism or violent extremist actions” (Borum, 2011, p. 9).

Marc Sageman also claims that it is necessary to distinguish between “joining a political protest movement”, having radical ideas, and a “turn to violence” (Sageman, 2014, p. 575). While Borum and Sageman make the distinction between radicalisation and terrorism very clear, relevant scholarship in the field does not often distinguish between radicalisation and terrorism, conveying an alarming image of groups (such as HT) that have radical ideas but reject violence. More recently, Alexandra Sewell and Halit Hulusi (2016) also decided to break with the past conceptualisations that see radicalisation as a natural path towards terrorism.

Sewell and Hulusi have elaborated their own definition of “radicalisation”, which does not involve the use of violence. In particular, they defined radicalisation as a phenomenon exhibiting the following features: the acceptance of an ideology that contrasts with what is perceived as the mainstream opinion; an evident personal zeal for the newly adopted ideological views; the exclusion of action taken: having adopted “perceived extreme ideas” is enough to mark that radicalisation is occurring; and radicalisation as a multi-sector process: it can happen in religious, political, and moral fields (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016, pp. 345-346).

Sewell and Hulusi’s point of view is also shared by Arun Kundnani, another expert in the field of radicalisation and Muslim minorities in the West. In his work A Decade Lost: Rethinking Radicalisation and Extremism (2015),
Kundnani rejects the idea that radical beliefs and terror acts are necessarily connected, arguing that the factors driving an individual towards terrorism “cannot be reduced to holding a set of values deemed to be radical” (Kundnani, 2015, p. 15). Instead, he points out several factors—some of them already highlighted by social psychology—that can deeply shake the individual’s microcosm and induce him/her to violent acts.

Among these factors, Kundnani includes “moral shocks” defined as traumas or the discovery of shocking truths and an identity crisis. The latter was identified as the conflict and incompatibility between an individual’s Muslim and Western identities (Costanza, 2012; Mandel, 2009; O’Brien, 2016). While Kundnani does not a priori exclude a possible link between radical ideology and terror acts, he does not assume that a radical ideology is the only or even the main motivation of terror acts.

Also David Mandel (2009) made a useful distinction between “cognitive” and “behavioural” radicalisation, stressing how the concept of radicalisation is very complex and therefore can lead to different outcomes. While cognitive radicalisation refers to the adoption of extreme beliefs and ideology at the mere intellectual level, behavioural radicalisation refers to the individual’s acceptance of specific attitudes, often leading to engagement in extreme actions, which may involve the use of violence.

Alyssa Chassman has re-stated the importance of distinguishing between radicalisation and terrorism, arguing “there are many who become radicalised or engage in the process of radicalisation yet do not become foreign fighters, engage in terrorism, or even reach the frontline” (Chassman, 2016, p. 213). Without questioning the existence of a relationship between radicalisation and terrorism, it would be still naïve to assume that all radicals will eventually turn into
terrorism. As stressed above, such generalisation (still accepted by a plethora of scholars) represents the first limitation of the current literature on radicalisation identified in this chapter.

Focusing on HT as a non-violent radical group, this thesis aims to break with the traditional conception of radicalisation as a process necessarily leading to terrorism. In fact, by exploring the role of HT as an agent (towards national authorities and other Islamist groups) and as a structure (towards the group’s members and affiliates), this thesis aims to contribute to the debate on the role of non-violent radical groups, stressing the importance of their agency both at the local and global level.

2.2 The Agency Factors of Radicalisation

After pointing out the main debates on radicalisation and its complexity, this section discusses the relevant literature on the “factors of radicalisation”, that is, the triggers pushing an individual to the adoption of a radical ideology. Therefore, this section constitutes an essential starting point to frame the central research question of this thesis in the literature and to provide an overview of what mostly drives segments of Muslim communities in the West towards radical forms of Islam.

Following the binary structure of this thesis—which focuses on the agent/structure debate—the author has regrouped the factors of radicalisation into two macro categories: agency and structural factors. The term “agency factors” includes all the elements related to the emotional sphere of the agents that drive young people from different cultural, social, and economic backgrounds towards radical forms of Islam. At the same time, the expression
“structural factors” is here used to define all inputs towards radicalisation deriving from the environment where the individual lives.

Since radicalisation is a complex process and cannot be considered as the product of one single factor, this thesis considers the factors of radicalisation as many “pieces of the same puzzle”. Radicalisation is considered as the result of several inputs, which are deeply connected to the agent (in terms of life experiences and personal character) and also to the structure (in terms national political system, impact of policies, and the role of the local community).

With regard to the agency factors of radicalisation, Andrew G. Ryder, Lynn E. Alden, and Delroy L. Paulhus (2000) first introduced the concept of “acculturation stress”, which later became the focus of other studies, such as William S. Wolfberg’s (2012) research. Acculturation is a “phenomenon that results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149).

Barry has broadened this definition, adding that acculturation is “a social interaction and communication response style that agents adapt to when interacting with individuals and groups from other cultures” (Barry, 2001, p. 193). The core assumption of Declan T. Barry’s contribution is that the constant contact with the “other” pushes the individual to question his/her microcosm, habits, and ideas, therefore generating a certain level of stress that might lead the individual to “take refuge” in the holistic vision of the world provided by radical ideologies.

Acculturation stress can be further triggered by what social psychologists call “personal uncertainty” (Hogg, Kruglanski, & Bos, 2013; Sewell & Hulusi, 2016). Personal uncertainty arises from many kinds of life experiences, such as
relationships with other people. However, personal uncertainty can also arise from the structure in which the individual lives his life, such as the family, local community, groups (s)he belongs to, or—more broadly—to the state. When people feel uncertain, they might develop a strong identification with a group to diminish their uncertainty. Such groups offer them well-defined norms and values, which shape their behaviours and their vision of the world (Doosje et al., 2016).

The second agency factor of radicalisation identified in the literature is strongly connected to acculturation stress. This has been referred to in the literature on Islamic radicalisation as “bipolar life” (Costanza, 2012; Fareed, 2005) and defines the significant cultural dichotomy between Islamic and Western values sometimes experienced by young Muslims in the West. Greg Noble and Paul Tabar (2002) stressed the importance of bipolar life in their study of Muslim youth in Australia. They reported that second generation young Muslims seem to feel caught between two cultures: their parents’ culture and the Western culture in which they live.

Presenting their argument in Islamist terms, Noble and Tabar suggested that an individual experiences a bipolar life when (s)he lives in a kuffar country while maintaining an Islamic identity. This debate has been recently expanded by Orla Lynch (2013), Sara Savage (2013) and Sewell and Hulusi (2016) who pointed out that young Muslims in the West often seem to live in two worlds separated only by the house door. This gap is also enforced by concepts of halal

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20 When speaking about “Islamic and Western values”, the author refers to the most prominent principles and standards of behaviour deriving from both mind-sets, which sometimes differ. For example, the virtues Muslim women should aspire to (such as purity, submission, and sacrifice) are very different from the ones ambitiously sought by the majority of women in the West, such as independence, career ambition, and personal freedom.

21 The term “Islamic identity” here refers to all those behaviours connected to the religious prescriptions deriving from the five pillars of Islam: Shahada (faith), Salat (prayer), Zakat (charity), Sawm (fasting), and Hajj (the pilgrimage as to Mecca).
(allowed) and *haram* (forbidden), which strongly differ from secular laws in Western democracies.\(^{22}\)

Given these premises, scholars have pointed out how second and third generation Muslims in the West might face serious difficulties balancing their religious and national identities. In fact, this friction can lead to an “identity crisis”, which refers to the conflict between incompatible identities of an individual, in this case between being a Muslim and a Westerner (Costanza, 2012; Mandel, 2009; O’Brien, 2016). When the cognitive dissonance between the individual’s religious and national identities becomes too much to handle, it is also possible that (s)he may reject both identities.

This is the case with a number of young Muslims in the West who reject both the Western lifestyle and also distance themselves from their family’s culture, religiosity, and traditions.\(^{23}\) This attitude of general rejection is included in what Stephen F. Culhane (2004) has identified as the four dimensions of acculturation. *Integration* occurs when individuals maintain their cultures but adapt to some degree to the host’s culture, and *assimilation* is when individuals fully adapt to the host’s culture. *Separation* occurs when individuals become alienated from the host culture and separate themselves from the dominate culture, socialising mainly with persons from their own culture. Lastly, an individual experiences *marginalisation* when (s)he feels alienated from both his/her own culture and that of the host.

Marginalisation is the starting point for many young people who are undergoing a process of identity-seeking and who are willing to construct a new

\(^{22}\) For instance, secular laws tolerate gambling, alcohol, adultery, homosexuality, and blasphemy, which are all *haram* (forbidden, shameful) in Islam. On the other hand, commonly accepted behaviours in Islam, such as polygamy, are outlawed in the West.

\(^{23}\) The term “Western lifestyle” is here associated with capitalism, consumerism, individualism, and promiscuous sexual relationships.
“self” that differs from both their family model and the Western model. Within this framework, Yang F. Ebaugh (2001), Sadek Hamid (2011), Lori Peek (2005), and David Voas and Fenella Fleischmann (2012) all agree that second and third generation Muslims in the West are more inclined to seek a different religious identity from their parents. This usually happens when young Muslims become disappointed in their parents’ model of religiosity because it is too strict, too weak, or simply not adequate for addressing the needs and aspirations of young people in the way that a more pronounced political activism can.

Individuals then enter into a process of religious seeking and cognitive opening, where they are willing to explore models that differ from those of their parents and of the dominant Western culture and are open to listening to different voices and opinions (Sageman, 2004; Wali, 2013; Wiktorowicz, 2005). In addition to the estrangement from the cultures of both the family and the host country, another reason for the appeal of radical Islam to some young Muslims in the West is that it can be used as a way to resist full assimilation. This point was argued by Olivier Roy in his book Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah (Roy, 2004). Roy argued that there is a tendency among Muslims in the West to re-Islamise their worldview as a way to resist new alleged forms of Western cultural imperialism.24

To preserve their Muslim identities, Muslims return to their symbols and traditions, creating a greater feeling of connectedness for the de-territorialised ummah than for the country they live in (Roy, 2004). This ideological space is a fertile ground for Islamist groups like HT to advocate for the rights of Muslims as a minority group in the West and to raise awareness of the persecuted global

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24 Cultural imperialism is here considered a soft form of Western cultural hegemony that aims to subjugate Muslims and is carried out by the progressive adoption of cultural practices that contradict or differ greatly from Islamic tenets.
*umma* and the importance of Islam in all aspects of life. In this way, Islamist groups such as HT serve as a safe harbour for many Muslims in the West, depicting “muslimness” as something to be proud of rather than something to hide.²⁵

Finally, when confronted with controversial aspects of their religion and national background, scholars noted that many young, educated Muslims in the West have become interested in finding the “real Islam”. This term refers to an Islam that significantly differs to what is practiced in most households. Conversely, real Islam is intended as a *din* (way of life), closer to the example of the Prophet Mohammad, his companions (the *Sahabi*), and the pious ancestors, i.e. *salaf al-salihin* (Amghar, 2007; Cesari, 2002; Wali, 2013; Warner, Martel, & Dugan, 2012). Therefore, some segments of young Muslims in the West may be attracted to radical groups like HT because these groups attempt to go back to the roots of Islam. This involves seeking inspiration in the Prophet’s life to learn the correct way of honouring God and observing Islamic obligations.

The fact that HT leaders present their organisation as a blessed group inviting people to the good and forbidding the evil generates ontological security in some segments of Muslim communities in the West.²⁶ In particular, those Muslims experiencing marginalisation and identity crisis seem more inclined to look for alternative models to express their religiosity, differing from both their parents’ religiosity and from the widespread Western theological vacuum. The religious model proposed by HT fulfils the need for real Islam, for a deeper

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²⁵ *Muslimness* is defined as “The quality or fact of being Muslim”, Oxford Dictionaries (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/muslimness).

²⁶ As highlighted in Hizb ut-Tahrir’s official website Home Page (http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/EN/), the organisation has adopted a specific verse of the Qur’an (“And let there be [arising] from you a group inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful”, Qur’an 3:104) to strengthen its position as the only legitimised leader towards a blessed change.
knowledge of ‘Aqeedah and for an ideal venue (the organisation itself) which is able to decrease the level of personal uncertainty by providing a holistic identity which generates ontological security and stability in the individual.

2.3 The Structural Factors of Radicalisation

In addition to the factors related to the emotional sphere of the individual (or agent)—here defined as “agency factors”, scholarship has pointed out several other triggers for radicalisation related to the individual’s environment. This thesis defines this group of factors as “structural”. According to Émile Durkheim (2014), the structure is made up of objective, external constraints that impact human behaviours. Specifically, the structure is constituted by rules, conventions, sanctions, and obligations that the individual and by the people around him/her (who play a crucial role in determining his inclination towards a radical group) should conform to. Within the set of structural factors, political grievances play a central role in impacting the individual’s perceptions, sense of belonging, and affection towards the host country.

In particular, foreign policy has been at the centre of several debates on radicalisation (Hamid, 2011; Pupcenoks, 2012). Experts tend to agree on a possible link between radicalisation and “Western foreign policy”, here intended as the set of political choices and interventions carried out by European states, the United States, and Australia, with particular emphasis on military operations in the Middle East (Abbas, 2007; Al-Raffie, 2013; Fareed, 2005; Jacoby, 2017). In his recent work on Muslims in the West, Kundnani concluded that “what governments call extremism is to a large degree a product of their own wars” (Kundnani, 2014, p. 35). The main claim is that the military decisions of Western coalitions in the Middle East have fostered a sense of frustration in the hearts
and minds of many Muslims living in the West due to the horrible treatment suffered by their family members or fellow Muslims back in the states affected by these conflicts.

Moreover, the measures related to the War on Terror have been described by the Hizb and many other Islamist groups as new tools used to oppress Muslims, control them in the West, and to push them away from their religion (LaRue, 2012; Wolfberg, 2012). While observing the propaganda of major Islamist groups (such as Al-Qaida and ISIS, but also HT and the Muslim Brotherhood) a significant common point among them is their shared conviction of an on-going war against Islam (Kundnani, 2015). This war entails multiple fronts: military (mostly in the Middle East), cultural (mostly in the West) and economic (usually former Western colonies that continue to take advantage of local resources in Muslim states).

This is known as the “neo-colonialism argument” for radicalisation, and assumes that the United States—together with the major former European colonial powers—have created new mechanisms for exploiting and controlling former colonies and their people (Taji-Farouki, 1996). For instance, ambiguous economic agreements or a massive presence of Western companies that use local workers and pay very low wages, are regarded as ways of maintaining control over certain territories rather than fostering economic and political independence (Gul, 2010). On this subject, Tim Aistrope recently pointed out that Islamist groups usually foster a “Muslim paranoia narrative” (Aistrope,

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27 The term War on Terror (WoT) was used for the first time by the US president George W. Bush on September 20th, 2001 to refer to the international military campaign undertaken to curb the phenomenon of Islamist terrorism after the attack on the Twin Towers, widely known as 9/11 (Schmitt & Shanker, 2005).
where Muslims are portrayed as the endangered group globally, creating a Western conspiracy-driven worldview.

Some of the most notable examples of this Muslim paranoia can be found in statements by the Hizb that date back to the Trusteeship System in the Middle East, which was regarded by HT as a way of globally controlling politics, people, and resources in a legitimised way (Taji-Farouki, 1996; 2000). Other examples of a Muslim paranoia narrative promoted by HT concern the United Nations—seen as a Western tool for fighting Islam and ensuring Western domination—and an unjust Western-sponsored system of economic aid agreements, foreign investments, development projects, and puppet regimes to maintain neo-colonial domination in the Muslim world (Ahmed & Stuart, 2009; Taji-Farouki, 2000).

Undoubtedly, these claims fuel a continuous process of blame against the enemy (i.e. the Western system) and foster a shared feeling of deprivation.

The *fraternal relative deprivation*, defined as “the feeling of injustice people experience when they identify with their group and perceive that their group has been treated worse than another group” (Doosje et al., 2016, p. 81; Moghaddam, 2005), is a major source of estrangement from their local context. This is the case for Muslim diaspora communities in Western states, where the perception conveyed by Islamist groups of an *ummah* subjugated by the West functions as a powerful trigger for radicalisation and mobilisation (Sewell & Hulusi, 2016).

### 2.3.1 The Community

In addition to political institutions, primary structural inputs for radicalisation come from the local communities where the individual lives, since community members can serve as triggers for radical ideas. As observed by
Ishtiaq Ahmed (2009), local communities can foster the anxieties of young Muslims in the West. Even those young Muslims who have chosen their Western identity over a religious identity sometimes feel as if their loyalty is constantly on trial. This issue was addressed in the studies of Hamid (2016), Kundnani (2014), and Farhaan Wali (2013) who all stress that even the full acceptance of a Western lifestyle and values by Muslims in the West is not enough to prevent them from experiencing exclusion, racism, and isolation.

These kinds of experiences create a vicious circle, which produces resentment in the individual towards the community that rejected him/her and causes a progressive disaffection. This kind of distrust of Muslims in the West increased significantly after 9/11, when Muslims became the “dangerous other” in the eyes of the West and were looked upon as a suspect community, which encouraged new attitudes such as Islamophobia28 and securitisation (Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde, 1998; Thompson & Buceri us, 2017). This, often groundless, vilification of Muslims in the West facilitates their progressive disaffection towards the local community and fuels marginalised living conditions. Within the local community, experts have identified two main actors who play a distinctive role in pushing an individual towards radical expressions of Islam: peers and religious leaders. Peers are the people closest to the individual and include members of his/her family and close friends.

These strong bonds can function as a catalyst for interest in Islamist groups. Among the advocates of this argument, Sageman stands out for his research based on empirical data and interviews with Afghan Mujahedin in Islamabad.

28 Islamophobia” is intended as the anxiety and fear in society towards Muslims because of suspicions that they are potential terrorists (LaRue, 2012)
Sageman’s theory of radicalisation is known as the “Bunch of Guys Theory” (Sageman, 2004), in which he argued that individuals are radicalised by their friends and family—the people they trust and whose opinion matters to them. Sageman rejected single-factor explanations for radicalisation and instead conceived of it as four-step process. The first step concerns a perceived moral outrage that affects the individual’s sensibility.

The second step is the perception of an ongoing war against Islam, conceived broadly as a moral war. In the third step, personal experiences of discrimination, racism, and exclusion intensify and are framed within a context of hostility against Muslims, causing the individual to consider him/herself as a victim of an unjust system that needs to be changed through implementation of Allah’s perfect law. Finally, the fourth step involves the mobilisation of networks of individuals ready to act within their group because they feel accepted, important, and part of a noble plan (Sageman, 2004; 2008; Sageman, 2014). In line with Sageman’s assumptions, Quintan Wiktorowicz, in his work on Al-Muhajiroun Radical Islam rising: Muslim extremism in the West (Wiktorowicz, 2005), argues that a person is usually introduced to radical interpretations of Islam through a family member or friend.

Wiktorowicz observed how both HT and Al-Muhajiroun members are encouraged to bring their family to the group gatherings and events. Furthermore, Wiktorowicz points out that when an individual is in the phase of religious seeking, (s)he will usually turn to people (s)he knows and trusts for answers. A couple of years before Wiktorowicz, Carrie R. Wickham (2002) had already noted how the da’i begins to perform his/her role by focusing first on family, friends, and relatives. Previous research has also revealed how recruiters begin operating by first building trust with people who are not part of their
family or circle of friends by behaving as good, helpful, and knowledgeable neighbours.

This is what Eric L. Hirsch describes as the “principle of socialisation prior to participation,” arguing that the creation of personal relationships and affective bonds is a fundamental initial stage for drawing individuals into the network (Hirsch, 1990, p. 245). McCauley and Moskalenko have also examined social bonds in their research on the mechanisms of political radicalisation. They capture the importance of this structural factor with a very powerful expression: the “power of love” (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008, p. 421). The main argument here is that the motivation behind the decision to follow friends or partners in joining groups that espouse radical expressions of Islam is often motivated by romantic or comradely love.

Furthermore, the person who first becomes a member of an Islamist group is usually regarded by the others as a model in terms of religiosity, political awareness, and social commitment, and becomes a catalyst for encouraging membership of the people surrounding him/her (Wali, 2013). Once membership is official, the member’s love for his/her friends and new companions is likely to increase since common aims and challenges increase group cohesion and long-term loyalty (McCauley, 2001). In addition to the individual’s peers, the second relevant actor within local communities are religious leaders.

Previous studies have highlighted how the religious local community also plays an essential role as a structural factor in radicalisation. Sarah Swick (2005) and more recently Rosleenda B. Mohamed Ali, Simon A. Moss, Kate Barrelle, and Peter Lentini (2017) pointed out that it is common for older immigrants (who run mosques) not to include young people in leadership roles, excluding them from the management of important matters. In this way, religious leaders fuel a
sense of disenfranchisement among young Muslims from their communities of origin. Moreover, it is not uncommon among young second and third generation Muslims in the West to have a negative opinion of the majority of imams, which is also fostered by Islamist narratives.

In fact, the imams’ credibility is often questioned either because they are considered out of touch, or because they are thought of as murtadd (apostate), a result of their collaboration with Western authorities (Akbarzadeh, 2013; Cherney, 2016). Moreover, the language barrier is an enormous obstacle to young people’s inclusion in their religious community of origin. Young people’s Arabic—or other language of origin—is not always fluent, and this often prevents a deeper understanding of Islam and serves as a barrier to participation in religious services (Akbarzadeh & Roose, 2011).

Conversely, radical Islamist groups operating in the West, such as HT, disseminate religious information and pamphlets and organise qur’anic studies using the language of the Western country in which they operate, which is in fact the mother tongue of the great majority of young Muslims. Therefore, the accessibility to religious sources and discourses constitutes an advantage of Islamist groups like HT over traditional Islamic group made up of older immigrants, who mostly conduct their activities in the language of their countries of origin.

In addition, Hamid (2016), Wali (2013), and Pankhurst (2016) argued that what strongly motivates young Muslims to leave their religious community of origin in favour of Islamist groups like HT are the following characteristics: the group’s role as an advocate of the ummah, its goal of re-establishing the caliphate to protect the ummah, its understanding of Islam, its ability to educate the
masses on religious obligations and revelations by presenting them in a rational way, and its bold political stances.

Therefore, young Muslims in the West who opt to join radical Islamist groups like HT usually see such groups as, not merely serving a spiritual function (in the way their parents might see Islam), but as a vehicle for living Islam as a \textit{din} and as a way to fight against injustices without engaging in violent acts (Hanif, 2012; Harris & Roose, 2014). Joining HT is considered as a way to face fraternal relative deprivation, advocate for the rights of Muslims around the world, and to gather in an organisation exalting and celebrating Islam. Driven by personal experiences of exclusion, racism, and isolation, by the “power of love”, or by the need to connect their faith with the most pressing political grievances of the time, Muslims in the West who join HT find in the group a sort of safe harbour where to engage in an intellectual fight against an imposed structure (the Western system) they do not accept.

Once again, an almost exclusive focus on terrorist groups, as the only relevant kind of radical groups, represents a major limit in the current research. Current scholarship mostly confines vocal radicals like HT to a marginal role, leaving its attractiveness to Muslims in the West, its role as a transnational organisation in the world and its mobilising ideology almost unexplored.

\textbf{2.4 Literature on Hizb ut-Tahrir}

\textbf{2.4.1 An Historical Overview}

Before exploring the specific gaps characterising HT’s literature today, this section provides some background on the group’s expansion in the Middle East, its relationship with national authorities, and its views on mainstream Muslims outside the group. After years of disputes with political authorities, HT was officially founded by Taquiddin an-Nabhani in Al-Quds (Jerusalem) in 1952. The
two most detailed accounts of HT are the monographic works of Taji-Farouki (1996) and Reza Pankhurst (2016).

Both scholars have reported that the group was highly active in the Muslim world between 1952 and 1954. Through engaging with people directly and personally distributing leaflets articulating HT’s main ideas, aims, and goals, An-Nabhani and his companions—Hamdan and al-Masri, members of the initial HT committee—were able to inspire and recruit members. The effect of this direct contact between HT’s founder and the people was so strong that it even determined the name of the early followers, who were referred to as the “nabahaniyyun” (followers of an-Nabhani), before the group was officially known as Hizb ut-Tahrir (Pankhurst, 2016, p. 54).

An-Nabhani and his partners had clear ideas of how to organise their followers and convey their message: as soon as new members joined HT, they were organised into study-circles (haqalaat), where they were trained on the Hizb’s ideology and tenets in all fields, including religion, politics, economics, and social issues (Ahmed & Stuart, 2009; Pankhurst, 2016; Sinclair, 2011; Taji-Farouki, 1996). Harsh criticism against Western states—as invaders and enemies of Islam—became the banner of HT propaganda, which spread very quickly throughout the Middle East with remarkable grass roots support.

In the early 1960s, new branches were established in Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, and Kuwait, where young educated politically-minded intellectuals played a pivotal role. New members were actively involved in proselytising by “knocking at society’s door,” trying to reach out to as many individuals as possible (Taji-Farouki, 1996, p. 19). Activists often used leaflets, petitions, individual visits, and even mosque sermons to present HT as the redeemer of a society under the power of a corrupt West and hypocrite Arab rulers (Pankhurst, 2016).
The impact of HT’s activities was further enhanced in the late 1960s with the introduction of the so called “Zone System” (Taji-Farouki, 1996, p. 24). This new concept implied that municipalities were divided into zones according to their population and geographic characteristics. Each zone was overseen by a senior member and was then subdivided into different areas, which were supervised by other HT members. This particular division into zones turned out to be very effective for HT activists who as a result were able to carry out the group’s activities throughout the entire territory (Ahmed & Stuart, 2009; Taji-Farouki, 1996).

An-Nabhani’s death (20th June 1977) and the ascent of the new leader ‘Abd al-Qadim Zallum triggered a further expansion of the scope of HT’s activities. Zallum, also a Palestinian, narrowed the target group for recruitment, giving even more prominence to the intellectual dimension. Zallum was a teacher like an-Nabhani and joined the Hizb in its very early stages (1953). Zallum’s passion for education gave a new focus to HT propaganda. Not only were activities reorganised to increase their efficacy, but new leaflet campaigns were launched in schools and university campuses, which became a primary target (Taji-Farouki, 1996).

Intellectuals became the most sought-after recruitment pool for continuing HT’s expansion because even a small group of educated people were able to convey HT’s ideology to a greater audience through public speeches, lectures, publications, and journal articles. For the same reason, HT targeted other influential groups to foster HT’s expansion; these groups included religious leaders—whose role allowed them to spread HT’s message in mosques—along with politicians, economists, and other public figures. HT members were
explicitly told to address these individuals and recruit them, defining this process as “amassing the forces for the party” (Taji-Farouki, 1996, p. 35).

Although decades have passed, HT’s target groups have remained the same. Today, prominent HT members—both in the UK and Australia—include intellectuals, doctors, and academics who all have high public profiles and are engaged in diffusing HT ideology not only through publications and public speeches but also through daily media campaigns, all of which are characterised by severe rhetoric that harshly criticises the West.29

After Zallum’s death (in 2003), Ata Khalil Abu-Rashta, a Palestinian engineer, became HT’s Amir. While Abu-Rashta became the head of an already highly institutionalised international organisation, Zallum’s leadership witnessed HT’s evolution from a small group into an organisation. It was during that evolution that HT abandoned its Arab-centric focus in the Middle East in favour of an international approach, culminating in several branches rooted in Europe, Oceania, the United States, Asia, and the Far East. This transformation began in the late 1970s and was in a large part triggered by the persecution of HT members in the Middle East.

The Hizbis’ relationship with contemporary Arab rulers and mainstream Muslims outside the group has always been a turbulent one. Since its foundation, HT leaders have never hesitated to define national leaders of the Muslim world as kuffar (unbelievers), apostates, and puppet rulers at the service of Western states (Taji-Farouki, 1996). The outspoken odium for Muslim politicians—who do not espouse HT ideology—triggered the conviction among national governments in the Middle East that HT could be a potential cause for civic

29 For instance, prominent HT members in Britain include Wahid and Nazreen Nawaz (both doctors) and Reza Pankhurst (an academic), all of whom are engaged daily in diffusing HT’s message through different means, such as news comments, publications, and speeches.
strife. For this reason, HT members have frequently been arrested since the early stages of the group, and many have ultimately decided to leave their homelands (Hamid, 2007; Pankhurst, 2016; Taji-Farouki, 1996).

The situation remains the same today: given its bold stances, HT has been banned in almost all Muslim-majority countries, and members continue to be jailed and, in some cases, even tortured by national authorities and secret services.30 Lebanon represents an exception—together with Yemen and the United Arab Emirates—where HT still legally operates and members are not persecuted (Marcos, 2011). For this reason, HT has chosen Lebanon as the location for its Middle East headquarters and central media office.

HT was officially legalised in Lebanon in 2006 and, as in the UK and Australia, continues its vocal battle in the country against a political, economic, and social system, which it claims is inconsistent with Islam (Hizb ut-Tahrir Lebanon, 2008). HT does not participate in electoral politics in the Middle East or in the Western world and discourages its members from voting or participating in any aspect of a kuffar lifestyle, including fashion, popular music, and other forms of popular entertainment. Instead, HT supports a clear separation from the jahili, using this term to refer to non-Muslims as well as Muslims who are not part of the group.31

The Hizbis’ holistic vision of the world leaves no room for more moderate versions of Islam. Since the group is regarded by its associates as the only righteous one, which invites the good and forbids evil (http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/EN/), all other Muslims who do not live abiding by the divine law in the

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30 This was the case for three HT Britons, Maajid Nawaz, Reza Pankhurst and Ian Nisbet, who were jailed for three years in Cairo for their HT membership in a country where the group is banned. All of them suffered torture, including electric shocks (Bowcott, 2006).

31 The term jahili derives from jahiliyyah, which refers to the state of ignorance characterising unbelievers (Suarez-Murias, 2013).
way that HT does or who do not engage in the struggle for the Caliphate (as a religious prescription) are living in a state of ignorance towards their religion and their obligations to God.

2.4.2 Gaps in Hizb ut-Tahrir Literature

As highlighted by the literature discussed so far, HT emerged in an extremely turbulent time in history characterised by the creation of the state of Israel and a massive Western presence in the Middle East. The widespread feeling of deprivation and the desire to react against foreign domination led many young intellectuals to become members of HT and to consider the Islamic revival as a panacea for all problems affecting Muslims. Today the situation is very similar to the past: personal experiences of deprivation and discrimination combined with political grievances and the power of love can lead an individual towards HT, which provides religious knowledge, political awareness, and a strong sense of meaning.

There are three main problems with the current literature concerning HT: there are few studies on HT and even fewer conducted in the West, there is much confusion over HT’s claims and goals, and there is a widespread use of Social Movement Theory (SMT) as a theoretical framework which does not account for HT’s high level of institutionalisation nor for its evolution into a transnational organisation. With regard to the first limitation, little scholarship has been conducted on HT before or after 9/11, and the literature that does exist is not very broad and focuses mostly on Asia, where the group’s presence is significant. Emmanuel Karagiannis is one of the experts on HT in Central Asia, having explored HT’s activity in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan (Karagiannis, 2005, 2006, 2010, 2013; Karagiannis & McCauley, 2006).
In his works, Karagiannis stresses HT’s ideology as a unique feature of the group as it based on a strong intellectual rigour that has not changed in more than six decades. When comparing HT with armed Islamist groups (such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan), Karagiannis again stresses the pivotal role played by the ideology of the Hizb as the key element for understanding why the group has not turned to violence. Other scholars who have studied the activities of HT in Central Asia include Alisher Khamidov (2003) and Didier Chaudet (2006); both explored the threat the group posed to governments and compared HT to terrorist organisations.

While acknowledging the potential danger deriving from HT’s radical ideology, both scholars concluded that it would be inappropriate to identify HT as the next Al-Qaeda in the region, given the significant differences between the two groups in terms of operating methods. Moving to the Middle East, Suha Taji-Farouki’s book *A Fundamental Quest: Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate* (1996) is one of the main contributions to date on HT. Using a historical approach, Taji-Farouki starts with a detailed account of the origins of the group, connecting HT’s emergence with the local context (Palestine in the 1950s), leaving the agency of the group in the West barely explored.

Taji-Farouki also sheds light on the personal background of the founder, Taquiddin An-Nabhani, and on the group’s main ideological tenets. Namely, the importance of “concepts” and “ideas”, the restoration of the caliphate as a religious obligation, and HT leadership as a champion of authentic Islam blessed by God (Taji-Farouki, 1996). After Taji-Farouki, Pankhurst, a current member of HT Britain, provided a comprehensive analysis of the group without referring to a particular country (leaving again HT agency in the West unexplored), but instead examining the Hizb globally. In particular, Pankhurst’s last book *Hizb ut-
Tahrir: The Untold Story of the Liberation Party (Pankhurst, 2016) offers an in-depth analysis of HT’s history and expansion throughout the world, while describing An-Nabhani’s character.

Because of his access to exclusive internal sources (such as unpublished documents and interviews), Pankhurst was able to provide an account of the Hizb from within. However, while the book does give a clear explanation of HT’s political goals (both generally and in individual countries) and discusses the group’s strategy and growth in the West, the book does not explicitly examine the particular elements of HT that appeal to young Muslims in the West. Jacob Høigilt (2014) offers an interesting analysis of HT in Palestine, the country where HT was founded. After analysing HT’s history, strategy, and methods in the local context, Høigilt defines the group as “a very sui generis actor”, a “unique hybrid” of political Islamists and apolitical Salafi movements (Høigilt, 2014, p. 501).

This can be seen in HT’s political aims, which often act as a mobilising force for the masses but also coexist with the group’s conservative stances (such as the prohibition on voting), making the Hizb a very conspicuous actor. Finally, Mohamed Osman and Mohamed Nawab (2010) and Asep Muhammad Iqbal and Zulkifli Zulkifli (2016) have contributed to the study of HT. While Osman and Nawab provided insights into how HT Indonesia (HTI) operates in terms of recruitment and proselytising, Iqbal and Zulkifli analysed HT as a global actor challenging nation-states and the West.

Although the common opinion is that Islamist groups are against globalisation, the two authors use HT to show how radical Islamist groups participate in globalisation “as participants and interpreters of globalisation characterised by their challenge to nation states and vision of establishing a global citizenship of ummah” (Iqbal & Zulkifli, 2016, p. 58).
2.4.2. Hizb ut-Tahrir in the West

Although limited in number, some scholars have tried to fill the first gap in HT-specific literature as identified in this chapter, producing a number of publications on HT in the West. In the late 1990s, Taji-Farouki introduced the concept of HT as a transnational organisation, explaining the group’s expansion in the West as the outcome of one major trigger: harsh persecution of populations in the Middle East (Taji-Farouki, 1996). As a result of this persecution, several HT members and leaders had to leave their countries, settling in more liberal countries where they were able to establish the first cells of the Hizb within the non-Arab world.

As pointed out by Houriya Ahmed and Hannah Stuart (2009), the first HT cell in the West was established in West Germany in the 1960s. From there, a rapid expansion to other European and Western countries took place due to continuous migrations and the displacement of HT members. Today, several ethnographic studies suggest that the UK is the headquarters of the group in Europe and thus indicate the need to expand research on HT activities in the West (Ahmed & Stuart, 2010; Hamid, 2007, 2011, 2016; Wali, 2013, 2016).

For these reasons, many scholars have decided to shift the focus of their research to the participation of young Muslims living in the West in HT. However, the new wave of publications focusing on HT’s agency in the West is heavily Britain-oriented. Among the most relevant scholarly contributions on the topic, Sarah Swick (2005) published a detailed account of the influence of HT on young British Muslims. She pointed out that the appeal of the group could be explained by the fact that it was “an alternative movement that empowers young Muslims” (Swick, 2005, p. 8). In particular, Swick argues that HT empowers young Muslims by giving them a strong Islamic religious identity and new
political awareness that differ from those of first generation immigrants. Ihsan Yılmaz (2010) also used a comparative approach to explore HT’s impact on young Muslims in four different countries: Britain, Uzbekistan, Egypt, and Turkey.

Yılmaz argued that, as a result of the political system, oppressiveness of the central government, and local religious and socio-economic conditions, HT is more likely to be successful in liberal contexts where a theological vacuum exists. This is the case in Britain, where a secular environment, a frustrating line of foreign policy, and experiences of discrimination and racism often push young Muslims towards HT, where they find a holistic and fulfilling identity (Yılmaz, 2010). The need to deepen the understanding of HT’s appeal to young Muslims in the West led Kirstine Sinclair (2010) to study the group in two European countries: Denmark and Britain. Her PhD thesis *The Caliphate as Homeland: Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain* is a one of a kind contribution entirely centred on HT in the West (Sinclair, 2010). She approached the subject from a socio-psychological perspective, focusing on the concept of “caliphate as homeland” and the consequent disaffection HT’s members show towards the countries they live in.

During her fieldwork, her qualitative analysis and interviews with HT (current and former) members led to some important findings. First, although most of HT’s members in Denmark and Britain were educated and apparently well connected to mainstream society, as they had good jobs, friends, and families, they still felt homeless. Sinclair found that this sense of emptiness

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32 As mentioned above, first generation Muslim immigrants in the West tended to have a more private approach to Islam and tried to keep a low profile in the host country, and thus they generally did not engage in political controversies. Therefore, first generation Muslims mostly lived Islam as a religion—separate from the political sphere—rather than as a *din*, i.e. a way of life, encompassing all fields.
ended when those people joined HT. Her interviewees thought of the caliphate as the perfect form of government and the solution to a myriad of human problems. Their attitude towards the caliphate was not utopian but was characterised by an intense longing for its re-establishment.

While Sinclair focused on two countries, Wali conducted his study entirely on HT Britain, highlighting some of the unique characteristics of the branch and its methods for growing membership among young, educated British-born Muslims. In his ethnographic study, Wali (2013) provided a picture of the typical recruitment pool of HT’s activists, namely, second-generation, upper-middle class Muslims university students. As young people leave their households and move to an environment with new people, they often experience a certain degree of isolation and loneliness, due to the separation from their families, and this is sometimes accompanied by an identity crisis.

These young people often experience the so-called “Bobby and Abdullah syndrome”, which refers to the inner struggle of maintaining a peaceful coexistence between their religious-cultural values and their British identity (Wali, 2013, p. 39). As revealed in Wali’s study, even Western-born, South-Asian young people from secular households experience racism and Islamophobia in Britain. Because of their non-white background these individuals are viewed as “the others”, trapping them in a “social limbo” between their Western birthplace and country of ethnic origin (Wali, 2013, p.151).

This limbo sometimes results in a progressive estrangement from both the West and the individual’s cultural background. In this context, HT serves as an alternative space in which being a Muslim is not a problem but something to be proud of. As stressed earlier in this chapter, HT promotes “muslimness” as the gateway to righteousness and blessings from God, mixing religious discourse
with elements of social justice, a combination that is very appealing to young educated Muslims. Hamid (2016) has recently broadened the discourse opened by Wali on the appeal of HT to young Muslims in the West, but still entirely focusing on HT Britain.

Besides stressing HT’s ability to provide the sense of fraternity, acceptance, and religious knowledge that a lot of young Muslims in the West are seeking, Hamid (2016) identifies three particular elements of HT’s success. First, the group’s ideology is very attractive because it addresses the need for a definite identity and uses external circumstances to idealise the past and to promise a successful future under the caliphate. Secondly, the intellectual rigour and the clear plan for a future caliphate are unique to HT. The group follows the method elucidated by An-Nabhani in the chapter “The Way to Belief” (An-Nabhani, 2002), which is based on complex reasoning and which promotes the idea that Islam, as the true revelation, is superior to all religions.

Thirdly, HT serves as an alternative family for young Muslims in the West, one where new members are welcomed and helped on their path of faith and activism within the organisation. While acknowledging the contemporary decrease in popularity of the group in the UK compared to the 1990s, Hamid (2016) also pointed out some of the reasons why people leave the Hizb. For the most part members realise as they grow up that HT’s conception of the caliphate and strategy to restore it are utopian, and as a result they grow tired of HT’s “one issue agenda” (Hamid, 2016, p.48). Furthermore, as members become more critical of HT, they start seeing it as a conveyor of selected information rather than as a source of absolute truth.

Hamid’s analysis is centred more on the history of the group, its ideology, and the reasons why members join and sometimes leave HT; instead, Wali’s
study devoted greater attention to the group’s ability to impact members’ identity and agency. Through a continuous process of acculturation to the group’s values and ideological tenets, Wali stresses how HT gives its members a new cognitive perspective, which forms the basis for any future action (Wali, 2013). Notwithstanding these significant contributions by experts to the study of HT in the West, current literature remains very context-specific, almost exclusively focusing on the UK and leaving out a significant number of Western countries affected by the activities of the Hizb.

For instance, Denmark, Germany, Australia, and the Netherlands are characterised by a vibrant Islamic activism where HT is a protagonist; yet this fact is barely mentioned in the relevant literature. Furthermore, as pointed out by the themes discussed so far, most studies focus on members’ experiences rather than on conducting an in-depth analysis on HT’s agency as a collective body. Even when examining HT members’ experiences, the literature is overly focused on the UK. For instance, Wali’s (2013) ethnographic study gives useful insights into who HT members are and how they become radicalised; however, Wali’s study is too focused on Britain to be applicable to other Western HT branches.

Given that significant differences exist among Muslims, as they come from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, country-specific research is required. While in Britain most Muslims have Indo/Pakistani origins, in Australia the great majority come from Middle Eastern countries, South East Asia, and Indonesia. It is important not to ignore these difference since culture matters and makes a difference, and thus generalisations are not always possible.
2.4.3 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Claims and Goals in the West

The second main gap in HT-specific literature identified in this chapter is the great confusion over HT’s claims and goals. The widespread but superficial knowledge of HT’s claims and goals in the West has generated serious concerns about the organisation, both among scholars and politicians, who generally see HT as a dangerous group. On this subject, Karagiannis points out that major concerns over HT derive from the scarce information available on HT’s ideology, which as Nomaan Hanif remarked “becomes fatal when analysing HT” (Hanif, 2012, p. 204; Karagiannis, 2010). A great source of confusion leading to alarming views of the organisation derives from the lack of clarity on HT’s strategy for re-establishing the caliphate.

While the Islamic state that HT advocates for is widely discussed in the major works of its founder (An-Nabhani, 1998; 2002), it has been given little attention in the scholarship, which does not provide an accurate analysis of HT’s model of the caliphate or its constitution. The lack of information on this topic has led to simplistic generalisations and associations with terror groups such as ISIS. An attempt to clarify HT’s claims and goals was made by Hanif’s (2014) contribution, which helped clarify the expansionist ambitions of the Hizb and where the group plans to re-establish the caliphate.

In his comparative study of HT in several diverse contexts (the Middle East, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, and the UK), Hanif highlighted the group’s ideas on majaal, the areas suitable to begin re-establishing the caliphate (Hanif, 2014). The distinction that the group makes between majaal and non-majaal areas highlights that HT does not aim to re-establish the caliphate all over the world. Instead, HT desires to see a caliph ruling the Muslim world, with a special focus on the Middle East. The plan to re-establish the caliphate only in certain areas is
also made clear in HT’s Draft Constitution for the Islamic State, where the relations between the caliphate and other groups of states are regulated.33

Despite HT’s clear statements concerning specific areas for the re-establishment of the caliphate, the fear of the ascent of a global Islamic state promoted by HT and the imposition shari’a law continue to worry both scholars and national authorities, inspiring several alarming institutional documents on HT. A 2015 report from the Indian Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) characterised HT as even more dangerous than ISIS: “a slow and steady player that has cleverly avoided any intense global scrutiny while spreading its ideology and support base in different parts of the world” (Sharma, 2015).

Surinder Kumar Sharma, the author of the report, not only argues that HT’s official rejection of violence has served as a brilliant expedient for eluding control of its activities, but also that the actual danger represented by HT is in its having “an armed wing called Harakat ul-Muhojirinfi Britaniya that is training its cadres in chemical, bacteriological, and biological warfare” (Sharma, 2015). While these claims have not been confirmed (nor is there any evidence of HT’s support for terrorism or violence) scholars and national authorities continue to perceive HT as a danger.

Contrary to what Sharma asserts, HT has not been able to elude global scrutiny of its activities or the spread of mistrust towards the group, which led to

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33 The first version of the “Proposed Constitution for an Islamic State” was issued right after the creation of the Party (in 1953), and can be found in its translated version as an appendix in An-Nabhan’s book The Islamic State (1998). When addressing freedom of movement within the Islamic states, the Constitution distinguished among four different groups of states: those that are part of the khilafah, those not part of the khilafah but with whom the Islamic state has some sort of agreement, the colonist states, and the belligerent states. The provision of states not included in the caliphate also serves as an indicator revealing how HT’s goal is not the one of establishing the caliphate all over the world, but instead the one of re-establishing the Islamic state in specific areas (majaal).
The main reason HT is considered dangerous is its alleged role as a “conveyor belt for terrorism”, first articulated by Baran (2005, p. 11). Baran’s thesis concerning the serious threat represented of HT found support in several Western governments. The main point of the conveyor belt hypothesis is that HT, while officially rejecting violence, may still push individuals towards violent extremism given the nature of the group’s ideas. For this reason, Baran was a prominent supporter of an immediate ban of HT in the West (Baran, 2005).

Although she does not characterise HT a terror group, Swick (2005) acknowledged that the group might lead young Muslims in the West towards isolation and radicalisation, producing a progressive disenfranchisement from their national identity. Furthermore, she acknowledges the potential danger of HT’s actions serving as a conveyor belt to terrorism. To support her argument, she quotes one of HT communiqués stating:

“O, Armies of the Islamic Ummah: The time has come for you to defend the domains of the Muslims... it is obligatory on you to work to liberate the Ummah from them and to support your Muslim brothers in Afghanistan and elsewhere by standing on their side in confronting America, Britain and their allies in their brutal war against Islam and the Muslims” (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2001).

While exposing the aggressive tone of the group, Swick argues that Western governments should not ban HT because the more that governments repress the group, the more it will grow in members and external support. Moreover, Swick claims that HT’s anti-Western, anti-American discourse will continue to find a wide consensus among young Muslims in the West if Western foreign policy (especially in the Middle East) continues to be characterised by interventionism.

34 HT has recently been banned in Indonesia (July 2017), a country where HT’s presence is very strong. The government’s reason for this ban was the need to curb radical Islam in the country and to “keep the national unity”, thus targeting HT as a group that challenged the national order. The decision to ban HT provoked several criticisms of the government not only from other Islamist groups but also from right-wing groups (Emont, 2017).
and military occupations (Swick, 2005). Before Baran and Swick, Ariel Cohen from the US had already pointed out the dangers represented by the Hizb, claiming that the group had strong connections with Saudi Wahhabism and Al-Qaida and that these positions have not changed over the years (Cohen, 2003).

More recently, several scholars have expressed harsh opinions towards the Hizb. Dina Al-Raffie (2013) stated the need to monitor the activities of the Hizb throughout the world, arguing that even non-violent groups might represent a source of radicalisation capable of leading people to extremism. Even more recently, Shahab Enam Khan referred to HT as an “extremist militant group” (Khan, 2017, p. 200), while Kristina Kovalskaya included HT in the broad family of wahabi groups (Kovalskaya, 2017), and Mario Peucker and Rauf Ceylan defined HT as a “exclusivist Islamic fringe group” capable of promoting self-segregation and the rejection of democracy (Peucker & Ceylan, 2017, p. 2408).

The academic opinions discussed above, not always grounded on HT’s books of the adopted literature nor on the HT-sponsored Draft Constitution for the Islamic state, might have influenced the attitudes of national governments towards the organisation. Although a possible ban of the Hizb has often been publicly debated in both Australia and the UK, HT continues to operate legally in both countries. In Australia, Senator Trood, a member of the Liberal Party of Australia, has expressed several times his concern about HT to the Australian Parliament on several occasions, describing the group as “an extremist organisation with members who give inflammatory, incendiary indeed, speeches around the world” and calling for an immediate ban of HT (Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, 2011).

More recently, the former Australian Attorney-General Senator George Brandis, again from the Liberal Party of Australia, proposed introducing new
amendments to the Commonwealth Criminal Code that would establish criteria for identifying terror groups (Kelly, 2017). With these new provisions, his coalition hopes to include in the category of terror groups, groups like HT who are not directly engaged in terrorism but who appear to advocate for it. The Senator also stressed that his party pushed for the introduction of the new offence of “advocacy of terrorism”, recently introduced in the country as a useful tool for curbing the activities of allegedly dangerous groups such as HT.

HT continues to legally operate in the UK, despite the fact that the Home Office has expressed its concern about HT several times. Regarding HT, British authorities appear to agree with the ideas of the Quilliam Foundation, an anti-radicalism think tank based in the UK: “Having nasty opinions is not a good enough reason legally to ban them” (Malik, 2011). The Home Office is still convinced that unpopular ideas are not enough to proscribe an organisation, despite the potential dangers deriving from HT’s anti-Semitic, homophobic, and anti-Western stances (Berry, 2015).

The opinion of the Home Office on the Hizb is common to all those scholars who see the organisation as having great ideological power by unlikely to adopt violent methods and are therefore not physically dangerous. By exploring the main sources of HT’s ideological foundations (mostly An-Nabhani’s writings), some scholars tried to fill the gap in the literature deriving from the great confusion around HT’s claims and goals. Among them Osman and Nawab (2010) have pointed out that Western governments should not be worried about a sudden turn to violent jihad, but rather about the power of HT’s intellectual struggle. Both scholars highlight how “The real jihad for HT is the intellectual struggle to convince Muslims to work towards the establishment of the caliphate
and this *jihad* is seen to be far greater and more dignified than a violent struggle” (Osman & Nawab, 2010, p. 615).

Hanif supports this argument, stating that “HT does not constitute an existential threat to the political security of states and regimes outside of its *majaal* in the Arab world and more specifically in the Middle East” (Hanif, 2014, p. 312). While HT envisions “non-violent coups” to seize the power in *majaal* areas, overthrow unjust rulers, and re-establish the caliphate, the organisation does not have similar plans in other parts of the world where it operates.\(^{35}\) In his several works devoted to HT, Karagiannis (2005, 2006, 2010, 2013; Karagiannis & McCauley, 2006) stressed the fact that HT is not dangerous *per se* and it is not likely to change its methodology or adopt violence any time soon.

Nevertheless, Karagiannis also points out the pivotal role played by HT’s ideology as a mobilising political force able to win supporters around the world. As stressed before, HT presents itself as a “champion for the *ummah*”, advocating for the rights of Muslims around the world, defending Islamic religious identity, and opposing the Western model regarded as a source of oppression. As highlighted by Jacoby, HT is not going to turn to violence, but it will keep representing in the West a “home-grown alternative to neo-colonialism’s comprador domination of the Muslim world” (Jacoby, 2017, p. 6).

In fact, HT is seen by segments of young Muslims in the West as the only actor who competently stands for Muslims’ interests globally, differing from the established Islamic leadership who conveniently keep a low profile (Akbarzadeh, 2016). The will to react against new Western forms of colonialism and oppression

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\(^{35}\) The possibility of a “non-violent coup” is envisaged by the Hizb to overthrow unjust rulers. With this goal in mind, HT wants to intellectually prepare society and individuals holding power (such as the military), so that they could support HT’s ideas and the need to bring back the caliphate. As a result, the Hizb hopes for a consensual revolution supported by both the population and its leaders (Badar, 2012; Hanif, 2014).
is what drives some Muslims in the West towards HT, confirming the remarkable power of the group’s radical but non-violent ideology.

Besides HT’s religious appeal, in terms of the knowledge of Islam and piousness conveyed by the associates, Karagiannis (2010), Hanif (2012), and Hamid (2016) all agreed that the most attractive elements of the Hizb are its ideological tenets and methodology. These two aspects have determined HT’s role as a champion promoting an alternative model to capitalism (based on the caliphate) and representing “Islam ideological vanguard” (Hanif, 2012, p. 202). HT’s ideological tenets continue to shape various facades of Islamic contemporary activism, including both mere intellectual and violent groups, such as Al-Muhajiroun (Kenney et al., 2013).

When discussing HT, it is important to bear in mind that the organisation still maintains that its goal in the West is not the one of re-establishing the caliphate nor the one of engaging in a violent jihad with kuffar states. Instead, in the West HT aims to create support activities for its objectives in majaal areas. Therefore, HT’s work is mostly focused on preventing Muslims’ assimilation by the West, educating Muslims on Islamic tenets and untold historical facts, and raising awareness among the ummah about the need for re-establishing the caliphate (Ahmed & Stuart, 2010; Hamid, 2016; Hanif, 2014; Pankhurst, 2016).

2.4.4 Hizb ut-Tahrir and Social Movement Theory

The third gap identified in the HT-specific literature concerns the widespread use of Social Movement Theory (SMT) as a theoretical framework by which to study the organisation. As stressed in the research of Karagiannis (2005), Sinclair (2010; 2011), and Hamid (2016), Social Movement Theory (SMT) has been the common theoretical tool for studying HT for decades. In
general, SMT has been adopted by a significant number of scholars for studying Islamic activism globally (Adkins, 2008; Armbrorst, 2014; Chassman, 2016; Samarov, 2008) and has provided useful insights into what conditions foster the formation of a group. Moreover, SMT has also been useful for examining how groups develop their networks, collect and mobilise resources, and to what extent they affect the lives and worldviews of their members (Benford & Snow, 2000; Della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tilly, 1978).

SMT was first applied to Islamic activism in the 1960s, when the scholarship began referring to new social movements, and thus this framework developed into New Social Movement Theory (NSMT). The label “new” social movements suggests a new form of organised collective action, characterised by post-material values, middle-class activism, a flexible structure, and the creation of new identities (Offe, 1985; Sutton & Vertigans, 2006). Before long, the concept of new social movements was associated with the plethora of Islamist groups advocating for the caliphate and whose discomfort on specific themes (social, political, and economic) worked as a trigger for their activities.

David A. Snow and Susan E. Marshall (1984) were the pioneers who initially included Islamist groups under the big umbrella of social movements by studying the link between cultural imperialism and the rise of Islamist movements. NSMT was very useful in the study of Islamist collective agency until it confined itself to the notion of social movements. This term describes “networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared identity” (Diani, 1992, p. 15).

While acknowledging the contribution of NSMT to the understanding of collective actors, the main problem with this theory is that it is difficult to apply
to highly institutionalised groups like HT, which have moved away from the lack of formal structures and procedures, high heterogeneity, and the unclear division of roles characterising social movements (Koopmans, 1993; Tarrow, 1998). Instead, HT resembles more a transnational organisation, since HT branches throughout the world are characterised by an equilibrium between centralisation and local autonomy and a clear distinction of roles.

Given that organisations are “tools used by people to coordinate their actions to obtain something they desire or value - that is, to achieve their goals” (Jones, 2007, p. 5), HT can be thought of as an organisation aimed at re-establishing the caliphate in specific areas of the world (majaal). Like all organisations with multiple branches in different locations, HT has a specific organisational structure, defined organisational values, and a competitive advantage that make people choose the group over its competitors. Since the competitive advantage is intended as “the ability of one organisation to outperform another because its managers are able to create more value from the resources at their disposal” (Jones, 2007, p. 12), this thesis also aims to explore the elements that constitute HT’s competitive advantage over its peers (i.e. other Islamic revivalist group), driving specific segments of young Muslims in the West to choose the Hizb over other groups presenting a similar ideology.

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided discussion of the relevant literature on radicalisation and on HT, identifying the main debates and limitations of current research. Five main gaps have emerged from the review of the relevant literature: two are deeply connected and concern the literature on radicalisation, while the other three gaps refer to HT-specific literature. The first problem with the relevant
scholarship on radicalisation is that it is often considered as the beginning of a process leading to terrorism and violence. Consequently, radicals are usually regarded by scholarship as terrorists (or terrorists-to-be), rarely considering the option that radicals can stay as they are: holding radical views on various topics without ever turning to violence.

The first generalisation (all radicals become terrorists) leads to the second problem concerning the literature on radicalisation: an almost exclusive scholarly focus on radical terror groups, such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda. This almost exclusive focus on violent groups has meant the neglect of a plethora of vocal radicals like HT which present a strong Islamist ideology but which do not engage in terror activities. Despite having a global presence in more than 45 countries around the world, having evolved into a transnational organisation, and surviving since 1953 in the face of harsh bans in different areas, HT often remains confined to the footnotes of current research on radical groups in the West.

By focusing on HT’s role as an agent and a structure in two Western countries (Australia and Britain), this thesis contributes filling the gap in the scarce knowledge on vocal radical groups in the West and their attractiveness to some segments of Muslim communities. In particular, by exploring HT’s (political and social) challenge to the Western, capitalist system, HT’s main ideological tenets, strategy for action, and role as structure for its members and affiliates, this thesis provides new insights into the power of vocal radical groups as collective agents engaged in an intellectual fight against the West, attracting all those segments of Muslim communities in the West who agree with Islamist tenets but who also reject the use of violence.

This chapter has also identified three main gaps regarding HT-specific literature. Firstly, of the small amount of research focusing on HT, very little
focuses on HT in the West; the majority of studies on HT are conducted in Central Asia (Karagiannis, 2005; 2006; 2010), in Indonesia (Osman & Nawab, 2010) and in the Middle East (Høigilt, 2014), leaving the West out. The only studies existing on HT in Western countries almost exclusively focus on the UK, where HT’s presence has been strong since the late 1980s.

The rise of British-based studies on HT did not act as a springboard for HT research in other Western countries, such as Germany, Australia and the Netherlands, where HT’s presence is resilient but where no significant research has been conducted. In this respect, this thesis serves as a contribution to the study of HT in Australia where no in-depth study on the organisation has been conducted so far. In particular, by using first-hand data gathered during fieldwork with HT members in Australia, this thesis enriches the knowledge about the activities of the organisation in loco, representing the first study on HT Australia.

The confusion around HT’s purposes and goals in the West is the second gap in HT-specific literature identified in this chapter. This gap is strongly related to the first one: the small number of studies focusing on HT in the West has hindered a deeper analysis of what the organisation wants to achieve in the West. This scarce knowledge, often mixed with ambiguous declarations of current members, has led to misleading conceptualisations of HT as a terror group.

To fill this second gap in HT-specific literature, this thesis offers an analysis of HT members’ declarations but also of the main sources of HT ideological tenets (mostly An-Nabhani’s writings), all clearly distinguishing between majaal and non-majaal areas. In addition, this thesis gives a detailed analysis of HT’s agency as a collective group in the West, deepened by a comparative study with
two other Islamist groups with similar goals, i.e. the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Lastly, this chapter identified the third significant gap in HT-specific literature deriving from the widespread use of SMT as a theoretical framework by which to analyse HT. While acknowledging the notable contributions made by Hamid (2016), Karagiannis (2005), and Sinclair (2010), who all applied SMT to HT, this chapter showed how SMT does not seem to fit HT anymore, since the group has lost the informal character typical of social movements. Instead, this thesis shows HT’s evolution into a transnational organisation, providing a new theoretical framework (inspired by the corporate world) by which to analyse highly institutionalised groups like HT. This thesis contributes to fill the third gap in the HT-specific literature by offering an analysis of never before explored HT elements, such as its organisational values and competitive advantage.
CHAPTER THREE

HIZB UT-TAHRIR’S APPEAL TO MUSLIMS IN THE WEST: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AN ORGANISATIONAL MODEL

The ummah cannot be revived without a structure or an organisation, yet all structures which materialise eventually failed, because they were established upon an incorrect basis. The question that needs to be addressed now is what is the correct structure that will revive the ummah.

Taquiddin An-Nabhani (2001, p.19)

This chapter argues that HT’s evolution into an organisation has contributed to consolidating its presence globally over the last 60 years and has ensured HT’s expansion and survival in different national contexts. This chapter is significant to the general enquiry of this thesis because it reveals the transnational character of HT, which has been an attractive element for certain segments of young Muslims in the West. Through an analysis of original data gathered from interviews with current HT members, social media, and HT-specific literature produced by the leaders, this chapter argues that HT’s evolution into a transnational organisation represents a key advantage for the group both in terms of expansion and recruitment.

The analysis of HT’s transnational character is here conducted through the agent-structure debate by identifying HT as a collective agent and the general environment, in which the organisation operates, as the structure. The chapter
begins by grounding the claim that HT has evolved into an organisation in three theoretical concepts: the transnationality of the organisation, the organisational structure (with a specific focus on the multidivisional structure), and the importance of the general environment in determining the performance of an agent in a specific place.

The findings that emerge from this discussion are then presented. First, HT behaves similarly to transnational corporations in managing its activities in different countries, ensuring a functional equilibrium between local autonomy and the need for centralisation. The analysis also shows how the local context—here referred to as “general environment”—strongly impacts the agency of HT, creating a number of opportunities (and also constraints), which determine the performance of the organisation at the local level.

Notwithstanding the pivotal role played by the general environment as a structure, this chapter shows how the particular character of HT works as an advantage for the organisation as it reconnects the local and global dimensions. By adapting to the local context, the group is able to bypass several structural constraints by adapting to the local context. With a presence in more than 45 countries around the world, HT has adopted an organisational outlook that enables the organisation to speak with “one voice”. This show of global unity has been a particularly attractive element for some segments of the Muslim diaspora communities in the West who have ended up joining the group.
3.1 Studying Hizb ut-Tahrir as an Organisation

When observing HT’s agency both at the national and international level, the group appears to have many similarities to an organisation.36 This chapter uses elements of the current literature on organisations (Kenney et al., 2013; Mahani & Agah, 2014; Rosińska-Bukowska, 2017) and Jones’ (2007, 2013) conceptualisation of transnational corporations (as specific kinds of transnational organisations) to explore HT’s appeal to Muslims in the West.37 This analysis is conducted through three organisational variables: the transnational character of a corporation, its organisational structure, and the general environment where it operates.

Lee Iwan provides a clear definition of transnational corporations (TNCs) defining them as “complex organisations, which have invested in foreign operations...while having a central corporate facility, TNCs give decision-making, R&D and marketing powers to each individual foreign market” (Iwan, 2007). TNCs differ from other companies with an international profile because they own businesses outside their home country (unlike international companies). TNCs have a coordinated, country-specific product offering (unlike multinational companies) and thus have a less centralised approach in favour of local autonomy, unlike global companies (Iwan, 2007).

Therefore, TNCs maintain a certain degree of consistency throughout the world with slogans and/or flagship products; however, they also tailor their operations to the local context. More recently, Rosińska-Bukowska (2017) remarked that one of the essential characteristics of TNCs is their ability to

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36 As specified above, the term agency is used throughout the thesis to refer to the power of agents “to think for themselves and act in ways that shape their experiences and life trajectories” (Cole, 2017, p. 1).

37 As Jones (2007; 2013) conceptualizes the transnational corporation as a type of transnational organisation, this thesis uses the terms “corporation” and “organisation” as synonyms when referring to HT.
coordinate skills to assure adequate performances in the neighbouring environments in which the corporation operates. Therefore, again, the success of TNCs is determined by their ability to link the global corporate stance to the local context and to connect the local reality to the goals determined by central leadership.

This ability to coordinate between the global and local contexts is facilitated (or limited) by the kind of structure a corporation adopts. When a corporation needs to assure certain standards of centralisation among its branches in different countries, while maintaining local independence for marketing strategies and specific products, the multidivisional structure is the most suitable kind of organisational structure for meeting these needs. The concept of multidivisional structure was developed by large American industrial companies after the Second World War to lighten the work load of the central office and to foster greater freedom in operating divisions in different places (Sanchez-Bueno & Suarez-Gonzalez, 2010).

This new setting adopted by companies was soon known as a multidivisional structure or M-Form (Chandler, 1990; Williamson, 1975), and it was characterised by a general office responsible for strategic decisions—such as planning, evaluation, monitoring, and the allocation of resources to single divisions—and advisory services. In addition to the general office, local divisions are located in different countries. The role of divisions is to implement the guidelines from the central office in the most effective way (Sanchez-Bueno & Suarez-Gonzalez, 2010; Williamson, 1975). As a result, while the general office sets the goals, the divisions choose the most suitable means and strategy for achieving the goals.
Given the high level of flexibility ensured by a multidivisional structure, it is not surprising that Islamist groups like HT have also gradually adopted an organisational structure similar to the *M-Form*. The latter is particularly suited for international groups that need to face the same challenges as transnational corporations when expanding their activities overseas. Adopting an *M-Form* structure entails that individuals who possess the same abilities are assembled and overseen by an expert in that specific area. This results in a structure with multiple divisions—in this case cells—which are equipped with their own resources and support various organisational functions.

Cells are directed by the top management but assembled in a bottom-up way with a focus on common functions (Jones, 2007, p. 150). In *M-Form* structures, authority is delegated to four macro levels: the chief executive officer (CEO), the corporate managers, the divisional managers, and the functional managers. The allocation of authority to multiple levels creates several efficient mechanisms. First, it allows general executives to focus on the general performance of the company without being inundated by the issues of the operational divisions. Moreover, different levels of authority serve as control mechanisms for each subordinate level, ensuring a certain level of consistency of company activities without direct engagement of the central office. Finally, companies adopting an *M-Form* are characterised by a higher degree of integration between divisions without the presence of a strict central control.

This is made possible by specific integrating mechanisms, such as people covering liaison roles, temporary work forces, and permanent work teams whose task is to ensure collaboration and communication between units (Sanchez-Bueno & Suarez-Gonzalez, 2010). The CEO, the most prominent position within an *M-Form* (multidivisional) structure, holds central authority and provides an
image of unity for the corporation. The CEO established the key directives, represents the company in formal contexts, and delegates some authority to the more country-focused corporate managers, who oversee the company’s performance in a specific area. Corporate managers also delegate some of their authority to the divisional managers.

Divisional managers are the partners of the corporate managers in dealing with the management of local activities. More specifically, divisional managers operate in specific cities and villages, and they in turn delegate some of their authority to the functional managers. Functional managers are located at the bottom of the hierarchy and mostly supervise small groups of people, corresponding to units or departments (Mahani & Agah, 2014). The authority allocation to multiple levels enhances the corporation’s effectiveness in a number of ways.

First, it allows the CEO and the central leadership to focus almost exclusively on the overall performance of the corporation, without the distraction of local matters, the responsibility of which is entrusted to local divisions. Secondly, different levels of authority secure a tight control on each subordinate unit, having local managers monitoring local issues. Their presence ensures a high level of consistency within the corporation’s activities, even without the direct engagement of the central leadership within the divisions. Finally, corporations adopting an M-Form structure are characterised by a higher degree of integration between divisions without a strict central control, which is made possible because of specific integrating mechanisms and positions (such as people covering liaison roles, temporary work forces, and permanent work teams) whose task is to ensure collaboration and communication between units (Sanchez-Bueno & Suarez-Gonzalez, 2010).
3.2 The Transnational Character of Hizb ut-Tahrir

The three theoretical concepts from Organizational Theory (OT) discussed so far—the transnational character of a corporation, the organisational structure, and the general environment—are used in this chapter to expand the analysis of HT and shed light on its evolution into an organisation. Furthermore, these theoretical elements from the corporate world are also useful for analysing HT’s current structure and agency vis-à-vis the local contexts in which the organisation operates. Applying concepts from OT to HT reveals the elements that have assured HT’s survival for over 60 years in more than 45 countries and helps explain HT’s enduring appeal to specific segments of the Muslim diaspora community in the West.

The analysis of HT’s Australian and British branches, through the analysis of the organisation’s activities and the interviews with current HT Australia members, emphasised the first of the three OT concepts mentioned above, namely the transnational character of the Hizb. The transnationality of the group is apparent in HT’s scope and its ability to coordinate its branches around the world. The transnational character of the group is also evident in the group’s ability to adapt to different territories, where it takes advantage of local opportunities, while trying to limit the constraints imposed by the general environment.

Like transnational corporations, HT has central headquarters (in the Middle East) where the central leadership coordinates with local branches. As stressed above, local branches are empowered with some degree of decision-making power so that they can tailor their local strategies and actions in the most efficient ways. While the focus of HT central leadership is always on the organisation’s core goal—the re-establishment of the khilafah through a
revolution of thought—local branches are in charge of implementing the most appropriate strategy for achieving this goal. Examples of such strategies include rallies, Khilafah Conferences, leaflets campaigns, and constant criticism of national authorities and their policies.

The transnational character of the Hizb is something current members are aware of, and in some cases members have reported this as a reason for their initial attraction to the group.

Table 2. Word Frequency Query - Hizb ut-Tahrir Members’ Interviews 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N.</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Weighted Percentage</th>
<th>Similar Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>5</td>
<td>103</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Muslims</td>
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<td>people</td>
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<td>group, groups</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.42%</td>
<td>system, systemic, systemization, systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 summarises the results of the exploration of data drawn from 16 individual semi-structured interviews with current members of HT Australia, conducted between February and May 2016 in Sydney. A word frequency query on NVivo (QSR International, 2016), a software program for coding and analysing text, was used by the author to conduct the thematic analysis to identify the most frequent themes that emerged in the interviews. As shown in

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38 For more details on the interviews see Chapter One.
Table 2, positions 1 and 2 are occupied by the terms “Islam and Muslims” (and similar words), stressing the significance of the themes connected to such words. For instance, interviewees frequently spoke about the *khilafah* as a religious obligation in Islam for every Muslim, their understanding of Islam, the reasonableness of Islam, the suffering of Muslims globally, and the conditions of Muslim diaspora communities in the West.

It is not surprising that *Islam* and *Muslims* were the most frequently mentioned words given that interviews were conducted with members of an Islamist group; however, the position of the term *world* in Table 2 is noteworthy, which was ranked 7th and was used by HT Australia members when speaking about HT’s goals, vision, and action in the West. HT Australia members often referred to their organisation as a “global party in the *world*” with a clear goal: the re-establishment of the caliphate (Mohammad, Aysha, Marwa, Farah, and Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, 2016).

Although the name itself suggests that HT is a party, since the Arabic term “Hizb” is translated as the English noun “party”, this thesis stresses that HT does not operate as a conventional political party, since it is not involved in formal political roles nor do HT members take part in the electoral processes. The term *world* was included in expressions like “HT has a unique trend in the *world*”, “HT takes care of the brothers and sisters around the *world*”, “HT is an established and reliable presence in the *world*”, “Unlike other Islamic revivalist groups, HT was able to survive for decades and to expand throughout the *world*” (Noura, Aysha, Amina, Ahmed, HT Australia, personal communication, 2016).

These statements stress HT Australia members’ conviction about the uniqueness of their group in many respects: the ways it operates transnationally,

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39 HT’s political attitudes and participation in the West is discussed in Chapter Four.
its global advocacy methods for the *ummah*, and its ability to survive in different contexts, while continuing to expand its membership and activities.

Some members reported that the transnational character of the Hizb was what initially attracted to them to the group. This was the case of Amina, Leyla, Sadiqa, Mahmoud, and Noura who all admired the group’s widespread, global presence, its survival despite harsh persecutions and bans in multiple countries, and its current global activity. These elements seemed to suggest the interviewees HT’s reliability and established presence as a global actor.\(^{40}\) When coming across HT’s *da’wah* (call to Islam)—through leaflets, online visual and text posts, conferences, and talks, 10 interviewees out of 16 stated that they were taken by HT’s ideas, but what had impacted them the most was HT’s global activity and expansion, “revealing the worth of the *khilafah* project not only for a certain time or for a place, but over the decades until it is finally re-established” (Marwa, HT Australia, personal communication, March 22, 2016).

Interviewees often noted how HT’s global presence attracted them to the Hizb rather than to other groups because “joining the Hizb is not like joining a group which could be dissolved at any moment... HT global presence and its long life indicate the value of HT project, of the caliphate as a religious obligation accepted and supported by Muslims in the world” (Farah, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016). In fact, unlike many other groups, both violent and nonviolent, that advocate for the re-establishment of the caliphate for a short time and then disappear, HT has remained a global actor after six decades (Phillips, 2017).

Current members revealed the relevance of HT as a transnational actor when speaking about HT operations in the West. The terms that ranked higher

\(^{40}\) Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
than world in Table 2 include member (3), people (4), Western (5), and politics (6), and each was mentioned by the interviewees to highlight specific traits of HT related to its devotion to people (both members, potential recruits, and the global ummah), political awareness of both local and global issues, and agency in the West as an opponent to the Westphalian state model.\textsuperscript{41} It is a common characteristic among HT members to be very politically-minded and to discuss religious and political issues in parallel. For instance, as stressed by Sadiqa and Khalida (two senior members of HT Australia), their discourses on the caliphate always entail political and religious considerations:

\begin{quote}
We are living in a dictatorship against Muslims, the caliphate is the only solution...the best system to establish based on justice and fear of Allah (swt) (Sadiqa, HT Australia, personal communication, March 6, 2016).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
The re-establishment of the caliphate is a promise of Allah (swt) and it will be the only system with a just and pious leader who cares about his people (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016).
\end{quote}

According to Sadiqa and Khalida, the caliphate is the best political, social, and religious system for ending the hardship of Muslims around the world because it is grounded on “the fear of Allah”. Sadiqa used this expression to refer to the fact that the caliphate would be governed by shari’\textsuperscript{a} instead of secular law. Secular law is regarded by HT members as immoral, leading to corruption, while shari’\textsuperscript{a} is regarded as the only system of regulations that can ensure justice and wellbeing for the entire population. This conviction is widespread among HT members, who all think—like Khalida—that the caliphate will eventually be re-established and a just Muslim ruler (caliph) will take control, re-uniting Muslims under the flag of Islam.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{41} Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
\textsuperscript{42} HT’s detailed vision of the caliphate will be discussed in Chapter Five.
All HT Australia members interviewed showed a strong certainty about the integrity of the future caliph, building their trust in the caliph’s ability to rule justly and effectively enforce the observation of Islamic tenets: “Islam is a religion of justice…if a man observes Islamic principles he will always practice justice” (Mohammad, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016).

Table 2 is also useful for analysing HT’s transnational project for re-establishing the caliphate. The table shows how interviewees often mentioned the terms state (8), group (9), and system (10). Again, these terms are all interconnected in HT members’ discourse, especially when they speak about HT’s role as an opposition group in the West and the fact that the group offers an alternative model to the Western system by aiming to bring back the Islamic state. HT members believe that their organisation emerged in response to the divine invitation of the Qur’an:43 “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” (Qur’an 3:104).

As a result, HT members are certain of their role as opponents of a system that has led to a progressive decline of Islam, causing severe problems, not only in the Middle East but around the world. Again the words of Khalida and Uthman Badar (prominent senior member of HT Australia) work as significant evidences:

Western colonial powers have re-written history by shaping school curricula and how they encourage this constant narrative against Muslims (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016).

HT’s aim in the West is the one of preserving Islamic identity of Muslims from assimilation and the destruction of Islam, which is goal number one of the “Western hidden agenda” (Uthman Badar, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).

These extracts illustrate the transnational importance of the terms *state*, *group*, and *system* in HT members’ narratives. HT emerged as a *group* challenging the Western *system* and nation *states* for their continuous exploitation of Muslims. HT sees Western governments, both past and present, as the oppressors with a “hidden agenda” aimed at the annihilation of Muslims and Islam (Uthman Badar, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016). Therefore, HT’s main role is informing the *ummah* about alleged Western historical manipulations (such as the change to school curriculum) so that they join HT’s intellectual struggle against the West with the eventual aim of re-establishing the caliphate.\(^44\) It is the group’s flexible structure and the work of its branches that allows HT to carry out these activities.

### 3.3 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Structure

#### 3.3.1 An-Nabhani’s Conception and Current Trends

HT’s ability to carry out an integrated action among its various branches globally—pursuing the re-establishment of the caliphate while conducting an ideological war with the West—is significantly determined by its structure. While acknowledging some resemblance with Bolshevik organisations’ “secretive cellsystem” (Baran, 2004, p. 24; Dudoignon, 2013; Karagiannis & Mccauley, 2006), this thesis argues that the Hizb has developed its “own way” over time, which has allowed the group to survive in several national contexts.

HT’s structure was initially conceived by the founder of the group, Taquiddin An-Nabhani, in the early 1950s and elaborated in the book “Structuring of a Party” (An-Nabhani, 2001). An-Nabhani had a clear vision for HT as a group and thought that it should avoid the mistakes of previous short-
lived Islamic revivalist groups (An-Nabhani, 2001, p. 13). According to An-Nabhani, the main reason for the failure of previous groups was the fact that they were entirely driven by emotions and lacked a solid rational foundation: “These movements were driven by patriotic emotions, they lacked any serious thought to define their course of action” (An-Nabhani, 2001, p. 5). Therefore, An-Nabhani was committed to building his group on “serious thoughts”, conceiving membership to the Hizb as a continuous learning process.

As stressed by An-Nabhani himself, HT was created with the precise purpose of revolutionising society, with the ummah playing the role of a leading reform actor structured on specific elements:

The correct structure [to reform the ummah] is an ideological Hizb based on Islam. In this structure, the idea would constitute the soul of the Hizb as well as its nucleus and the essence of its existence...the first cell of the structure would be a person who embodies the idea, and a method which is of the same nature as the idea, until he becomes a person of the same quality as the idea in his purity and clarity, and like the method in his distinctness and straightforwardness...once these three elements come together—the profound idea, the clear method and the sincere person—the first cell comes into existence...soon the cell multiplies into other cells to form the first circle of the Hizb, or “the leadership” (qiyaadah)...once the first circle is formed, the Hizb group (Kutlah Hizbiyyah) emerges (An-Nabhani, 2001, p. 19).

As highlighted by this quote, An-Nabhani intended to build HT’s effectiveness on three main pillars: an idea, a clear method to implement the idea, and a sincere person who espouses the idea and the method after a process of learning and acculturation to the main concepts. The Hizbi’s success does not depend on members’ fascination by a few leaders or some aspects of ideology, since these elements would make membership to the group very weak. If the individual is not fully educated on the ideological tenets of his/her group—but

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45 The terms “culturing”, “acculturating” and “acculturation” is used throughout the thesis as synonyms to identify the process initiated by an organisation to instruct its affiliates on specific values and meanings, making the members familiar with the organisation’s culture. These process of acculturation is better explored with reference to HT in Chapter Six of this thesis.
only on some general notions—(s)he will not be able to advocate for the group and will be more likely to leave for something more convenient or attractive.

At the same time, if the individual’s membership is linked to a particular leader, once the leader leaves, regardless of the reason, the individual will have no other bond with the group and (s)he will likely leave. Conversely, if a single member espouses the core ideological elements of the group, through careful and continuous study, (s)he will be unlikely to leave. For HT, the single member is an essential part of the group’s structure in all branches. This particular conception of the individual and the importance placed on the single member by HT leadership was also identified by the interviewees as an aspect of the group’s appeal.

It emerged in the interviews that, when individuals began learning about HT’s ideology, they began to regard membership in HT as something very unique, since they were treated as more than mere numbers within a group. Instead, they were valued as individual people, with different characters and personalities, but still sharing the same goal: the re-establishment of the caliphate. This goal was not imposed by leadership, but it was gradually understood by the members as their number one priority. As stressed by Mohammad, member of HT Australia for ten years:

We are not about numbers, but ideas... a person becomes a member in the Hizb when (s)he is fully aware of his/her Islam and religious obligations...our aim is not to simply attract people but to educate Muslims, build Islamic personalities and carry the da’wah to the society (Mohammad, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016).

Mohammad was introduced to the Hizb at the University of Western Sydney. What first struck him about HT was not its goal but rather the way the organisation operated, its stress on education, the complex reasoning of members, and members’ extensive knowledge of not only Islamic matters but all
current events. At the same time, Mohammad was surprised by the apparent lack of interest of the Hizb in recruiting as many members as possible: “they were interested in quality not quantity” (Mohammad, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016). As the aim of the Hizb is to build Islamic personalities capable of bringing the da’wah to the rest of society, the recruitment period for the Hizb normally takes up to two years. In this timeframe, the potential member—called daris (student)—must study HT’s core tenets and Islamic vision.

As stressed by Mohammad’s words, HT’s focus on the person is also part of the appeal of HT’s structure, which is portrayed as one where the individual is central. In this way, the member is the foundation on which the organisation is grounded, and at the same time, (s)he is the main means through which the organisation expands and carries out its activities. Once the person is educated on the main tenets and method of the group and has fully espoused them, the main tie binding the member to the group is the ‘Aqeedah (doctrine). An-Nabhani was strongly convinced that the ‘Aqeedah had to be basis of the group and its main strength for survival over time (An-Nabhani, 2001, pp. 19-20):

The group then requires a Hizbi bond to bind the individuals who have embraced both the idea and the method. This Hizbi bond is the ‘Aqeedah, from which the outlook of the Hizb and the culture that characterizes the Hizb’s concepts emanate. The Hizb group will thus proceed in the mainstream of life once it is formed. During this process, the Hizb will encounter many situations, face many obstacles, and be exposed to many different environments. In other words, the circumstances around it will fluctuate from hot to cool. If the Hizbi group manages to withstand these conditions, then its idea will become crystallised, its method clarified, and the group will have succeeded in preparing its members, and strengthening the bond of the group. It will then be able to take the practical steps in the da’wah and the activity. At this point, it moves from being a Hizbi bloc to a fully-fledged ideological Hizb working towards revival.
As highlighted by An-Nabhani’s words, the strength of a group’s structure lies in its core ideas, which create a strong and durable bond. If a group succeeds in adequately preparing its members, the group is likely to survive over time (even in harsh conditions) in multiple locations. Such preparation also gives consistency to the group’s methods and ideology over time. Over the years, HT leaders have chosen to maintain An-Nabhani’s recruitment model because of the importance of member acculturation for strengthening the bond between the group and the individual.

While the idea and the method serve as the two pillars of HT structure, the latter is also self-empowering, generating strong bonds between the individual and the organisation itself, without intermediaries. When a person becomes a full member of HT, (s)he fully acknowledges the Hizb as an essential part of his/her life and Islamic personality, independently from current leaders or other members. Members usually continue their work within the organisation for years, since HT is important for members on a personal level—as part of their religious commitment as Muslims—and for this reason often continue their activism in HT for a long time, thus giving the group a high degree of stability.

HT’s iconic senior members (such as Nazreen Nawaz and Abdul Wahid from HT Britain) are good examples of long-term members and include male and female intellectuals from the medical, academic, and legal professions. Interviews with current members of the HT Australian branch also confirmed long-lasting membership in the group as 9 out of 16 interviewees were over 30 years old at the time of the interview, but they became members of the Hizb before the age of 20. Over the decades, they have maintained their loyalty to the group and have even increased their level of commitment to HT by taking part in multiple HT activities.
This is the case of Hamzah Qureshi who was 29 years old at the time of the interview and has been a member of the Hizb since he was 19. He had recently become HT Australia’s official spokesperson. After Qureshi became a full HT member, he was given multiple low-profile roles in the organisation, such as delivering speeches, talks, and producing online content. Eventually, HT leaders promoted him to head of the media department at HT Australia, giving him a major public profile, which culminated in his recent promotion to spokesperson of the HT Australian branch.46

3.3.2 The Evolution of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Structure and the Current M-Form

As highlighted by Qureshi’s experience and by what has been discussed so far, the model of HT’s structure envisaged by An-Nabhani in the 1950s has proved effective for binding the individual to the organisation through intimate knowledge of the ‘Aqeedah. Thus, members see the organisation as an essential aspect of their lives and their Islamic identities and usually play active roles in HT for a long time.47 While An-Nabhani envisaged HT’s ideas and method as the pillars of HT’s structure, what he did not foresee was the progressive evolution of HT into an organisation resembling a transnational corporation with an M-Form structure. However, to understand this evolution, it is necessary to take a step back and look at the conditions that generated the current HT’s current structural outlook.

After the official establishment of HT in Jerusalem in 1953, the group quickly expanded in the Middle East. As new branches were established in Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, and Kuwait, HT resembled an informal network of

46 For more information on Hamzah Qureshi, see his Facebook account (https://www.facebook.com/hamzah.qureshi.39).
47 HT long-term membership will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.
individuals united by a common goal: to redeem a society under the control of a corrupt West and unjust Muslim rulers (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996). The driving force of HT were young, politically-minded intellectuals determined to proselytise as many individuals as possible. Their early strategy was simply “knocking at society’s door” with leaflets, petitions, individual visits, and mosque sermons (Taji-Farouki, 1996, p. 19).

However, as the number of members increased in different locations, HT leadership needed a higher level of institutionalisation. For this reason, the early 1970s witnessed the emergence of what is today defined as the “Zone System” (Taji-Farouki, 1996, p. 24). According to this new system, municipalities were divided into areas based on population and geographic characteristics. Each zone was given to a senior member, while other members were given specific areas within the zone, according to their personal preferences and distance from their work or place of residence.

Hence, the Zone System turned out to be very useful for HT activists in covering greater portions of a territory, and it marked the beginning of HT’s evolution into a corporation-like actor with a clear distinction of roles and responsibilities and a well-defined hierarchy. Yet, it was HT’s expansion into non-Muslim countries, such as Europe, the United States, Oceania, and Asia that determined the need to further transform the group’s structure into something more flexible with a functional equilibrium between central leadership and local independence. To address this need, HT adopted a multidivisional structure (M-Form), similar to many transnational corporations.

Adopting an M-Form structure entails that individuals who possess the same abilities are assembled and overseen by someone else who is an expert in that specific area. This results in a structure with multiple cells, which are
equipped with their own resources and support various organisational functions (Jones, 2007). Cells focus on common functions which are context-specific, such as leaflets campaign, talks, conferences, rallies, and the production of HT-specific literature.

As pointed out above, HT was initially conceived as a cell in expansion, where the fundamental unit is the individual and his/her strong bond to the ‘Aqeedah. Therefore, the group’s early “unstructured structure” worked as a springboard for the development of an M-Form structure, whose driving force still lies in the cells.

*Figure 1. Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Multidivisional Structure*

Figure 1 offers a graphic representation of HT’s structure, mirroring the M-Form structure adopted by transnational corporations (Chandler, 1990; Williamson, 1975). In HT, the *Amir* is similar to the CEO. He is the supreme leader who presides over the central committee of the organisation, monitoring HT’s activities from above. He is informed on all accomplishments and goals pursued by the cells, and he represents HT globally, providing a sense of unity to third parties. Given the importance of the Amir, current HT Australia members
stressed that only a few people in the leadership know where the Amir lives. For security reasons, the rest of HT members only know that “he is based somewhere in the Middle East” (Leyla, HT Australia, personal communication with the author, March 22, 2016). In spite of this secrecy, the Amir continues to give online lectures at HT-sponsored Khilafah Conferences worldwide and post new videos on HT official websites.48

In partnership with the Amir, a group of high-level departments are responsible for determining the general guidelines of the organisation for all branches globally; these departments are: the committee responsible for the election of the Amir, the administrative department, the political department, the legislative body, and the enforcement body. These departments correspond to the corporate staff in the *M-Form* of a corporation. HT corporate staff have the responsibility of maintaining consistency with An-Nabhani’s guidelines, while ensuring a certain space for innovation to allow for adaptation to the current global context. This equilibrium between continuity with traditional ideological tenets and local needs is also facilitated by the figure of the *Mutamad*.

Directly appointed by the Amir, *Mutamad* is the title given to HT regional leaders, who are the group’s counterparts to corporate managers. They are in charge of activities and general management in a specific territory, and each *Mutamad* supervises one of three areas: finances and donations, information collection, and publication of HT literature. These three groups play a pivotal role

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for the success of a local branch because they collect the resources necessary for
the functioning of the organisation, raising funds and managing members’
donations. Furthermore, by collecting relevant regional information and
identifying significant regional grievances, regional leaders are able to
ideologically attack national authorities and conceptually connect these attacks to
the need to re-establish the caliphate.

HT’s ability to connect local grievances with the need to re-establishing the
Islamic state is evident in HT’s literature. In news comments, posts, essays, and
leaflets, local departments seem to follow the same pattern: they identify local
grievances and then connect the problem with the international geopolitical
context and the immediate need for the khilafah to restore local well-being (Hizb
ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017d). HT rejects the Western division of the world into
nation states and sees the world as divided into wilayaat (provinces), with each
wilaya (province) corresponding to a country or a region within a country (An-
Nabhani, 2007).

HT sees the borders of modern nations as illegitimate because they were
established with “the blood of local populations”, which is a reference to the
colonial era and the “unjust division of the world regardless of the people within
the territory” (Ahmed, HT Australia, personal communication, February 21,
2016). While a Mutamad is usually in charge of a region, the leader at the
country level is the Masul. The role of the Masul is almost a clone of the
Mutamad. The Masul oversees the same three departments of the Mutamad
(finances and donations, information, and publications), but his activity is
oriented towards the national level. However, each Masul collaborates with
higher hierarchical levels to achieve the same goal: the re-establishment of the
caliphate in the majaal areas.
Authority in HT is further delegated down the hierarchy to local and provincial committees, whose leaders are called Naqib. A Naqib corresponds to a divisional manager and he is responsible for administering and controlling HT activities in the main cities and surrounding villages. The Naqib acts as a bridge between the local and provincial contexts: while running the local committee, based in the city centres, the Naqib reports to the provincial/national leaders (Masul).

Finally, the Naqib delegates authority to the Mushrif, a supervisor or instructor whose task is to continuously acculturate HT members and members-to-be (daris) to HT’s main ideological tenets. To do so, the Mushrif runs regular halaqaat, small study groups usually made up of five people, where members and new recruits gather to study once a week for a couple of hours. Halaqaat are essential aggregative hubs, where the smallest units of HT structure are formed: the individuals. The halaqa (study circle) is where daris learn about the 14 books forming HT’s adopted literature and are trained to think in a very critical way.49

Furthermore, halaqa is where Muslims recruited by HT learn their religious obligations (according to HT’s specific vision) and where Hizbi personalities are constructed through a continuous process of acculturation. Given the importance of halaqaat in developing a “correct Hizbi personality” (Leyla, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2017), HT members usually bring their children along. Khalida, in her mid-30s at the time of the interview and a member of HT Australia since her teens, stresses the pivotal role played by halaqaat in the minds of HT members:

My children need to be educated on Islam and on what we believe...for this reason, my boys attend the halaqa with their father while my daughter studies

49 See Chapter Five on the importance of halaqaat as an ideal space where HT leadership conveys meanings, values, and a new group identity to the individual.
with me at home...my children are educated on how to believe and on how to build a strong Islamic identity, based on An-Nabhan’s chapter “The way to belief”...I think it is important to teach them how to respond and structure their arguments against any objection towards Islam (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication with the author, April 6, 2016).

Khalida’s words tell of how HT members not only see halaqaat as the best space to teach people how to build a strong Islamic personality, but how they also consider halaqaat as an opportunity to empower young Muslims, giving them the intellectual and critical tools to respond to any argument or criticism against Islam. For these reasons, HT members, both new and old ones, continue to regularly attend halaqaat, eager to gain knowledge, which strengthens week after week their bond with their organisation through a progressive awareness and acceptance of the group’s ‘Aqeedah.

As stated above, the strong bond between the individual and the organisation, based on HT’s Aqeedah, serves as a solid foundation for HT action globally, which is facilitated by the delegation of authority to multiple levels (according to the M-Form structure). Therefore, the progressive adoption of an M-Form structure over the decades has enabled HT to maintain central leadership and a central control system, while empowering multiple divisions that are independent in terms of support roles and value-creation activities.\(^{50}\)

\(^{50}\) As stated above, each division is responsible, at multiple levels (urban, national, and provincial), for carrying out three core functions: resource collection (through finances and donations), information collection, and the regular publication of context-specific literature.
3.4 Hizb ut-Tahrir and the General Environment as the Structure

When discussing the attractiveness of HT agency in the West, the structure, as an ensemble of factors able to constrain or empower the agent (Giddens, 1984), plays an essential role. As mentioned before, the general environment serves as a structure, creating significant limitations and opportunities for HT, which determine the performances of the organisation in different countries. The general environment is constituted by economic, technological, political, and social forces, which can all empower or limit HT’s agency, creating pertinent differences between the branches. For instance, HT Lebanon and HT Britain differ greatly in terms of political freedom, campaigning, and economic and technological resources.

In Britain, members have higher incomes compared to members in Lebanon and can therefore donate more to HT, providing the local branch with more resources. Access to new technologies is also an advantage of HT Britain over its Lebanese counterpart. Technological devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and fibre optic telecommunications, help empower the agency of the local branch because they allow information to spread quickly, provide greater access to data for the general audience (mostly through the web and social media), and allow HT members to communicate in real-time to better coordinate their activities.

Political forces, intended as the specific system of government and regulations, also play an essential role in determining the performance of HT local branches. In Britain, where freedom of speech and association is guaranteed, members of HT regularly gather and run events (such as lectures and rallies) where they harshly criticise the British government and foreign policy promoting the caliphate as the ideal global system. Given the freedom they
enjoy, members of HT Britain continue running leaflet campaigns outside the main mosques, at university campuses, and in Muslim majority areas. Conversely, in Lebanon the political situation is much more constraining: the country was declared “partly free” in 2017 but a number of serious restrictions to civil liberties remain (Freedom House, 2017).

While freedom of expression and the press are formally guaranteed by law, the mainstream media still practices a degree of self-censorship to continue operating in the country. Furthermore, it is considered a criminal offence to openly criticise or simply defame the president or Lebanese security forces (Freedom House, 2017). Therefore, HT—whose rhetoric is based on criticism of national authorities, both kuffar (unbelievers) and Muslims—is forced to keep a low profile to maintain legal operations in the country. Keeping a low profile means that the local branch has fewer opportunities to conduct public campaigns and events and to promote its views to a global public as HT Britain does.

Lastly, social forces are a significant structural element impacting HT’s agency in a specific territory. Given that social forces include age, education, lifestyle, values, and norms of a certain population, they strongly determine the core characteristics of HT local branches (Jones, 2007). For instance, in the UK the median age of the population was 41 in 2017; while in Lebanon it was 29 years old. For this reason, the Lebanese branch has younger members and a younger audience (Office for National Statistics, 2017; Worldometers, 2017).

Furthermore, education systems differ significantly. In the UK, the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) — intended as an estimate of the likelihood of a young person participating in Higher Education by age 30 — reached 59% in 2014/2015 (UK Government, 2016). In other Western countries such as Australia, this rate has reached 89%. However, Lebanon’s rate is much
lower at 38% in 2015 and has decreased from 2011 when it peaked at 49% (Unesco Institute for Statistics, 2017). Although Lebanon is unique in the region for providing high-quality institutions, which offer free high education, such as the American University of Beirut founded in 1866, the participation rate in higher education in Lebanon is still considered low.

When establishing a new branch in a country, HT activists need to keep in mind the characteristics of the local population, such as education levels, in order to choose the most suitable topics and venues to conduct an effective campaign. If universities and colleges are crowded places in a specific nation, then HT activists will go there, but if mosques and parks are more frequented by young people than university campuses, HT members will begin their work in mosques and parks. If the country is a Muslim-majority country, the topics founding the local branch campaign will be specifically developed for a Muslim audience.

In contrast, if the branch is based in the West (such as in the UK), the core points of HT’s advocacy campaign will still be devoted to Muslim communities but the community will be framed in the group’s discourse as a diaspora community, living under alleged “Western oppressive authorities” (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2015). The fact that HT has expanded in over 45 countries around the world in the last six decades is evidence of HT’s ability to adapt to each specific country. Furthermore, the M-Form structure has served as a useful tool for granting local autonomy to local branches, while keeping them connected to central leadership in terms of guidelines, goals, and recurrent themes.
3.5 Hizb ut-Tahrir: When the “Local” Connects with the “Global”

The discussion above on the transnational character of HT, its M-Form structure, and its ability to adapt to the general environment suggests the efficacy of HT’s strategy in connecting the local dimension with central leadership at the global level. As highlighted by the interviews with current members, one of the elements that had attracted them to HT was its established global presence for over six decades, with multiple branches in diverse countries that speak as “one voice” globally (Ayda, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).

Thus, the organisation behaves in many ways like a transnational corporation promoting one distinctive product globally, namely the re-establishment of the caliphate in majaal areas, while tailoring local marketing strategies, such as the contents of leaflets and online videos, to survive in the different environments. Undoubtedly, the effective equilibrium between global and local established by HT is a point of strength and helps the group win the hearts and minds of Muslims around the world.

As mentioned above, HT leaders present the caliphate as a necessity for all Muslims, no matter where they live. But the core strength of HT is the way the group links the urgent need of the caliphate to local grievances, inviting Muslims to re-interpret history and carefully consider their status as a diaspora community in the West:

Muslims are in danger as a minority living in Australia…they only make up 2.4% of the population, they have no clear leadership and no substantial influence in media, politics or the corporate world (Qureshi, 2017).

The hardening of anti-Muslim sentiment [in the West] is alarming but hardly surprising as the obvious and expected result of a 15 year politically motivated campaign to encourage hatred and suspicion of Islam and Muslims… a campaign that used terrorism as the excuse to implant the false idea that Islamic beliefs were the cause of violence, so Islam itself was the suspect and needed reform (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia Media Office, 2016).
As illustrated in these two extracts from Hamzah Qureshi and HT Australia Media Office, the local branch aims to portray Australian Muslims as an endangered, deprived group and as victims of a Western-sponsored campaign encouraging “hatred and suspicion against Islam and Muslims” (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia Media Office, 2016). By incessantly depicting Western authorities as “having a hidden agenda to destroy Muslims” (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016), HT branches push Muslims towards a progressive estrangement from the local context in which they were born and raised.

For those who then become members of HT, “home” is not the actual place where they were born, but an ideal space where the caliphate will be re-established. As highlighted by the data presented above, their country of citizenship in the West becomes a place that is not home anymore but instead a place where they—as Muslims—constantly feel under trial as a “suspect community.” While spreading these ideas as the basis for their campaign, HT members also express the need to re-establish the caliphate as a panacea for all problems of Muslims’.

Branches usually differ in the boldness of their criticisms against national authorities and in the kind and frequency of events held, but the focus on the immediate need to re-establish caliphate is the leitmotiv of all HT branches all over the globally. Analysis of the data suggests that HT activists at the global level mostly employ three main themes to convince their audience of the need to re-establish the caliphate. These three themes are the glory of the caliphate, the reasons leading to the fall of the caliphate, and the current demands for the re-establishment of the caliphate by the global ummah.

51 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
Data analysis revealed the focus of HT members’ discourses on the many aspects of the glorious past of the Islamic state: equal distribution of resources, social justice, the rule of law, and the large number of intellectuals in academia, science, and mathematics. HT members also highlighted the care caliphs had for their people as a unique element of a system of government based on Islam. Khalida’s interview again offers relevant evidence (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016):

The caliph will be a leader who cares about his people since we have multiple examples in our history of caliphs loving their people and being just to them...on this subject, there is a beautiful story of a caliph who one night was disguised to go among the people and check on them...when he arrived in a poor house, he stopped and saw a lady stirring rocks in a pot. When he asked what she was doing, she answered that she had nothing to cook for her children and she was hoping that they would fall asleep while she was stirring the rocks (pretending it was food) and telling them some stories...deeply touched by what he had seen, the caliph—as soon as he went back to his palace—gave orders to bring food to that woman and her children...the caliph commanded that the woman was to be provided with everything she needed for herself and her children...can you tell me what Western political leader would ever do something like this?

Besides being a senior member of HT Australia, Khalida is also a da‘ī, that is a person devoted to inviting others to Islam. Her words were full of romanticism and emotion as she told the story of the caring caliph. In addition to expressing a deep sense of nostalgia for an ideal, just caliphate, Khalida used this story as a springboard for criticising Western governments, their policies, and their alleged lack of care for their populations. She compared the affection and care the caliph exhibited with the detached attitude Western authorities seem to have towards communities, especially minorities and Muslims.

This instance of the caliph personally checking on his population was contrasted with the lack of attention for the individual in capitalist states where “the poor becomes poorer and the rich becomes richer” (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016). Khalida’s harsh comments mirrored the
common view HT members have about the West as an ideological, social, and economic system in progressive decline, where the focus has shifted towards profit and where institutional accountability and justice are just an illusion.\textsuperscript{52}

In arguing for glory of the caliphate, HT members also referred to the building of hospitals, barracks, and infrastructure by great caliphs. One of the most quoted examples was Abdul Hamid II, caliph of the Ottoman Caliphate from 1876-1909, described by HT as the “last of Ottoman sultans who had any real power... he was overthrown in 1909 by the Western educated liberal secular group the Young Turks” (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017). Again, secular education and the spread of Western liberalism and secularism in the Middle East is identified by HT members as the beginning of all evils in the area, leading to the abolition of the caliphate and to the miserable conditions in which Muslims live in both the Muslim world and diaspora communities.

The theme of the glory of the caliphate was also introduced by members who stressed the primary role of education, which generated an abundance of female scholars and scientists within the caliphate’s borders. Some striking examples are Fatima al-Fihri, who founded what is today known as the University of Al Quaraouiyine (Morocco) in 859 CE, and Sutayta Al-Mahamali, who lived in the 10\textsuperscript{th} century and invented solutions to equations cited by other mathematicians and was also accomplished in literature, hadith, and jurisprudence (Women & Shariah, 2017).

3.5.1 The Fall of the Caliphate and Current Demands
The second main theme that emerged from the analysis of the data, a theme which is common to all HT branches globally, concerns the fall of the caliphate.

\textsuperscript{52} Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
All interviewees made it very clear that the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate (in 1924) was entirely due to the slow acceptance by Muslim leaders of a system of values and principles that was completely alien to Islam, namely capitalism and democracy. HT members interviewed for this study strongly argued that these concepts were not embedded in Islamic tradition; instead they argued that the concepts were anti-Islamic and pushed Muslims further away from their din:

The main cause for which the caliphate came to an end was Western influence...the West is indeed the enemy of Allah (swt): after the Crusades, Europeans understood that a military attack was not enough to destroy Muslims...instead, they had to attack our 'Aqeedah in order to destroy our identity...for this reason, Westerners started to disseminate their ideology over the centuries, with a precise agenda: attack Islam and the Qur'an under the flag of liberation, feminism, and democracy...therefore, the end of the caliphate was a well calculated political-economic move from Western power to destroy Muslims (Activists’ speeches at the Rajab event, Sydney, April 9, 2016).

These powerful declarations mirror HT members’ conviction regarding the reasons causing the end of the “glorious caliphate”. At the Rajab Event (organised by HT Australia and held in Sydney on April 9, 2016) activists consecutively gave powerful speeches about the end of the caliphate. The corruption of Muslim leaders by Western practices and thoughts together with the “Western agenda” (aimed at destroying Muslims spiritually rather than militarily by contaminating Islam) are significant themes on which HT branches in the world base their campaign.

The strong incompatibility between Islam and the West was also fuelled by the interviewees’ deep hatred for capitalism: “Westerners are all about money and power. We Muslims are all about community and Allah (swt)”, favouring a communication pattern of “us vs them”, which highlights the impossible coexistence of the two entities, namely Westerns and Muslims (Activists’ speeches at the Rajab event, Sydney, April 9, 2016).
Likewise, the interviews highlighted the alleged incompatibility between Islam and democracy, starting at the etymological level; while democracy stands for “government of the people”, Islam stands for “submission” to God and to his law. Thinking about this dichotomy, HT members agreed on the fact that no Muslim should welcome man-made laws, and instead should call for the application of shari‘a as the only just system of law.53

Finally, data showed how HT branches constantly refer to an on-going process of Islamic revivalism, allegedly taking place at the global level (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017a). On this subject, Hamzah Qureshi’s declarations on the will of the global ummah to restore the caliphate are particularly relevant:

The world is experiencing a great and imminent transition towards the Islamic khilafah...the unified call for the khilafah was awe-inspiring, humbling, and mesmerising...from all around the world, from the rich to the poor, from the famous former Indonesian rock star Hari Mukti, to your everyday Muslim, there was only one thing on the minds of the people at the conference and that was the khilafah (5 Pillars, 2013).”

5 Pillars (a British website mostly dealing with news, opinions and analysis concerning British Muslims and the Muslim world) has reported the words of Qureshi, the current HT Australia spokesperson, commenting on the high level of attendance of the HT-sponsored Khilafah Conference in Jakarta (Indonesia). The conference was held in 2013, and it hosted 130,000 Muslims. Moreover, Nazreen Nawaz from HT Britain used publicly available data to support the vision of a global Muslim call for the re-establishment of the caliphate:

Many recent studies and surveys—such as the one of the University of Maryland in the US (April 2007)—published a report that said that 70% of people in the Muslim world would support a strict application of shari‘a and the unification of the Muslim states into one, i.e. the caliphate...this is something inevitable (BBC, 2009).

53 These points will be further analysed in Chapter Four, where HT’s challenge to the West in the political and social fields are discussed.
Both Qureshi and Nawaz—from HT Australia and HT Britain, respectively—used numbers to strengthen their claim of a global Muslim consensus for the caliphate. As stressed by these declarations, HT branches around the world are committed to providing an image of a global ummah longing for the caliphate as the only way to stop the global decline and to protect Muslims. While Qureshi mentioned high degree of attendance to the Khilafah Conferences around the world (such as the ones that took place in Indonesian and another in Ankara that was attended by over 5,000 people despite the ban of HT in Turkey54), Nawaz used reports and percentages to legitimise her arguments; she even claimed that 70% of people in the Muslim world support the re-establishment of the khilafah (Nahda Productions, 2009).

Although Nawaz’s data might need further verification, what is striking about arguments supporting the caliphate from HT branches is the capacity of HT spokespersons to appear as “one voice” on core issues at the global level. The analysis of the arguments presented by both HT British and Australian branches led to the identification of three main common themes: the glory of the caliphate, the fall of the caliphate, and the current demand for the re-establishment of the caliphate. These themes are used by HT British and Australian branches to convince their members that the caliphate is the best and only solution for everyone, both Muslims and non-Muslims.

This process begins with the conviction that the khilafah was a magnificent state in terms of efficiency and quality of life. The argument then continues with the assumption that the fall of the caliphate was entirely due to the

54 Turkish Information Technologies and Communications Authority (ICTA) recently blocked access to HT Turkey’s official website in Turkey (www.hizb-turkiye.org) and to the official website of Hizb ut-Tahrir Central Media Office (www.hizb-ut-tahrir.info), implementing a full ban of their internet content. The ban became effective in March 2017, after the HT Turkey announcement of the conference “Why the World is in Need of the Khilafah”, which was also banned by Turkish authorities (Hizb ut-Tahrir Wilayah Turkey Media Office, 2017).
contamination of *kuffar* thoughts and the acceptance of anti-Islamic concepts and values by Muslim leaders. Finally, the path terminates with the idea that the only way to restore the previous condition of well-being in the Muslim world is to re-establish the caliphate.

In this ideal path, HT’s agency is remarkable: through a careful and detailed presentation of specific historical facts—such as the Islamic golden age, the importance of education in the caliphate, and the economic and intellectual achievements of the Islamic state—HT aims to promote the idea of the re-establishment of the caliphate as necessary, not only because it is a religious obligation but also because the caliphate is essential for assuring Muslims and non-Muslims good living conditions around the world. Again, all HT branches are committed to working towards this end, astutely connecting the most pressing local issues to HT’s global positions and aims.

### 3.5.2 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s “LoGlo” Strategy

As highlighted by the data presented above, although HT has expanded globally, the main goals of the organisation and its methodology have remained unaltered. HT has maintained the same unvaried stance on the most salient issues, such as the corruption of the West and the need to re-establish the caliphate, which over the decades has resulted in a coherent and well-structured group and has attracted a number of intellectuals not only in the Muslim world and in the West.55

Moreover, HT’s capacity, as a vocal radical organisation, to speak with one global voice has served as the impetus for the author to further explore HT’s ability to connect the local and global contexts through a specific strategy, here

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55 HT’s uniqueness vis-à-vis other similar groups will be further analysed in Chapter Six.
defined as the “LoGlo Strategy”, where LoGlo is a portmanteau of the two terms “local” and “global”. HT branches use local issues as prompts for criticising national authorities, while exalting the caliphate as the best model of government. Over the decades, HT has started using local grievances to turn individuals against the local government by highlighting the lack of accountability, legitimacy, and rule of law.

This strategy is particularly evident in HT’s online activity. For instance, HT Britain’s website (http://www.hizb.org.uk/) is continually updated with commentary on news concerning British politics, foreign policy, and social problems. It is very common for HT Britain to use a fact as a prompt for building an argument for the immediate need of the khilafah. For example, in the headline “5 Thoughts for Muslims about Corbyn’s Victory” HT Britain begins by using Jeremy Corbyn’s re-election to comment on timely local themes, such as the Brexit vote, and then depicts socialism (the ideological foundation of the Labour Party of which Corbyn is a representative) as a failing ideology, which opposes shari’a:

Socialism and Capitalism both oppose the shari’a of Allah (swt) and are active opponents of belief in Allah (swt) or at best are agnostic over belief in God... Both Corbyn’s re-election and the Brexit vote show that people are looking for something different. Muslims should be offering that, because we carry an alternative viewpoint, rather than embracing a failed and false Socialism... Instead Muslims should surge forward and engage in discussion and debate with those who are unsettled by the situation and present Islam in terms of its values, beliefs and solutions (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2016b).

This extract clearly exemplifies the way HT uses local facts to re-connect the discourse of the local branch with the organisation’s global stance. The comment opens by declaring both socialism and capitalism as being incompatible with shari’a, and this paves the way for HT’s main claim: an Islamic state is the only correct solution capable of bringing stability to a deeply troubled global political
context, leveraging people’s strong desire for political change and directing it towards an alternative model based on the caliphate.

*Figure 2. Hizb ut-Tahrir’s LoGlo Strategy*

As in an inverted pyramid, where the smaller bottom widens towards the top, HT uses local contexts to support its central claim regarding the immediate need for the caliphate. As shown in Figure 2, HT cells in single countries are always up-to-date on the most pressing national debates. Themes are carefully selected and revised according to the group’s worldview. HT focuses on local facts that are strongly connected with economic, political, and social grievances, fostering in the individual a sense of mistrust towards the central government.

Frequently mentioned issues include Islamophobic behaviours in Western states, the backlash of the economic crisis, corrupt politicians, and a deficient welfare (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia Media Office, 2016; Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2016a). Local facts are therefore examined by the specific local departments and are then reconnected to the caliphate as the remedy for all problems. As a result,
local reality is continually related to the main goal of central leadership, and every topic is connected to the khilafah and its glorious era.

Consequently, the local context is reconnected to the main stance promoted by the central leadership, while the local branch maintains a certain degree of autonomy to tailor its activities to local preferences (such as national public opinion and the most pressing local debates) as long as it maintains consistency with the organisation’s central guidelines. Even in non-majaal areas—such as in the West—HT activists carry out their LoGlo strategy, which aims to raise awareness among Muslims in those areas of the need to re-establish the caliphate and to encourage them to think of the khilafah as home, triggering a progressive disenfranchisement from the local context.

By continually linking the local and global dimensions, HT is able to provide unity among the different branches, attracting the admiration of some segments of the Muslim diaspora communities in Western states, such as Australia and the UK. These communities in turn often see the organisation as a stable transnational actor, unlike many of the other Islamic revivalist groups that operate for a short time and then dissolve.56

Conclusion

This chapter offered a study of the transnational profile of HT as a core advantage of the organisation both in terms of global expansion and recruitment. The above comparison of HT to the corporate world, in terms of transnational character, organisational structure, and general environment, provided an original analysis of HT, which explored some core aspects of its agency from an organisational perspective. In particular, this chapter used original data to

56 More discussion on HT from a comparative perspective with other Islamist groups is provided in Chapter Six.
highlight the transnational profile of HT, which was identified as a core advantage of the organisation, both in terms of global expansion and recruitment.

This chapter showed how HT’s evolution into a transnational actor was fostered by some transformations in the structure of the organisation. It has evolved in its actual form, resembling more a multidivisional (M-Form) model where central leadership defines the goals and priorities, leaving the numerous branches around the world free to choose the most appropriate strategies and means to implement the directives received. This chapter also revealed that HT’s ability to establish a functional equilibrium between centralisation and local autonomy has been a significant source of strength for the organisation in several respects.

First, it has allowed HT to survive in different general environments, some of which have harshly constrained the agency of the organisation. Secondly, it has allowed HT to maintain several branches, which appear to have “one voice”. The ability of HT to stand as a consistent and coherent organisation worldwide, through its unchanging goals and methodology over the last six decades, has fostered an image of HT as a stable and reliable group within the wide pool of Islamist revivalist groups.

This chapter has therefore revealed how HT’s transformation into a long-living transnational organisation has served as a successful strategy for recruiting some segments of Muslim communities in the West. Not only has HT’s evolution into an organisation provided the group with greater flexibility in its global activity of advocating for the caliphate, but it has also facilitated the group’s opposition to the West by connecting the local dimension with the global stance of the organisation.
A clash is inevitable between the actual world order and the proposed [Islamic] one. Some will try to present these words as a threat to everyday mums and dads. Ironically, those who will try are the wolves dressed as sheep who are responsible for making all our lives miserable. The international architecture that exists today was designed to prevent the re-emergence of khilafah... it cannot be re-instituted without dismantling this architecture based on modern nation states...Muslim political emancipation can exist only outside the Western state paradigm.

Wassim Doureihi, Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia

This chapter argues that HT is attractive to some segments of Muslim communities in the West because of the way the organisation challenges Western states. Framing this challenge within the agent-structure debate, where HT is the agent and Western states are the structure, this chapter analyses the way HT opposes Western states through an aggressive “war of ideas” (Baran, 2004, p. 11), which began with the birth of HT in 1953. Grounded on intellectual and revolutionary concepts, HT proposes the caliphate as a counter-model to Western democracy and capitalism.

This chapter focuses on the ideological premises and strategies presented by HT to challenge the West both politically and socially. In so doing, this
chapter shows how HT stands out as a collective agent offering an alternative model to the West (based on the caliphate), an ideal arena where some segments of Muslim communities feel safe, where they can exalt their “muslimness”, and can live a separate life from the *kuffar* world opposing *kuffar* concepts but without engaging in violent acts.

By attacking the ideological pillars on which the West is built, such as democracy, personal freedom, and the emancipation of women, HT aims to encourage the individual to critically revisit these concepts with a new (sceptical) lens. After discussing the ideological premises for challenging the West—which are regarded here as the motives embedded in HT’s main tenets—this chapter argues that HT’s unique vision of the *da’wah* is the most relevant input for its war of ideas.

The chapter examines the content of HT’s challenge to the Westphalian state model, focusing on HT’s three main claims: the illegitimacy of the Western state-model for Muslims, the backlash of Western foreign policy against the global *ummah*, and the existence of a Western hidden agenda to assimilate Muslims. In the social field, this chapter reveals how HT challenges the West by exposing “incorrect Western concepts” and the “problems” caused by personal freedom and lost femininity.

Although these claims are common to the vast majority of Islamist narratives, what makes HT attractive is its unique way of challenging the West intellectually, without engaging in violence. Using complex reasoning and references to historical facts, the organisation attracts those Muslims who agree with Islamist ideology (about a corrupt West exploiting Muslims globally) but reject the killings of innocents.
4.1 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Ideological Premises for Challenging the West

The ideological premises used by HT today for challenging the West are the same premises established in the 1950s by the founder Taquiddin An-Nabhani. Leaders and members are convinced, as they have always been, that the hardships faced by Muslims globally have been caused by Western states, which are regarded as sources and promoters of a corrupt political and social system, extremely harmful to Muslims.

This conviction has characterised HT activism over the decades, and it still serves as the basis for the organisation’s ideological struggle with the West. This chapter examines the three main ideological premises used by HT as an agent to challenge the West as a structure: the West as the enemy, the incompatibility between the West and Islam, and an alleged everlasting battle between Islam and the kuffar.

4.1.1 The West as the Enemy

The first ideological premise is the group’s depiction of the West as the enemy. As stated above, this has always characterised the group since its foundation. When the group was officially established in 1953 in Jerusalem, the early Palestinian leadership led by Taquiddin An-Nabhani was deeply influenced by a number of events: the break-up of the Ottoman empire (1924), the disintegration of its territories into newly born nation-states, the creation of the state of Israel, and the weakness of Muslim societies in the wake of the neo-imperialism practices conducted by Western colonial powers in the Middle East.

An-Nabhani has frequently used the “Mandate System”, implemented by the League of Nations after World War I, to illustrate how the West has legitimised its continued colonial influence over specific territories, with a
particular focus on the Middle East, and this conviction is still very powerful among HT members today (An-Nabhani, 2002). While the two official foundational principles of the Mandate System were the non-annexation of the territory and its administration as a “sacred trust of civilisation” to develop the territory for the benefit of its native people (Matz, 2005, p. 55), HT members strongly believe that mandates were a tool designed by the West to undermine Muslim identity and values on multiple levels.

On the physical level, this was achieved through the actual dismantlement of the Ottoman empire, and on the ideological level, the West attacked the Muslim world through the progressive introduction of Western concepts (such as the notions of democracy and personal freedom), which challenge the pillars of Islam (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996). Since the beginning of HT’s activity, the leaders of the organisation harshly criticised the readiness of Western states to deprive other populations of their local assets and resources, depicting the West as a Leviathan interested only in obtaining more control and assets. On this subject, An-Nabhani (2002, pp. 70-71) maintains:

At the end of the First World War, the Allies victory culminated with the announcement of Lord Allenby, the commander of the campaign when occupying Jerusalem (al-Quds), stated: "Now the Crusades are over" the Kafir [unbeliever] colonialists have applied upon us since then the Capitalist system in all life matters, to perpetuate the victory they achieved over us we must therefore get rid of this rotten and corrupted system by which the colonialists control our countries.

An-Nabhani’s words highlight his strong conviction that the West, thought of as a structure, was an enemy, which aimed to destroy Muslims, not only through the military invasion of the Middle East, but also through an ideological invasion by a new set of concepts (such as capitalism and democracy) that undermined Islamic identity. An-Nabhani illustrated how the ideological subjugation perpetrated by the West against Muslims was even more dangerous
than a traditional military occupation: once accepted by the population, the new Western-sponsored economic, political, and social concepts become part of their daily routine. The ideological power of these Western-sponsored concepts impacts state-functioning in “all life matters” and, according to An-Nabhani, serve as a way for the West to perpetuate the victory achieved over Muslims (An-Nabhani, 2002).

An-Nabhani elaborated on the dangers for Muslims posed by the introduction of Western concepts in Muslim societies in the publication, *Structuring of a Party* (2001), where the HT founder boldly claimed:

Colonialism poisoned the society with ideas such as patriotism, nationalism and socialism, as well as regional attitudes, and made these concepts the focus of any immediate attempts for revival...it also poisoned the society with the idea that establishing the Islamic state and unifying the Islamic countries is impossible (An-Nabhani, 2001, p. 12).

Again, such statements denouncing Western enmity against Muslims continue to influence HT’s actions globally. The strong conviction that the West has “poisoned” Muslim societies with false concepts and ideologies (such as patriotism and nationalism) and that the West has initiated an ideological war aimed at pushing Muslims away from Islam and from the desire for an Islamic state continues be a powerful force for turning HT members against Western states. This anti-Western attitude is fostered by HT’s continuous references to colonial history, which allow them to construct a narrative of Western states as dangerous enemies.

### 4.1.2 The Incompatibility between the West and Islam

An-Nabhani’s idea of the West as the enemy of Islam is strongly connected to the assumption that the West, as a system of political, social, economic, and religious values and practices, is not compatible with Islam as a *din*, i.e. a way of
life. An-Nabhani argued (as current members argue today) that this incompatibility was irreconcilable. This incompatibility between Western and Islamic worldviews is the second ideological premise on which HT’s challenge to Western states is based. The reasons for the incompatibility are elucidated in the book *The Inevitability of the Clash of Civilizations* (2002), part of HT’s official literature, in which HT defines civilisation as “a collection of concepts about life” (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2002, p. 5).

In the book, the West is depicted as a civilisation with goals opposite to Islam, and it argues that, while Islam focuses on the after-life and work that pleases God, the West values profit and power and praises man-made concepts instead of God (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2002). Furthermore, according to the founder of the Hizb, it was the “soft Western invasion” (mostly cultural and missionary) that strongly damaged Muslim societies making the West an insidious oppressor. In his book *Concepts of Hizb ut-Tahrir* (2007), An-Nabhani depicts Western states as “enemies of Islam” who have cleverly introduced laws and principles incompatible with Islam, leading Muslims away from their *dîn* (An-Nabhani, 2007, pp. 6-7):

> From the end of the eleventh century *hijri* (seventeenth century C.E.) up to the present day, the Islamic world has been subjected to cultural and missionary invasions, followed by the political invasion of the West, which added insult to injury and created further complications in the Islamic society...rules contradicting *shari'a* were laid down using the excuse that these agree more with the time, and it is necessary that Islam suit every age, time and place...this resulted in the detachment of Islam from life. This erroneous understanding and incorrect rules were used by the enemies of Islam to introduce their laws and principles...Muslims did not see in them any contradiction with Islam, due to what had been established in their minds based on the erroneous understanding that Islam suits every time and place. The misinterpretation of Islam to suit every school of thought, ideology, incident and every principle - even if the interpretation disagreed with the ideology of Islam and its viewpoint - became prevalent.

According to An-Nabhani, Muslims’ estrangement from their ‘*Aqeedah* was caused by a false belief—inserted in Muslims’ colonised minds by the West—that
Islam should be reinterpreted to fit the cultural and historical context. In line with HT founders, HT members today strongly oppose the view that Islam should be reinterpreted to fit different circumstances and see all attempts as ways of westernising the ‘Aqeedah and moving it further away from the example of Prophet Mohammad.

The ideas expounded by An-Nabhani remain strong in current HT narratives and are often explicitly invoked in the speeches of HT activists:

The West is indeed the enemy of Allah (swt) and it was Western influence in the Middle East that determined the dissolution of the caliphate...after the Crusades, Europeans understood that a military attack was not enough to destroy Muslims...instead, they had to attack their ‘Aqeedah [doctrine] in order to destroy Muslims’ identity. For this reason, Westerners started to disseminate their ideology over the centuries and they had a precise agenda: attack Islam and the Qur’an under the flag of liberation, feminism and democracy...it is evident how the end of the caliphate was a well calculated political-economic move from Western powers to destroy Muslims and the struggle between the West and the Muslims is definitely ideological and it is an eternal struggle... (Activists’ speeches at the Rajab event, Sydney, April 9, 2016).

This quote links together the first and second of HT’s ideological premises for challenging the West, namely the West as an enemy of Islam and the incompatibility of the West and Islam. This quote also elucidates the reasons for this implicit incompatibility: the ideological foundations of the two civilisations. HT members believe that as soon as Westerners began to understand that the strength of Muslims lies in their ‘Aqeedah (Islamic doctrine), they started indirectly attacking the basis of Islamic identity and “Islam and the Qur’an started to be attacked under the flag of liberation”. In so doing, Western former colonial powers were able to instil new concepts in the minds of Muslims and lead them away from Islam.57

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57 For instance, it is argued by HT that the concepts of democracy, personal freedom, and female emancipation (which will all be discussed in the following sections) are incompatible with Islam.
57 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
HT members strongly believe that Western concepts are mostly *haram* (forbidden) and have a precise aim: to subjugate Muslims and exploit their land and resources. According to HT, for decades the West has attacked Muslim societies through constant bombardment of Western culture, political practices, and concepts. The problem highlighted by the Hizb is that Muslims have gradually begun to embrace Western concepts and move away from their faith and religious obligations in favour of a Western-sponsored version of Islam.58 For this reason, the central focus of HT, underpinning the re-establishment of the *khilafah*, is the restoration of Muslim minds through familiarisation with the “right” HT-sponsored concepts, which focus on post-materialistic values, such as spiritual purity, piety, and protection of the global *ummah*.59

4.1.3 An Everlasting Battle between Islam and the Kuffar

As suggested by the first and second ideological premises used by HT to challenge the West, An-Nabhani, like HT members today, strongly believed that Westerners’ enmity against Islam derived from the incompatibility between the two civilisations. An-Nabhani’s believed that the greed of Western colonisers pushed them to continue subjugating Muslims, not only militarily and politically but also ideologically. This conviction forms the logical basis for the third ideological premise of HT’s challenge to the West: an everlasting battle between Islam and the *kuffar* (unbelievers).

The conviction of an irreconcilable conflict between Islam and the West led an-Nabhani (like current members) to adopt a dualistic worldview, dividing the world into *Dar al-Islam* (Land of Islam) and *Dar al-Kufr* (Land of Unbelief). The

58 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
59 Post-materialistic values focus on self-expression and quality of life instead of economic and physical needs (Inglehart, 1977).
former is where Muslims live under Islamic law (shari’ā), while the latter is where unbelievers rule and live according to a man-made system of regulations. Within the Land of Unbelief there is the Dar al-Harb (Land of War), the Islamic system is challenged through attempts to colonise and oppress it. Therefore, HT argues that Muslims living in those territories urgently need to be liberated and to live under shari’ā (An-Nabhani, 1998; Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2016).

As for the duty of the Muslims, they should work towards turning their land where Islam is not implemented, and which is considered as Dar al-Kufr, into Dar al-Islam (An-Nabhani, 1998, p. 238).

In line with An-Nabhani’s ideas in the 1950s, HT members still believe that all Muslims have the religious obligation to fight against corrupt Western ideology in order to revive Islam through the re-establishment of the caliphate. Although they expect the caliphate to be re-established only in specific areas of the world (majaal), HT members believe that Muslims in the West also need to play a pivotal role in fostering the re-establishment of the Islamic state. They believe that Muslims in the West should participate in HT’s revivalist activities, not only because working for the caliphate is considered a religious obligation, but also because HT sees Muslims in the West as in danger.

While the first and second ideological premise for HT’s challenge to the West demonstrates Muslims’ ideological struggle to resist the West in the Muslim world (mostly in the Middle East where colonisation attacked the ‘Aqeedah), the third ideological premise stresses the dangers for Muslims living in the West. In addition to stressing the problem of Islamophobia experienced by Muslims in the West (Wahid, 2017), HT members often depict Muslims as forced to live in the West, given that Western colonial powers have invaded their ancestral lands and transformed these areas into a perpetual warzone:
Western colonial powers caused the war in our countries...now we are going to stay in theirs, whether they like it or not (Farah, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016).

As stressed by Farah, a 28 years old member of HT Australia who joined when she was 19 years old, HT members do not want to live in the West and are instead forced to live there by the misconduct of Western colonial powers. Moreover, living in the Dar al-Kufr is difficult for Muslims, who need to face a number of daily challenges. First, HT members believe that the West continually conspires against Islam with ideological attacks:

The American campaign aims at turning the Muslims away from their din to Capitalism by all ways and means including media misinformation, distortion of the concepts and rules of Islam, the implementation of kuffar laws, as well as setting up legislation necessary for this implementation (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996, p.7).

As suggested by this quote, HT members argue that the continuous spread of kuffar ideas aims to turn Muslims away from their faith. This argument is not only valid for the United States but for all Western nations. HT presents Muslims in the West as endangered by both institutions and private actors. For example, the group claims that educational institutions, such as schools and universities, implement biased curricula, “reinterpreting history as they like” (Bsis, 2015).

The colonialists were not content with the mere implementation of their culture, but they also wanted to poison the Muslim territories with several political and philosophical ideas and opinions, which corrupted the correct view-point held by the Muslims...thus, the Muslims’ thoughts became confused in all aspects of life, which caused their alertness to lose its natural focus...the colonialists turned every attempt of awakening the Muslims into a muddled and confused movement, which resembled the convulsions of a wounded animal as it approaches its inevitable death (An-Nabhani, 2001, p. 12).

The forceful emotional language used by An-Nabhani’s words suggests a transition in the battle between the West and Islam. As mentioned before, the conflict shifted from a military intervention to an ideological battle, with Western former colonial powers implementing neo-colonialism practices, such as cultural
imperialism. Assuming that the West has a specific ideological agenda aimed at annihilating Muslims, current HT members argue that this ideological battle between the *kuffar* and Islam will continue with no end.

These assumptions imply the need for Muslims to resist the destructive attempts by the West to destroy their Islamic identity, a resistance which must be collective, organised, and carried out through a group, namely HT, working to counter the process of Muslim assimilation. HT presents itself as the actor capable of leading the global *ummah* back to its Islamic glory by challenging the West as a system of values, concepts, and beliefs and by framing religious claims in the context of political and social resistance.

### 4.2 Legitimising Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Challenge through the Da’wah

HT uses the *da’wah* as the main tool for legitimising its challenge to the West as a structure in religious terms. The term *da’wah* literally means “call to Islam” and is regarded by HT members as a religious duty deriving from the need to propagate “true Islam” as a redeeming religion for all of mankind. While *da’wah* usually refers to the call to Islam that Muslims spread to non-Muslims, HT sees the need to carry the *da’wah* also to Muslims who are not part of the organisation. This necessity is built on HT’s conception of *da’wah* as not merely a call to Islam but instead as a mission aimed at countering the war of ideas carried out by the West against Muslims.

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60 Hizb ut-Tahrir defines *neo-colonialism* as a “new vicious form based on an indirect economic, political and cultural hegemony which was represented in military accords, alliances, mutual security agreements, economic and financial aid and cultural programs” (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996, p.8). Hence, cultural imperialism is here considered a soft form of cultural hegemony based on the progressive adoption of foreign cultural practices that subjugate Muslims, pushing them away from their *Aqeedah*.

61 In this thesis, the term “Islamic identity” refers to the way of life adopted by Muslims who accept the encompassing principles, tenets, and beliefs, accompanied by specific behaviours, deriving from the *Qur’an* and the example of Prophet Mohammad.

62 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
HT’s particular idea of *da’wah* suggests that the group also holds a precise vision for Muslims belonging to the out-group, seeing them as a part of the *ummah* but unaware of the “true Islam”. HT’s vision of true Islam is closely connected to its understanding of the ‘Aqeedah and Islamic obligations. Claiming to be the “group inviting to the good and forbidding the evil”, HT members believe that their primary role is to educate the masses and propagate the right concepts of Islam. Most importantly, HT wants all Muslims to understand that working for the re-establishment of the *khilafah* is not a naïve hope or a utopian goal, but is instead a religious obligation.

HT grounds this conviction of the need to obey *shari’a* law within a political, economic, social, and religious system by arguing that *shari’a* is effective because it is based on Islam. As stressed in the section “Notable Quotes” of Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia’s official website (http://www.hizb-australia.org/2016/02/faqs-hizb-ut-tahrir/):

The obligation of appointing an imam (*khalifah*) is from the necessities of the *shari’a* that simply cannot be left” (Imam al-Ghazali).

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, "He who dies without having a pledge of allegiance (to the *khalifah*) on his neck, dies the death of *jahilliyah*” (Muslim).

As highlighted by these two “notable quotes” from HT Australia’s official website, it is an obligation for all Muslims to live under *shari’a* law and give their loyalty to a Muslim leader (*khalifah* or caliph). Those Muslims who do not acknowledge this claim as valid are associated with *jahilliyah* by HT members. An-Nabhani often referred to *jahilliyah* as “the state of ignorance of the guidance from God characterising Arab populations prior to the revelation of

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63 As previously mentioned in this thesis, HT has adopted a specific verse of the Qur’an (“And let there be [arising] from you a group inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful”, Qur’an 3:104) to strengthen its position as the only legitimised leader towards a blessed change (http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/EN/).
HT considers *jahiliyyah* a timely concept, one that was not only valid during the time of Prophet Mohammad but one which still finds a great variety of applications today. Inspired by the ideas of Sayyid Qutb and Abu al-Ala Mawdudi, An-Nabhani saw modernity as a “new *jahiliyyah*”.

In particular, An-Nabhani shared Qutb’s vision of new *jahiliyyah* as a state of domination of humans over humans, as opposed to their submission to God on which Islam is based (Shepard, 2003). While this section does not compare groups (as Chapter Six of the present dissertation discusses this further), it is important to emphasise the influence that figures such as Qutb and Mawdudi had on An-Nabhani.

All three Islamist leaders shared the common understanding of a genuine Islamic revival as the key to ending colonial domination and for bringing back the glorious caliphate. Given that HT considers Muslims in the out-group as living in a state of ignorance with regard to their Islamic obligations, the organisation is committed to using the *da’wah* as a means of convincing Muslims to challenge this state of *jahiliyyah* typical of the West. In the analysis of An-Nabhani’s main writings, he frequently associates the Western system with capitalism, identifying the latter as the key ideology driving Western societies.

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64 Qutb and Mawdudi are two key figures who have determined the profile of contemporary Islamist groups. While Qutb was an Egyptian intellectual and a prominent member of the Muslim Brotherhood (founded in 1928), Mawdudi was born in India and was the founder of *Jamaat-e-Islami* (in 1941), the largest Islamist organisation in Asia (Martin, 2004). Both characters had a strong influence on An-Nabhani’s thought and on the ideology underpinning the activities of HT. Further discussion on these two figures of Islamic activism is can be found in Chapter Six.

The separation between din and life is the doctrine of the Capitalist ideology...it is the basis of Western haDarah [civilization] and the intellectual leadership which the Western colonialists call for and subsequently convey to the world...[Capitalism] is the main pillar of its culture...based on this doctrine [Western colonialists] shake the Muslims belief in Islam (An-Nabhani, 2002, p. 89).

As illustrated by the above extract, An-Nabhani considered capitalism a core element of the Western system, the “pillar of its culture”, and an extremely dangerous ideology capable of estranging Muslims from Islam in favour of other beliefs. In line with Marxist thinkers, HT leaders see capitalism as an ideology depriving the individual from his human nature and reducing him/her to a mere machine for production.65 However, differently from Marxists, HT also opposes capitalism because it leaves no space for God in the life of the people and pushes them away from Islam towards an individualistic, mostly profit-oriented worldview.

This point is extremely crucial for HT’s challenge to the West as a corrupt system. The alleged ability of such a system to take Muslims away from an authentic version of Islam and familiarise them with haram concepts, using a seemingly benevolent approach, is what HT is most concerned with when presenting its da’wah. HT members claim that capitalist societies use a set of “non-coercive means to promote and naturalise certain views in society that the people start adopting as common sense” (Huq, 2017). Nevertheless, HT seems to act in a very similar way to capitalist states: while denouncing the non-coercive means used by the West to pave the way to new forms of imperialism (such as

65 Louis Althusser is among Marxist thinkers mentioned by HT members, quoted by Shafiul Huq (HT Australia) in his article The Ideological Workings of Capitalist Society (Huq, 2017).
Western music, food, fashion, and economic practices), HT has built its challenge to the West on the same grounds. In fact, HT uses non-coercive means to challenge the West as a system, with capitalism as its underpinning ideology, through a continuous “war of ideas” (Baran, 2004, p. 11).

Well aware of the effectiveness and power of ideas, HT uses the *da’wah* as the main tool for carrying out its intellectual battle against the West as a system. Given the primary role of the *da’wah* as a call to embrace HT’s vision, HT members have carefully conceptualised their *da’wah*, identifying the specific aim of this call and the standards characterising the person who carries the *da’wah*, namely the *da’i*.

### 4.2.1 The Aim of the *Da’wah* and Standards of the *Da’i*

The main aim of the *da’wah* identified by HT is “to change the thoughts, emotions and systems” (Huq, 2017). This aim stresses the strong conviction of HT members that, through the *da’wah*, it is possible to reform the ummah by teaching the “right Islamic concepts” and building strong Islamic personalities.\(^{66}\) Once these strong identities are built, Muslims can then intellectually fight Western hegemony (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996). Given that the war with the West is based on contrasting ideas, HT considers the main aims of the *da’wah* to be: shaping the minds of Muslims to eliminate incorrect values and beliefs, familiarising them with the glorious past of the caliphate, and introducing them to a Western-free version of Islam (An-Nabhani, 2007).

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\(^{66}\) By “strong Islamic personalities” HT members usually refer to people who fully accept HT’s ideological tenets, espouse HT’s goals and operative methods, and who have changed their personality and religiosity according to HT standards.
The analysis of the data also made clear that there are specific standards for HT's *da’wah*. While all members of the organisation must carry the *da’wah* whenever they can, some members have been given the particular status of *da’i*, which is a person who carries the *da’wah* and invites others to Islam. *Da’i* can be both men and women and they structure their call according to the background of the interlocutors they interact with. When conducting fieldwork in Sydney, the author had first-hand experience with a female HT *da’i*. This encounter occurred because the author requested several times to take part in the intimate HT study circles (*halaqaat*), but these requests were always refused by HT members.

The refusal was mainly motivated by the fact that the author was an external presence, which is forbidden in study circles, and that before attending the *halaqaat* the author “needed Islam first” (Ayda, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016). Given that the author was not a Muslim, HT members argued that the author needed to know more about HT’s *da’wah* before attending *halaqaat*. When the author asked her initial HT female contacts to tell her more about HT’s vision of Islam, all of them answered that it was not possible. This information was to be conveyed by a specific *da’i*, trained to present HT’s *da’wah* to *kuffar*. For this reason, the author was soon approached by another female member of the organisation who was officially recognised (by the fellow HT members) as a reliable *da’i* to carry out this task. The pseudonym used for HT’s *da’i* in this thesis is Khalida.

The three-hour discussion between Khalida and the author revealed some of the principles espoused by HT’s typical *da’i*. These principles are also summarised in a recent publication by HT Australia, which can be thought of as HT’s *da’wah* manifesto (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2017a). First, to articulate Islam persuasively, powerfully, and politically, the *da’wah* should be deeply
rooted in the Islamic tradition. Therefore, the da‘i needs to be well educated on his/her Islamic commitments. Da‘i would be completely ineffective if (s)he did not live his/her life abiding by “the letter of the halaal and haram” and exhibiting this discipline with both his/her speech and actions (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2017a).

It also emerged from the author’s discussions with Khalida that da‘i presents a worldview centred around seeking the pleasure of God by observing his commands. Khalida frequently pointed out her desire to be at the centre of “God’s will”, to “observe His law”, and to perform all actions, not for the approval of men and women but to earn the “divine favour as an obedient servant” (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016). Strictly connected to this first point is the second standard characteristic of HT’s da‘i: Tilawa (recitation) of the Qur’an. Not only should the da‘i be literate on Islamic prescriptions and the Qur’an, but (s)he should also frequently recite it. As zealous practitioners of Islam, HT members believe that the verses of the Qur’an can provide the da‘i with the spiritual strength required to perform the difficult job of struggling to carry the message of Islam to non-believers.

HT sees Islam as a din (a way of life), which implies a continuous jihad (struggle). The organisation often quotes facts that suggest how hard is to be a Muslim in the contemporary world, demonstrating Muslims’ need for adequate spiritual preparation to face these challenges (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia Media Office, 2016a; Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2016). In order to face the hostility in the West, HT members believe that they need to be grounded by the Islamic ‘Aqeedah, which will allow them to hold on to their Islamic identity and not be persuaded by other, less Islamic, state-sponsored concepts. As stressed by Khalida “the resources to resist the complete assimilation of Muslims in the West
can only derive from the Qur’an and from its recitation as an act of faith and encouragement” (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016). Therefore, in HT’s view, the Tilawa is not a mere ritual but something very special from which the believer takes strength and encouragement and allows him/her to stay close to Islam, while resisting foreign interference.

The third essential standard concerning HT’s da’i is the desire to contact new people and socialise with them:

The da’wah carrier would not be worthy of this title simply because of his affiliation to a group, because affiliation is subjected to the mere administrative rules drawn on paper...the affiliation is in fact no more than an administrative matter...therefore, the priority would lie in these contacts and relationships, and the familiarisation which the da’wah carrier establishes with people...[the da’i is called to] study people’s state of affairs, deal with their sensations and recondition their thoughts with the thoughts and rules of Islam (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2017a).

This extract stresses the need for the da’i to constantly engage with people and present them with the “true Islam” (as by HT) through influencing their modes of thought and interpretation of facts. The author’s fieldwork confirmed this element as a core characteristic of HT’s da’i. The author’s conversation with Khalida took place at her house, where the author was invited and introduced to her family and warmly welcomed. After general conversation for the first 15 minutes, in front of a generous platter of home-made food, Khalida opened the discussion on Islam as a way of life. She tried to learn more about the author’s thoughts on the themes of life and death as well as on her ideas about God and eternity.

As the conversation went further, Khalida abandoned the mild stance characterising the beginning of the visit and began depicting negatively all faiths that differ from Islam, referring to them as “not proceeding from God”:

All beliefs other than Islam lack something: they are not rationally supported, they are a source of confusion and their message is quite controversial. For instance, when I think about Christianity, how can God be three and one at
the same time? Why should God let his alleged son die? I assume that all this does not proceed from Allah (swt) but they are all man-made thoughts (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016).

While pointing out all the alleged faults of other religious beliefs compared to Islam and criticising Christianity (even though she showed little understanding of its doctrine), Khalida discussed the holiness of Islam and its ability to assure men and women a good life. When speaking about the good life that Islam could create, even on earth, Khalida immediately connected her da’wah discourse with the caliphate as the most effective political, economic, and social system that humankind has ever experienced.

The conversation proceeded by opposing the glory of the caliphate to the alleged decline in the West today. Given the non-Muslim background of the author as the main interlocutor, Khalida’s way of presenting HT concepts was slightly different than the group’s approach during public events. Nevertheless, the themes were the same as those that are usually covered by the Hizb. Khalida used the same reasoning employed by senior HT members during their lectures and talks (grounded on An-Nabhani’s writings), which assures the consistency and intellectual rigour of the organisation as conceived by the founder.

The intellectual rigour is the key concept of the fourth standard characterising HT’s da’i, who should be educated on both “books containing da’wah’s culture and those which contain the general Islamic culture, be it Fiqhi [related to Islamic jurisprudence], intellectual, or political” (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2017a). This conviction springs out of the need for the da’i to prove that (s)he is heralding the best model for everyone. For this reason, HT leadership encourages the da’i to support his/her claim by using facts and historical examples.
For instance, people serving as *da’i* in the Hizb argue that the caliphate is a system capable of addressing people’s needs in the most effective way because it is the system revealed by Allah. Furthermore, HT’s *da’i* argue that a democratic system is not able to lead the individual to true happiness and a sense of fulfilment because it is a system of disbelief. To support these claims and gain credibility in the eyes of the interlocutor, HT’s *da’i* uses three main sources of data: Islamic law, relevant political and intellectual works, and contemporary facts (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2017a).

Again, the author’s contact with an HT *da’i* confirmed the use of this pattern in the development of her discourse. Khalida first presented the caliphate as a religious obligation for all Muslims, using the first source of legitimation (Islamic law) to support the argument that all Muslims are called by Allah to observe *shari’i*a with the caliphate being the only system that allows its full observance. After discussing this point, Khalida referred to historical events to illustrate the glory of the Ottoman Caliphate in terms of economic development, intellectual achievements, and social justice.

Among the examples quoted by Khalida, is a story concerning a just caliph who cared so much for his people that he would go out of the palace at night to personally check on the population. When he saw that something was not right, such as families living in poverty, he would immediately provide for their needs. In addition, she mentioned the happiness enjoyed by all populations (even non-Muslims) within the caliphate, which again was presented as destroyed by Western invaders:

We have beautiful examples in the history of the caliphate of non-Muslim people living happily under Muslim rule...for instance, during the papacy of Urban II (1095), some Christians living under the caliphate did not want to leave and go with the crusaders and they ended up being exterminated (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication with the author, April 6, 2016).
The reference to historical facts helped support her arguments, which were further supported by the third main source of data: contemporary facts. During the conversation, the author remarked how Khalida was very informed on both Australian and global current events. Keeping informed in this way is defined as “pursuance” by HT and is the fifth standard for HT’s da’i (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2017a). HT’s da’wah carriers need to follow current affairs and daily news relentlessly, without missing a single day so as “not to allow the events to pass us by without at least acquainting ourselves with them” (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2017a).

The purpose of pursuance is to understand history as a well-connected chain of events; therefore, it is essential not to miss anything so that one can develop an allegedly unbiased worldview (although this information is in any case filtered through HT’s ideological lens). Pursuance is also important for supporting the arguments presented by the da’i with contemporary facts, corresponding to the third source of data for HT’s da’wah. For this reason, while talking with the author, Khalida also shared her vision of the current main evils affecting the world:

The current massacres of Rohingya Muslims in Burma and the previous ethnic cleansing perpetrated by governments against Muslim minorities—such as the Bosnian Genocide where more than 8,000 Muslims were killed between 1992 and 1995—are all evidence of the ummah’s grief and vulnerability of living without an Islamic state...the only state able to protect Muslims (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016).

Khalida strongly believed that the actions aimed at damaging Muslims in the world—not only ethnic cleansing but also Islamophobic episodes in Western states, verbal attacks, and any sort of religious discrimination—could be significantly reduced with the re-establishment of the khilafah. Hence, Khalida
saw the caliphate as a safe harbour, a shield for the whole Muslim community, where they would be able to find protection, prosperity, and a “good life” (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016).

4.3 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Challenge to the West in the Political Field

While the previous sections aimed to clarify the ideological premises and the role of HT’s da’wah as tools of legitimation for HT’s challenge against the West as a structure, this section specifically focuses on the arguments used by HT to oppose the West in the political field. It emerged in the analysis of the data that HT has built its conceptual onslaught against the West in the political field on three main claims: the illegitimacy of the Western state-model for Muslims, the fact that Western foreign policy has led to several backlashes affecting the global ummah, and the existence of a Western hidden agenda for the assimilation of Muslims.

4.3.1 The Illegitimacy of the Westphalian State Model

Focusing on the first assumption, HT members show no hesitation in declaring Western states illegitimate for Muslims (Ahmed & Stuart, 2010; An-Nabhani, 1998; Uthman Badar, personal communication, 12 March, 2016). The main reason behind this strong conviction is the religious obligation for every Muslim to live according to shari’a. Given that the caliphate is the only political system capable of ensuring the rule of shari’a, HT members declare all other systems illegitimate. To forge ahead with this claim, HT members move along a dichotomous line contrasting the greatness of the caliphate with the wickedness of the West.

In the eyes of HT members, the khilafah is much more than a system of governance; it is the crossroads where religion and politics coincide to produce
the most effective and just equilibrium. Uthman Badar, prominent member and former official spokesperson of HT Australia, gave a clear picture of what the caliphate represents for HT members (Uthman Badar, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016):

For Hizb ut-Tahrir, Islam is not a religion but it is a din, a way of life ordained by God where there is no distinction between politics and religion...while in Western societies people identify the union of politics and religion with the term “theocracy”—which has a negative connotation—this union for Muslims is a positive one and it is embodied by the glorious example of the caliphate...the only bad experiences taking place under the caliphate were due not to the system but to the people who were starting to be corrupted by Western thoughts.

As highlighted by the words of Uthman Badar, the group has a holistic conception of Islam as a din, which is the glue that binds Islam to all aspects of life, including politics. By comparing Islamic and Western experiences, Uthman Badar also stressed that the Islamic experience of binding religion to politics was positive and came to an end only after Western invasion of Muslim lands and the introduction of specific anti-Islamic notions.

Common themes used by HT members to highlight the glorious time of the caliphate include the stability of the Middle East, the flourishing economy, the good standard of living within its borders, scientific progress, and the respect for people of other faiths (Mohammad and Leyla, HT Australia, personal communication, 15 March, 2016). Furthermore, HT members often define Sultan Abdul Hamid II, who ruled from 1876 to 1909, as the last great caliph of the Ottoman Caliphate. In line with HT’s strategy, Sultan Abdul Hamid was the one of the few people in power in the Muslim world who decided to face the initial intellectual and political decline of the caliphate (mostly thought to be the result of European encroachment) by emphasising Islam in the life of his subjects.
Sultan Abdul Hamid II focused on the holy sites of Makkah and Madinah, building hospitals, barracks, and infrastructure and encouraging people to go on pilgrimage and to give prominence to religion (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017). Hence, HT members’ admiration of Sultan Abdul Hamid II is largely a result of his revival of the state through an Islamic revival. HT members have often stressed that Sultan Abdul Hamid II was the last Ottoman sultan with any real power within the caliphate and was followed by a series of allegedly illegitimate governments that were not based on Islam. His strategy of reviving the caliphate through Islam is seen by HT members as the only effective weapon for resisting Western neo-colonialism, which was responsible for the collapse of the caliphate.

According to HT, the end of the Islamic state was due to the immense pressure exerted by Western colonial powers against the caliph to convince him to implement constitutional reforms in line with capitalistic states (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017). As highlighted in the section regarding the ideological premises of HT’s challenge to the West, the organisation was created by An-Nabhani with the conviction that the Westphalian system of nation-states had caused much harm to the Muslim world. Conceived by European colonial powers and exported throughout the world, the Westphalian nation-state system is considered by HT as something completely unrelated to Muslims, which caused damage from the moment it was introduced. On this subject, Marwa (HT Australia) did not hesitate to state in her interview strong words against Western former colonial powers and their presence in the Muslim world:

Borders of colonial states were defined by the blood of the Muslims…tribes were separated, ethnic groups divided, families destroyed and all this because of the Western greed for profit and power (Marwa, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016).

Marwa’s emotional words depict the “West” as a group of states greedy for profit and power, which colonised the Muslim world and imposed their political,
social, and economic worldviews. During talks and conferences and in online publications, HT members frequently stress the Middle East’s strategic geographical location and considerable natural resources, both of which attracted the attention of those with Western expansionistic ambitions, culminating in the partition of the region after World War I.⁶⁷

According to Marwa and all HT members interviewed, foreign hegemony not only harmed Islamic identity, creating confusion about which example is the right one to follow, but also caused much harm when the territorial division of the colonised areas took place. Marwa’s striking expression “borders defined by the blood of the Muslims” refers to the dismantlement of the Ottoman empire and the borders defined and imposed by Western colonial powers. These Western borders did not correspond to local conceptions of how people ought to be partitioned; instead Western powers attempted to try to keep the various groups united through the concept of a common nation state rather than through Islamic brotherhood.⁶⁸

According to HT members, it was the loss of Islamic identity and the shifting focus from Islam to secular values that caused a rapid decline leading to the dissolution of the khilafah, and it was shortly after the approval of the constitution (in 1908) that the khilafah had to face its formal dissolution in 1924. After the abolition of the caliphate, nation states were created in Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon and the rest of the Muslim world was colonised (Awad, 2016). Through their narratives, HT members claim that from the moment the caliphate was abolished Muslims were exposed to a very different system of laws,

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⁶⁷ As World War I came to an end, the partition of the Ottoman Empire was organised through several agreements between Western colonial powers. Among the most significant political documents determining the creation of the modern Arab world is the Sykes-Picot agreement, a secret covenant between Britain and France signed in 1916. The agreement marked the break-up of the Ottoman Empire and the imposing British and French presence in the Muslim world.

⁶⁸ Interview with the author, Sydney, 2016.
values, and lifestyles, very different from their own, which was imposed and which allegedly marked the beginning of Islamic decline in the world.\textsuperscript{69}

\textbf{4.3.1.1 A Kuffar-Imposed System}

In addition to highlighting the illegitimacy of the Westphalian state system as something completely different from what Muslims were used to, in terms of borders, values, and social unity, HT often illustrates the illegitimacy of the Westphalian state system by pointing out that the kinds of rules regulating the West often contradict Islamic tenets. HT points out the contradiction that Muslims in the West find themselves in as a result of this system, namely that are required by the state to obey man-made laws that sometimes oppose Islamic concepts of \textit{haram} (forbidden) and \textit{halal} (licit).

HT members frequently stress that several behaviours condemned by Islam are accepted in the West and vice versa. For example, secular laws tolerate gambling, alcohol, adultery, homosexuality, and blasphemy, which are all \textit{haram} through according to of Islam (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996; Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016). Simultaneously, commonly accepted behaviours in Islam, such as polygamy, are outlawed in the West. As highlighted in the \textit{da’wah} section of the present chapter, HT builds much of its narrative against the Westphalian state on the religious obligation of Muslims to live their lives according to \textit{shari’a}.

As a result, HT sees the project of creating a system based on secular laws for Muslims as futile and argues that Muslims should instead work together to re-establish the caliphate (Awad, 2016). Once again, as stressed by An-Nabhani, the problem of the incompatibility of Islam and Westphalian systems lies in the

\textsuperscript{69} Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
constitutive principles of each civilisation, i.e. *hadarah* (An-Nabhani, 2007). HT conceives the expansion of notions like democracy, patriotism and nationalism as incorrect political concepts, which have slowly poisoned the *Dar al-Islam* with un-Islamic ideas, such as “the ummah is the source of authority”, “sovereignty belongs to the people”, “religion belongs to Allah (swt) and the homeland belongs to all” (separation between state and religion), and “homeland is above all” (An-Nabhani, 2001, p. 13).

According to HT members, all these concepts go against the Islamic principles of submission to Allah alone, the only legislator and source of authority, who has never proposed a division between religion and politics. Instead, HT insists that it is Allah’s will that religion and politics be bound together through the institution of the caliphate, the only legitimate system according to *shari’a*, allowing Muslims all over the world to live according to divinely ordained prescriptions, as they have done for thousand years:

For a thousand years the Muslim *ummah* lived under Islam and Islam being implemented in their societies was a very natural thing...[Muslims under the caliphate] would witness traders trading without any taxes on their commerce, *zakat* being taken from the rich and given to the poor...lands liberated...Islam was the blood that flowed through the veins of Muslims (Badar, 2012).

Uthman Badar’s words again stress the role of the caliphate as the ideal system, one that allowed Muslims to live for centuries with prosperity, justice, and fair trade. But most importantly, Badar’s words stress the role of Islam as “the blood flowing through the veins of Muslims” as the key element that determined the success of the caliphate. According to HT members, only the holistic implementation and observance of Islamic law, including its political, social, and economic prescriptions, can create a system where Muslims can flourish.

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70 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
For these reasons, HT argues that the Western state should be rejected as a *kuffar*-imposed system and that the main driver for Muslims to work towards the re-establishment of the caliphate should be the realisation that Western secular laws will never allow Muslims to fully live according to their religious obligations.

### 4.3.1.2 The Khilafah is the Solution

For HT members, the *khilafah* is “part of their *din*, their dignity and their hope for humanity” and it is believed that those Muslims who work towards bringing back the caliphate will receive a reward from Allah (Wahid, 2017). Therefore, for HT, re-establishing the caliphate is not a mere political project, but a panacea for all global problems, which implies a significant commitment of each Muslim to work for the unity of the *ummah*. As revealed by the interviewees, the unity of the *ummah* under Islamic governance led by an elected caliph is essential for assuring the global protection of Muslims, especially since the protection promised by Western governments and international institutions has turned out to be completely ineffective in performing this task.

Interviewees frequently pointed out that the *ummah* can be compared to the human body: “if one part suffers then all parts are affected.”71 This argument is often used by HT to convince Muslims to reject the West as a system and to refrain from taking part in any initiative that might entail an active contribution to the Western political apparatus, such as running for elections or voting.72 At the same time, HT calls on its members to work hard to re-establish the *khilafah*, framed as a religious duty and a responsibility towards their brothers and sisters around the world.

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71 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
72 Chapter Five will broaden the discussion on the impact of HT ideology on the members’ behaviour.
Those of you who responded to the call of Allah (swt), you have indeed recorded with honour that you are working for the unity of this ummah, raising high the banner of the Messenger of Allah (saw), and seeking the return of the righteous khilafah. How excellent a reward for the stances of honour and dignity which please Allah (swt)! So, congratulations for you as Allah (swt) says: “In this way does Allah (swt) set forth the parable of truth and falsehood: for, as far as the scum is concerned, it passes away as [does all] dross; but that which is of benefit to man abides on earth. In this way does Allah (swt) set forth the parables.” [Qur’an, 13:17]

This extract, taken from an official declaration of HT Sudan posted on HT Central Media Office website, perfectly illustrates HT’s strategy for convincing Muslims that working for the caliphate is a noble activity and something for which they will be rewarded. Conversely, those Muslims who continue living in the West and appear to accept secular laws and an individualistic lifestyle (deeply contrasting with the communitarian focus of Islam) are targeted by the group as adhering to a false form of Islam, which is state-sponsored and emptied of its main tenets.

Declarations such as the one mentioned above are released daily on HT official channels online (websites and social media), and they mostly serve as fuel for turning the individual against the Westphalian system. While instigating distrust in the Western system, HT also fosters progressive disenfranchisement from the place where HT members were born and raised, replacing it with a sense of belonging to the ummah, who should be reunited under the flag of the Islamic state.

4.3.2 Exposing the Backlash of Western Foreign Policy

The second assumption used by HT to politically challenge Western states is related to the consequences of Western foreign policy. When analysing the
literature produced by HT—both through publications and activists’ speeches—one apparent theme is their ad hoc generalisation of the terms “West and Western”. Without really distinguishing in the broad “Western universe” between different ethnicities, histories, and current contexts, HT tends to represent the West as a uniform force opposing Islam.

Therefore, even when HT members use the concept of “Western foreign policy”, they are usually referring to the joint actions, including military occupations and peace missions, carried out by international coalitions (such as NATO or the United Nations), where the United States plays a central role. When discussing Western foreign policy, HT fully shares the idea that “what (Western) governments call extremism is, to a large degree, a product of their own wars” (Kundnani, 2014, p. 35).

HT members link terror attacks in Western states to West’s continuous misconduct in foreign policy matters rather than to religious extremism derived from Islamic beliefs. Official spokespersons of the group in different countries share the view that the political grievances and moral outrage of Muslims (rather than radical interpretations of Islam) are the main triggers of terrorism:

The long history of Western violent occupations around the world, the support to tyrant despots for economic reasons, the invention of arms of mass destruction and the rise of a wealthy 1st World on the blood of a massacred 3rd World’ are all examples of Western misconduct, affecting Muslims’ “hearts and minds” (Badar, 2015).

These words were spoken by Uthman Badar during his speech at the 2015 HT conference “Innocent until proven Muslim” (Badar, 2015). The colonial past is frequently used by HT leaders to build a logical nexus between Western oppression of Muslim populations and the actual problem of terrorism as a purebred Western product. Instead of joining the large Muslim community living
in the West that condemns terrorism (Active Change Foundation, 2014; Sweid, 2014; Veiszadeh, 2016), members of the Hizb continue to openly attack the Western establishment by pointing out the violence against Muslim civilians and alleged political plots to subjugate Muslims to shift the attention of public opinion from the terror act to the continuous transgressions of former colonial powers.  

For this harsh stance, HT spokespersons are often at the centre of several controversies involving Western media. A high-profile example is the heated debate between the Australian journalist Emma Alberici and Wassim Doureihi, one of the most prominent members of HT Australia and former spokesperson of the group in the country. Invited by Alberici for an interview on the programme *Lateline*, Doureihi intentionally dodged the journalist’s questions on the tactics of ISIS.

When he was asked whether he and his group supported the tactics and violent methods of ISIS, Doureihi defined the question “offensive” and shifted the focus of the conversation to Western colonialism in the Middle East: “Groups like ISIS and Al-Qaida do not exist in a vacuum...they exist as a reaction to Western interference in Islamic lands and they see themselves as a form of resistance to an unjust occupation” (Qldaah, 2014).

When Alberici again asked Doureihi why he would not publicly condemn ISIS like many other Australian Muslims such as Jamal Rifi, Doureihi said that instead he would rather fight the “Islamophobic narrative”, created by Western media and politicians through their discourse of terrorism, by denouncing

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73 The term “establishment” here refers to the leading group or elite that holds power and authority not only at the nation level (Norbert & Scotson, 1965) but also at the international level through the main international organisations, such as the United Nations or the International Monetary Fund.
Western misconduct in the Middle East and identifying Western states as the ones responsible for terrorism today (Qldaah, 2014). When the author interviewed Uthman Badar and asked him about Wassim Doureihi’s response to Alberici’s question, Badar described it a “political manoeuvre” with a specific purpose:

> While many Muslims choose to apologise for the actions of other Muslims in order to be accepted and admired in the West, we think this practice only fosters the Western narrative of dividing the *ummah* between “good Muslims” and “bad Muslims”. Conversely, in HT, we want to remind Western authorities and public opinion that what is happening in the Middle East with ISIS and the multiple attacks to the West are not caused by the actions of “bad Muslims” but this is the product of Western occupation and exploitation of Muslim lands (Uthman Badar, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).

These statements illustrate HT’s desire to be seen as a bold actor who is relentless and perseverant over the time and not afraid to express its opinions. Despite the risk of a possible ban in Australia, local leadership has continued with the narrative of a monolithic, evil West, which is contrasted with the goodness of the *khilafah* (Williams, 2014). Even when confronted with direct questions, as in the case of Doureihi, HT members choose to continue their counter-narrative against the alleged Islamophobic Western narrative, exposing the evils caused by Western foreign policy and identifying them as the main trigger for terrorism.

Although attracting much criticism from local political leaders, representatives of Muslim communities, and secular actors, HT’s boldness is part of the uniqueness of the organisation as a non-violent but strongly anti-Western actor made up of intellectuals with a plan to change the world.74 While denouncing the backlash of Western foreign policy in Muslim lands, HT

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74 Chapter Six of the present dissertation allows further discussion on the uniqueness of HT and its plan to change the world.
illustrates the repercussions of Western foreign policy within Western territories, with a special focus on the Muslims communities that live there. HT constantly stresses that Western states have become unsafe environments for the ummah and that, since the beginning of the War on Terror, these states have painted Muslims as the “dangerous other” (LaRue, 2012).

HT leadership often points out that the growing anti-Muslim sentiment in the West has been a calculated move by governments, backed by the media, to encourage hostility against Islam over the last 15 years (Doureihi, 2017; Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2016a; Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017b). As a result, HT branches all over the world are committed to providing an image of Muslims minorities as an oppressed and suffering people, who are experiencing terror themselves in the West:

The hardening of anti-Muslim sentiment is alarming but hardly surprising...it is the obvious and expected result of a 15 year politically motivated campaign to encourage hatred and suspicion of Islam and Muslims...a campaign instigated by mainstream politicians and dutifully carried by the mainstream media. A campaign that used terrorism as the excuse to implant the false idea that Islamic beliefs were the cause of violence, so Islam itself was the suspect and needed reform...for fifteen years straight all things Islam have been abused as a political football by politicians and demonised in the media...for fifteen years straight Islam and Muslims have been viewed squarely through the prism of national security, terrorism, values and integration...what other result can we possibly expect? (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia Media Office, 2016a).

As clearly illustrated by this declaration from the Media Office of HT Australia, HT leaders do not miss an opportunity to denounce Western foreign policy as a source of grief for Muslims, including Muslims in the West, who are often looked at with suspicion by locals. According to HT, this wide-spread “anti-Muslim sentiment” is the result of Western political decisions that have aimed to foster the idea that Islam in its current form is dangerous and inherently violent and needs to be “reformed” or Westernised.
HT works hard, both online and offline, to expose the falsity of these conceptions by presenting the Muslim community as the victim and the Western bloc of states as the abusers who have demonised Islam and Muslims, which in turn has led to attacks against the ummah in the West. To support their stance, HT media representatives compile and report all news concerning attacks against Muslims in the West. Some high-profile examples include the case of a young Muslim woman pushed into an oncoming Tube train in London in November 2015 (Atkin, 2015) and the more recent attack on a train in Portland, in the United States where two Muslim girls were attacked by a man with a knife, and two other passengers were stabbed to death while defending the Muslim girls (Wang, 2017).

While the frequency of these episodes in the West is debatable, HT’s media work is entirely devoted to conveying an image of great insecurity for Muslims living without a caliphate to protect them. All branches (Australian, British, or American), following the central leadership guidelines, are engaged in a process of building an image of Muslims as scapegoats for the backlash resulting from the misconduct of Western foreign policy.

4.3.3 Exposing the “Western Hidden Agenda” against Muslims

Another core part of HT’s narrative is grounded on the idea that Western politicians have undertaken a process of securitisation, which serves their “hidden agenda” of depriving Muslims of their genuine Islamic identity. Securitisation is defined as “the process of state actors transforming subjects into matters of security; an extreme version that enables extraordinary means to be used in the name of security” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25). HT generally identifies securitisation as a consequence of the War on Terror and as a legitimised way of
imposing restricting measures on Muslims in the West, such as tight controls on imams’ speeches at mosques, the ban of religious groups that present a more textual approach to their religion, and the demonisation of the words “radical” and “extreme”.

Clashing with the majority of Muslim groups with a moderate profile in the West, HT bases its provocative campaign against Western states on the revival of the term “radical” as a positive attribute. In the eyes of HT members, Muslims should be rooted in Islam and their religious obligations as presented by HT. Moreover, these obligations should be the centre of their existence and should not be watered down by attempts to compromise with the West. As highlighted by Mohammad (senior member of HT Australia) in an interview with the author:

Islam is the same religion that was revealed to the Prophet Mohammad (saw) in 610 CE…we cannot pick and choose what we like but as Muslims, we should accept it as a whole…we should keep the same uncompromising stance Prophet Mohammad had (Mohammad, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016).

The uncompromising stance of the interviewee finds a practical implementation in opposing the alleged Western campaign aimed at reforming Islam, including some aspects of secularism and pushing the ‘Aqeedah towards common values and integration (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2016a). Conversely, Mohammad’s words demonstrate the desire of HT members to keep their din as it is; moving away from the revelation means moving away from religion because it cannot be modified or only partially applied.

At the same time, HT members believe that Western former colonial powers aim to convince Muslims of the need to reform Islam and move away from their ‘Aqeedah because “it does not fit modernity” (Nuha, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016).

Some instances of major Muslim organisations in Australia with a moderate stance are the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils and the Australian National Imams Council.
communication, March 13, 2016). Nuha’s claim concerning Western states’
desire to distort Islam is a central element in HT’s exposure of the Western
hidden agenda. When verbally attacking Western governments, HT often claims
that it was not only the military interventions by former colonial powers that
harshly subjugated Muslims, but even more damaging was the Western project of
“identity construction”. This term refers to consciousness formation, that is “a
process through which the coloniser’s political horizons are limited by the
prevailing ideology and through which we construct our identity strictly in
relation to the colonial centre” (Hizb ut-Tahrir Global, 2017).

By placing emphasis on the ideological work carried out by Western states–
committed to instilling in the minds of Muslims the conviction that the Western
model is better than the Islamic model—HT continually invites Muslims to
engage in an ideological struggle (as-sira’ al-fikri) against the Western-imposed
“ideological state apparatus”: the modern secular nation-state (Hizb ut-Tahrir
Global, 2017). HT members believe that the Western hidden agenda against
Islam is carried out today through the War on Terror and the migrant crisis.
According to HT, these two controversial topics are manipulated by Western
governments to induce fear in the general population and to encourage Muslims
in the West to adopt a “state-sponsored version of Islam” (Bsis, 2015).

HT argues that the alleged freedoms of speech and religion in the West are
not absolute, and the group illustrates this with examples of the West controlling
and limiting the activities of some Islamic circles and associations (Badar, 2015;
Bsis, 2015; Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2016). At the same time, HT’s media offices
stress how the message conveyed by Western media and governments is that
Muslims should be less Islamic and more open to Western values and lifestyle
and should abide by Western laws without complaint, thereby embodying the
perfect stereotype of the “moderate Muslim” commonly perceived as the “good Muslim” (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2016).

In public talks and seminars, and through online posts and email bulletins from national branches, HT works to instil a sense of mistrust of Western governments in Muslim communities and to see Western states as “enemies of Islam”.76 It is a common belief among HT members that “Western people try to demonise the caliphate, shari’a, and also the hijab.”77 This opinion is widely held on online social media platforms like Facebook, where HT activists speak often of the struggle of Muslims in the West who want to hold on to shari’a:

They [national authorities] have to force the shari’a into submission...there’s no room for Islam or God in society...keep them at home and if you try to cross that line, they will have to submit to the ‘superiority’ of Australian law (Qureshi, 2016).

Hamzah Qureshi, in his declaration in a Facebook post, again reiterates HT’s position on Muslims and shari’a in the West, specifically referring to Australia. Qureshi denounces the alleged state of oppression of Muslims in Western societies, where “there is no room for Islam” and where Muslims are encouraged to keep their religious profile private. Instead, as stressed by Qureshi, Muslims must submit to the “superiority of Australian law” in cases where there is a conflict between shari’a and local regulations (Qureshi, 2016).

To prevent a full assimilation of Muslims into the Western system, HT continually disseminates their worldview with the aim of encouraging a deeper Muslim disenfranchisement from Western institutions, pushing members to develop a stronger emotional bond with HT and the global ummah. HT tries to achieve this goal not only through publications or posts on social media but also through public events attended by hundreds of people.

76 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
77 Author’s observation at Rajab event, KCA Lakemba, Sydney, April 9, 2016.
An example of this is the recent conference organised in Sydney by HT Australia “Hatred Rising: Living Islam in a hostile West” (May 21, 2017). On this occasion, HT speakers staged powerful declarations such as:

Appealing to the Western political establishment to intervene in the problems of the Muslim world—problems they help create—is not only the peak of political naivety but one of the worst forms of betrayal since Western governments have one single goal: to keep the Muslim divided and submissive (Doureihi, 2017).

This statement by Wassim Doureihi, denouncing Western governments’ main goal of keeping Muslims “divided and submissive” is again an attempt to encourage a sense of suspicion towards local politicians, along with a deep sense of frustration. Through labelling Muslims in the West who look towards the state for effective solutions to problems affecting the ummah as “politically naïve or traitors”, Doureihi is again exposing the fact that these serious international problems—such as the massacres of Muslims in the world, the occupation of Islamic lands, and the recurrent Islamophobic episodes—have all been created by the West to destroy Islam.

Notwithstanding the harsh criticisms such declarations might provoke, these ideas were instrumental to attracting several current HT members to the group. All interviewees pointed out how HT’s nonconformist notions—and the bold way these ideas were conveyed by HT speakers—sparked their interest as outsiders. Even members who were very sceptical in the beginning because of specific social constraints—mostly inculcated by their parents—later became increasingly interested in the boldness of HT leaders’ criticism of the Western establishment they were living in.

During interviews with the author, members of HT Australia described conventional ideas used by their parents to keep their children far away from

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78 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
Islamist activism. For instance, when talking about his parents’ idea of a “good Muslim” Mahmoud declared: “My parents thought that good Muslims are the moderate ones, those who do not engage in any controversy, those who do not rock the boat” (Mahmoud, HT Australia, personal communication with the author, March 20, 2016). Today, Mahmoud’s vision of Islam as a member of HT contrasts markedly with his parents’ idea of a “good moderate Muslim”. Mahmoud passionately stressed the need for Muslims in the West to engage in current political debates, exposing the evils caused by Western states and rejecting any form of compromise regarding Islam.

HT’s complete rejection of any sort of *al-Wasatiyyah* (“middle ground or centrism”), while at the same time refusing to engage in violent struggle with the Western establishment, were attractive aspects for current members of the group. While the term “moderate” is commonly used in current debates to describe Islam as a religion of tolerance, the Hizb sees *al-Wasatiyyah* as a compromise with capitalism, designed to secularise Islam. The group therefore calls its members to be faithful to the received teachings, defining “apostates” as those who move away from traditional positions in favour of milder ones.  

4.4 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Challenge to the West in the Social Field: The Ideological Foundations of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Opposition

HT’s rhetoric against the West in the social field is built upon two main books in the adopted literature: *Concepts of Hizb ut-Tahrir* (An-Nabhani, 2007) and the *American Campaign to Suppress Islam* (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996). Both books provide HT members with an ideological framework through which they can express their disapproval of the West as both individuals and members of the

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79 Chapter Six expands the discussion on *al-Wasatiyyah*, revealing how HT’s rejection of moderation was a very attractive aspect of the group for new recruits.
social-system. HT’s starting point is the claim that individual behaviour is dictated by their perceptions of life, their core values, and their ultimate goals:

Life is based on the enlightened thought and man, thus, progresses in accordance with it...enlightened thought also shows the reality of things and issues in a way that enables their correct comprehension. Thought must be deep in order to be enlightened and deep thought is the profound view of things, whilst enlightened thought is the profound view of things, their conditions, and everything which is related to them thus, drawing conclusions from this so as to reach sound judgements (An-Nabhani, 2007, p. 13).

According to An-Nabhani, a person must adopt an enlightened thought to learn the correct concepts, develop insight, and be able to draw valid conclusions. An-Nabhani believed that enlightenment of thought only comes from studying shari'a and seeking the favour of Allah. This idea is still a pillar of the group; they believe that following Islamic law will give people a safe and good life and conversely that kuffar, non-Islamic concepts lead to everything sharr (bad), namely everything Allah dislikes. However, HT members do not believe that each action has a precise connotation per se but instead believe that it is the system of concepts in the individual that defines an action as sharr or khair (good).

For instance, the act of killing can be both sharr and khair; a thief who kills in order to steal is definitely sharr, while killing an enemy in battle is considered a noble action (An-Nabhani, 2007). Therefore, the problem with kuffar and their society is not strictly connected to the actions characterising their lifestyle, since these are a direct consequence of the concepts driving people’s behaviours. For HT, the core issue concerns the concepts and thoughts that give birth to specific actions embedded in kuffar ideas, which are anti-Islamic.

For instance, when thinking about gambling, abortion, adultery, and divorce, HT warns that these actions are merely the symptoms of an illness whose aetiology goes far beyond the action itself (Muslimah Media Center, 2014). In the eyes of the Hizb, the root cause of this sickness in Western society is the
presence of incorrect concepts, which in turn influence people’s actions, leading to *sharr* behaviours. Given these premises, HT argues that the problems in Western societies are the result of the absence of the *khilafah* and Islamic law.

The caliphate is considered by HT members as the only system capable of preventing men and women from causing self-harm because, by observing Islamic tenets, individuals are no longer ruled by their “wicked desires” (Aysha, HT Australia, personal communication, March 6, 2016). By citing verses from the *Qur’an*, HT supports the idea that man is by nature more inclined to do evil than good. For example, the organisation often quotes: “But it may happen that you hate something which is good for you, and it may happen that you love something which is bad for you. Allah knows and you know not” (*Qur’an*, 2:216).

Therefore, in HT’s view, only one thing could lead humanity towards good, and that is submission to *shari’a*. HT members believe Westerners’ submission to a man-made system of values rather than *shari’a* is what fuels their decline as individuals and collectively as a social-system.

### 4.4.1 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s “Problem” with Personal Freedom

HT members stress the deep failure of the Western social model in a variety of arenas, including outside of mosques, on university campuses, and at conferences, talks, and rallies. Activists aim to dismantle the myth of a Western society as free and happy by conducting an aggressive campaign intended to destroy this myth by pointing out the negative and most disruptive consequences of the core concepts on which Western societies are based. The most important of these concepts is personal freedom and is regarded as an important catalyst for the decay of a society (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996): “Freedom is bad and it is against
Islam, which means submission” (Leyla, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016).

While Leyla’s declaration might sound shocking to the reader, it can logically be derived from HT’s claims regarding Western societies. In HT’s view, the problem with personal freedom is that it allows every person to conduct his/her private life as (s)he wishes. As a result, a number of activities are permitted, such as sexual perversions and eating and drinking whatever one wants as long as (s)he behaves “lawfully”. Moreover, the definition of lawful changes according to the specific historical period (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996). Under the flag of personal freedom, several practices considered immoral by HT have spread in the West:

Men and women live together without any legal relationship, even establishing abnormal same-sex relationships under the protection of the law...[indeed] the personal and sexual perversions that prevail in the capitalist societies result from personal freedom: pornographic magazines and movies, sex phone lines, and nude bars are just a few examples of the abnormalities and perversions which the capitalist societies have degenerated to as a result of personal freedom (Hizb ut-Tahrir 1996, p.32).

According to HT, the libertarian attitude towards these *haram* behaviours is the origin of a number of social plagues in the West. HT members see Western societies as a place where men and women can satisfy their desires without restriction of even the most immoral ones, and this causes decline, which can only be halted by the implementation of Islamic law. Often, HT associates Western society with the *jahili* society prior to Prophet Mohammad’s revelation of the Qur’an, illustrating that “when people are left free to satisfy their urges under no divine regulations, they will certainly go towards self-destruction”.

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80 Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia activists’ speeches at Rajab Event (Sydney, 2016). See Chapter One for more details on the event.
As highlighted by the original data presented so far, HT members interviewed had a very negative image of societies where personal freedom is allowed. Among them, Leyla, who presented a very negative image of democratic societies enslaving the individual rather than making him free:

*Kuffar* think they enjoy the freedom they have in a democratic society but what they really do is to be subjected to the unhappiness deriving from their sins...Allah (swt) has established a code of conduct for all men and women in order to assure their happiness and to preserve them from self-harm originating from all their desires which are contrary to Islam...living in a democratic society does not make you free...only *shari‘a* makes you free and happy because you finally start living the life in the way Allah (swt) conceived it for you” (Leyla, HT Australia, personal communication, February 25, 2016).

These powerful declarations were not only espoused by Leyla, but they were widely held by all HT members the author spoke with. Moreover, the catastrophic effects of personal freedom were crucial themes of all main events the author took part in during her fieldwork in London and Sydney. The contrast emphasised by HT, between *shari‘a* as a source freedom and happiness and democratic laws as a source of subjugation, is used by the group to dismantle the alleged Western vision of Islamic law as oppressive and dangerous.

To strengthen this claim, HT activists often use official data, from sources such as Eurostat, concerning the high rates of suicide, drug abuse, alcoholism, and mental disease affecting Western societies, to provoke a desire to escape the imminent collapse through the implementation of an effective counter-model based on HT’s vision of the state and Islam (The Revival Production, 2013). For these reasons, HT calls on its members to vigorously hold on to their Islamic way of life and their submission to *shari‘a* to avoid *kuffar* contamination, which would lead to the decline already experienced by non-Muslims.
4.4.2 The “Lost Femininity”

The second argument raised by HT to attack the West in the social field is deeply related to the first one (personal freedom), and it concerns the role of women. The analysis of HT publications and interviews with current members revealed HT accuses the West of depriving women of their femininity and pushing them away from their natural inclinations (such as motherhood). HT argues that the West has confused the roles of men and women and has promoted a model that transforms women into either mere sexual objects or cheap imitations of men (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2016a; The Revival Production, 2013).

This alleged degradation of women in Western societies is usually pointed out by the women of HT, both in the media and at public talks. Women’s participation in HT is very high: in each branch, women have their own sections, characterised by a clear division of roles, which are remarkable for the amount of work they contribute to social media campaigns, publications, and event organisation.\(^\text{81}\) While promoting the principles of gender segregation, a wife’s submission to her husband (as the head of the family), and the primary identity of women as wives and mothers, most female members possess university degrees and have well-paid jobs, such as doctors, lawyers, and teachers.

HT maintains that capitalism and democracy have perverted the natural social order as prescribed by Allah.\(^\text{82}\) These harsh opinions are again rooted in An-Nabhani’s idea that Muslims should first assess a concept and then give their

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\(^{81}\) Two of the most active online platforms are Women & Shariah (https://www.facebook.com/WomenandShariah/) a Facebook Page run by the women of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain and Women of Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, (https://www.facebook.com/womenofhtaust/). Both Facebook pages are a great source of HT publications, live talks and anti-Western propaganda.

\(^{82}\) Speeches of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s women activists, Ansar High Tea, Observation, Sydney, KCA Centre, May 22, 2016
opinion on it (An-Nabhani, 2002). When facing doubts about a concept, HT activists believe that Muslims should always consider two things: the nature of that specific concept (e.g. origin, historical background) and how that concept is evaluated from the perspective of Islam (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2017b).

Therefore, when dealing with concepts like feminism, female entrepreneurship, independence, and equality of the sexes, all branches of HT globally speak with one voice by categorising these ideas as not only anti-Islamic but also as very dangerous, since they could lead to the decline of the fundamental social unit: the family (Hizb ut-Tahrir Central Media Office, 2016a). HT holds that women were created by Allah to be wives and mothers and not to be obsessively oriented towards productivity, profit, and the illusion of personal freedom. As stated by Amina (HT Australia senior member):

> Women do not think about getting married and having a family anymore...they only think about career, focusing on how to get a good job and earn a lot of money to be independent...those women will certainly end up being old, lonely and depressed (Amina, HT Australia, personal communication, March 24, 2016).

These strong declarations are built upon HT’s idea that women in the West have progressively adopted behaviours that are contrary to their nature and which have been encouraged by capitalism and its capacity to transform human beings into “productive objects”, making them unavoidably sad and unsatisfied. According to HT members, the unhappiness caused by not observing divine prescriptions is the driving force for mental illness, divorce, and adultery.83

It emerged in the interviews with female members of HT Australia that their vision of a “virtuous woman” corresponds to a submissive and obedient wife, who is held accountable when she fails to fulfil her responsibilities and is

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83 Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia activists’ speeches at Rajab Event, Sydney, 2016. See Chapter One more details on the event.
subject to disciplinary measures if necessary. On this subject, Amina was convinced that the observance of religious prescriptions protects women from the alleged deception from their constant pursuit of freedom, which transforms them into frustrated “sexual objects”:

Women in the West often go out half naked, showing everything they have to men and transforming their bodies into products of a general big “meat market”...Western women are inclined to think that they do not need a man so they try to perform male roles, experiencing frustration and loneliness (Amina, HT Australia, personal communication, April 22, 2016).

As stressed by Amina’s words, HT women identify the loss femininity as a cause of social decline in Western societies, where the misguidance of man-made laws and an immoral system of values has led women to act as commodities in a “big meat market” where they experience an unavoidable solitude. In addition to highlighting the sadness of Western women, often depicted as trapped in an ideological slavery that has deprived them of their femininity, the interviews also revealed HT women’s stereotyped vision of Western women, which does not make any sort of distinction between the women they categorise as “Western women”.

HT members usually made no distinction between Italian and English women, neglecting all the ethno-cultural aspects that determine a large part of an individual’s behaviour. For instance, on the theme of alcohol, women of the Hizb were very surprised to hear that it is an Italian tradition to drink good wine at the table with main meals, without the aim of getting drunk, as it is more of a family ritual, when people accompany their food with one or a maximum of two glasses of wine, usually chosen to match the meal: white wine with fish and red wine with meat.

This controversial point will be further discussed in Chapter Six.
Conversely, in Anglo-Saxon contexts, it would be more common to just “go out for some drinks”, during a night out with friends, most likely without a meal. This expression—“go out for some drinks”—had a very negative connotation for the interviewees, who tended to associate it with the desire to get drunk, and conjured up images of women “vomiting in the streets, having one-night-stands, putting aside their dignity as women and creatures of Allah (swt)” (Amina, HT Australia, personal communication, May 2, 2016).

HT activists often provided an image of an ensemble of female individuals in the West experiencing a progressive decline caused by their rejection of Islamic prescriptions. This image of Western women in progressive decline is usually supported by comparing the great standard of living experienced by women under the *khilafah*, illustrated by examples of brilliant Muslim women, such as Fatima al-Fihri and Sutayta Al-Mahmali, with the image of a sick Western social system that attempts to keep Muslims away from their *din*:

> The Muslim lands under the rule of Islam created a glorious civilization, which became the centre for learning of the world... this pioneering education system was born from the Islamic rule of the glorious *khilafah*, which gave great support to scholars and brilliant minds...the *khilafah* led the world in women’s education generating abundance of female scholars and scientists, such as Fatima al-Fihri, Sutayta Al-Mahmali (Women & Shariah, 2017).

HT uses all its communication channels to convey this vision of the favourable conditions of women under Islamic rule. Together with daily campaigning on social media and study-circles (*halaqaat*), HT also organises international events to foster an Islamic revival among the *ummah*, with a particular focus on women. An example is the HT-sponsored gathering: “Women are an honour that must be preserved” with the subtitle “The *kuffar* and their tools to conspire against them”, held in Palestine in 2014.
The title and subtitle of this event reveals its aim, which was to alert Muslims about Western attempts to mislead and secularise Islamic families and their social lives, while inviting the ummah to hold on to Islam (The Revival Production, 2013). As highlighted by the data presented in Australia and other branches, HT members are committed to reviving the Islamic concept of femininity and see women as central figures in their roles as wives and mothers. This tenet challenges the Western-sponsored model of an emancipated woman by arguing that the focus of Western women on power and career will certainly drive them towards loneliness and depression.

**Conclusion**

This chapter explored the role of HT as a collective agent, challenging Western states as structures staunchly opposed to Islam. Analysis of the data revealed that HT aims to convey to interlocutors the idea that the West is an enemy to be challenged in every arena. Given the fact that HT has always presented itself as an organisation condemning violence, the fight the group is engaged in is a war of ideas, where HT attempts to dispel the myth that the Western model is the most effective. To do so, HT is engaged in an intellectual challenge—mostly centred on the political and social fields—where HT proposes the caliphate as a counter model to the Western system.

This chapter illustrated how HT’s ideological challenge to the West is mostly grounded on An-Nabhani’s ideological premises, which still serve as the impetus for HT’s activities today. Specifically, these ideological premises are “the West as the enemy”, “the incompatibility between the West and Islam”, and the “everlasting battle between Islam and the kuffar”. All three premises have a precise aim: to foster a progressive social, political, and emotional
disenfranchisement of the individual from the West, which is usually also the place where (s)he was born and/or raised. This progressive disenfranchisement from the West is accompanied by the emergence of a sense of belonging to HT and the global ummah, which is seen as deeply oppressed and in need of the Islamic state.

This emotional process, based on the careful acculturation of HT members to specific concepts and claims, is legitimised by HT using the concept of da’wah. Although the da’wah is usually intended as a “call to Islam” for non-Muslims, HT has reinterpreted this concept as a religious basis for educating the masses—both Muslims and kuffar—on the “right” Islamic concepts. After analysing the ideological and religious grounds for HT’s challenge to the West, this chapter identified the arguments leading the challenge in both the political and social fields.

In the political field, HT wages its war of ideas with three main claims: the Westphalian state-model is illegitimate for Muslims, Western foreign policy has caused significant backlash for Muslims, and the West has a “hidden agenda” to oppress Muslims. Again, fostering mistrust between the individual and the West as a system, HT uses these claims to advance the idea of an embedded incompatibility between the West and Islam and a progressive separation of Muslims from the West in favour of HT.

In the social field, HT attacks the West through the concepts of personal freedom and femininity within a democratic political setting. By exposing the social decay of Western societies, in terms of immorality, subversion of the God-given natural order, and the unrestrained quest for satisfaction of physical urges, HT argues that Muslims should distance themselves from the West. Portraying the West as a decadent system, with historical facts and current data to support
their claims, HT members convince segments of Muslim communities in the West to shift their solidarity, loyalties, and trust entirely towards HT.

HT invites its interlocutors to hold on to their Islamic faith as the key to avoiding decline and keeping Muslims united globally in advocating for the only efficient socio-political system based on Islam: the caliphate. As a result, HT grounds its challenge against the West on a complex set of arguments, narratives and historical references which let the group emerge as a collective agent able to offer an alternative to a broken system (the West) based on the caliphate.

HT’s positioning as an alternative to the West as a system is particularly attractive to those segments of Muslim communities in the West who see HT as an ideal arena to fight against a kuffar system without engaging in any violent acts, and where they feel fulfilled and gratified by their actions. Lastly, HT provides its members with a sense of security and stability mostly deriving from its unchanged political and social tenets (the same held by An-Nabhani in the 1950s), from the unity of the branches around the world and their capacity to connect the local context to the global stance of the group, and its durability.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE UNIQUENESS OF HIZB UT-TAHRIR AS AN AGENT VIS-A-VIS ITS COMPETITORS

HT is different from all other movements advocating for the khilafah because it has a clear methodology and an uncompromising stance in Islam...HT was founded on the example of Prophet Mohammad who was himself uncompromising... furthermore, HT is an example of unique coordination worldwide, inspiring Muslims in the world to fully embrace the 'Aqeedah and to work for one of the most relevant Islamic religious obligations: the re-establishment of the glorious caliphate.

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This chapter argue that specific features of HT’s agency make the group more appealing than other international, high-profile groups with similar goals to many Muslims in the West. The present chapter expands the analysis of HT as an agent presented in Chapters Three and Four, which mostly focused on the inner dimensions of the organisation, and reveals HT’s agency by comparing the organisation with the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), two groups that present a similar ideology and the same desire to revive Islam in current socio-political systems.

Framing the analysis within the agent-structure debate, this chapter uses three agency variables identified by Giddens: reflexive monitoring, the rationalisation of action, and the motivations for actions (Giddens, 1984, p. 5). While reflexive monitoring is used to reveal the similarities among the three
groups under analysis, rationalisation of action and the motivations for actions are used to uncover HT’s unique features, vis-à-vis its competitors, to account for the group’s appeal to segments of Muslim communities in the West.

While there are a number of similarities between these groups, such as the historical background of the founders, the will to liberate the ummah from kuffar contamination, and the idea of the West as the enemy, HT strongly differs from the MB and JeI in terms of methodology, detailed vision of the caliphate, and consistency over time, characteristics which continue to promote HT’s agency in the world.

Although there are several Islamist groups in the world presenting similar ideological views as HT, this chapter identifies the specific elements of HT’s agency which attract segments of Muslim communities in the West. These Muslims still choose HT over its competitors as an ideal arena where they feel safe and fulfilled and where they can oppose a kuffar system without engaging in any acts of terror.

5.1 Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Three Agency Variables

As mentioned in Chapter One, the agent/structure debate is used as a theoretical tool in this research to study HT because it suggests important variables useful for analysing collective agents. Among these variables, three are used in this chapter to expand the analysis of HT’s agency from a comparative perspective: “the reflexive monitoring, the rationalisation of action, and the motivations for actions” (Giddens, 1984, p. 5). Reflexive monitoring is understood as “a chronic feature of everyday action and involves the conduct not just of the individual but also of others” (Giddens, 1984, p. 5).
Agents do not only monitor and observe their own behaviours, but they are also impacted by the conduct of other agents and by the specific temporal and spatial settings in which they perform their activities. Therefore, agents’ actions and behaviours are exposed to both the influence of their peers and to the influence of the specific environment in which the actions take place. Agents exposed to similar environmental conditions and interacting with similar actors can develop common patterns of behaviours.

Reflexive monitoring is useful for the present study because it gives greater insight into the emotional and environmental factors that gave rise to HT, the MB, and JeI as international protagonists of contemporary Islamic activism. By using reflexive monitoring, this chapter identifies the common ground of HT and its two competitors, which is a result of exposure to similar inputs, and analyses the two main concepts common to Islamic revivalist groups: their vision of the West and their ideal target group for recruitment.\(^85\)

The second variable used in this chapter to analyse HT’s uniqueness vis-à-vis its competitors is the *rationalisation of action*. This concept is defined as a process where “agents maintain a continuing ‘theoretical understanding’ of the grounds of their activity” (Giddens, 1984; 1985, p. 5). Notwithstanding the limits of agents’ awareness of all the factors that might impact their agency, agents are still able to provide some kinds of explanation for their conduct because they are driven by a certain degree of intentionality. Ira Cohen defined intentionality as the agents’ “knowledge or belief that specific kinds of practices will have a

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\(^{85}\) As discussed in previous chapters, this research argues that HT is organisationally similar to transnational corporations, and thus references to the corporate world are common throughout this thesis. For instance, the author here refers to the MB and JeI as “HT’s competitors” because they sponsor the same products: the caliphate and Islamic revival.
particular quality or outcome and the agents’ use of this knowledge to achieve the quality or outcome involved” (Cohen, 1989, p. 50).

Agents have a specific goal in mind, which is intentionally pursued with the knowledge and means available. While the reflexive monitoring is used in this chapter to illustrate the common ground between HT and its competitors, rationalisation of action is used as a theoretical tool to articulate the discourse on HT’s uniqueness. All agents have a certain degree of intentionality in performing their actions; data collected for this study reveals how HT’s rationalisations of its actions have differentiated it from the MB and JeI and shows how HT’s high level of intentionality constitutes the essence of the organisation’s “competitive advantage” over the other two groups. HT’s intentionality is very evident in three fields, which also constitute the main attractive elements of the organisation for new recruits: its method, constitution for the caliphate, and rigidity over time.

Motivations for actions represent the third agency variable used in this chapter to compare HT with its competitors. Motivations “supply overall plans and programmes within which a range of conduct is enacted” (Giddens, 1984, p. 6). According to Giddens, motivations are related more to the potential for action than to the ways in which action is performed by the agent. Therefore, strong motivations will certainly determine powerful actions even when confronted with several potential obstacles. With regard to HT, the group has relentlessly advocated to re-establish the caliphate in spite of decades of persecutions, bans,

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86 The author uses the term competitive advantage to refer to “the ability of one company to outperform another because its managers are able to create more value from the resources at their disposal” (Jones, 2007, p. 12). HT’s intentionality has been the first source of its competitive advantage.
and arrests of its members, illustrating the strong motivation behind HT’s actions (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2016a).

Using this third agency variable, this chapter shows how HT’s strong motivations and persistence have served to increase its appeal to new recruits over the years. As pointed out by the interviewees, while MB and JeI have shifted the focus of their activities over time, HT’s motivations have remained the same, providing a sense of stability and reliability to its expansion around the world.

5.2 Reflexive Monitoring: Exploring the Common Ground between Hizb ut-Tahrir and its Competitors

As mentioned in the previous section, reflexive monitoring is used as an agency variable in this analysis to explore the ideological similarities between HT, the MB, and JeI. When agents are exposed to similar stimuli, they often develop similar behaviours; therefore, the fact that the founders of these three groups were living in similar environments (HT’s founder An-Nabhani in Palestine, MB’s founder Al-Banna in Egypt, and Mawdudi in British India) explains several of the similarities between the three groups.

The three founders lived in a period of political instability in Muslim regions, generated by the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the state of Israel, and by the Western occupation of those territories, which had a significant political, economic, and social impact for those Muslim populations (Ataman, 2015; Rahnema, 2008). The presence of Western colonial powers in their homeland and the introduction of several new concepts in their political and social systems, such as democracy and personal freedom, triggered in the founders of the three groups the desire to hold on to Islam as the only powerful weapon for countering Western territorial and ideological colonialism.
While HT, MB, and JeI differ in many ways, their beginnings share many similarities. HT, MB, and JeI represent the oldest and most widespread Islamic revivalist groups still active today. The three founders were contemporary brilliant minds, highly educated in both Islamic Law, the Western political system, and Western philosophy. The MB is, in a sense, the forefather of both HT and JeI, since it was founded first by Hasan Al-Banna in Egypt in 1928. After the MB, Abul Ala Mawdudi founded JeI in British India in 1941, and 12 years later An-Nabhani founded the Hizb in Palestine.

While An-Nabhani and Al-Banna were both school teachers, intellectuals, and political activists, Mawdudi had to leave school when he was young to support himself. Nevertheless, Mawdudi was not less astute in Islamic law and theology than Al-Banna and An-Nabhani, who both came from very religious, politically active families involved in Islamic jurisprudence.87 The fact that Mawdudi was self-educated in Islamic matters did not undermine his capacity to obtain a certificate in religious training (Ijazah) and to be officially recognised as a member of the ‘Ulama, i.e. the community of expert Islamic scholars, whose members are considered to be the “guardians, interpreters and transmitters [of] religious knowledge, of Islamic doctrine and law” (Gilliot et al., 2012).

As agents who wanted to make a difference in the particular period in which they were living, the three founders organised their actions by establishing groups that went back to the true teachings of Islam to cleanse society from all kinds of kuffar influence by applying shari’a (Gul, 2010). Once established, the groups became autonomous, collective agents, exercising different kinds of

87 An-Nabhani was very much influenced by his father (who was affiliated with the Palestinian Ministry of Education and was a teacher of Islamic legal sciences) and his maternal grandfather, who was an important judge in many areas of the Ottoman Empire (Taji-Farouki, 1996). Also Al-Banna was influenced by his father, Sheikh Ahmad Abd al-Rahman al-Banna al-Sa’ati, a prominent Hanbali imam, muezzin, and mosque teacher (Mura, 2012).
pressure on the ummah, national governments, and their competitors. Not only was their agency carried out through intellectual activities, such as lectures, sermons at the mosque, study-circles, and leaflet campaigns, but all three groups were also engaged in a process of reflexive monitoring, where interaction with other actors fostered the adoption of similar ideas and behaviours.

The single group focused on its own conduct first and then on the conduct of others, while also observing the environment in which the conduct is performed, making it an intergroup reflexive process. It is reflexive because each group first monitors and observes its own behaviour, and it is an intergroup process because each group also observes the conduct and performance of its peers. Reflexive monitoring is the reason the three groups share many of the same characteristics, which is a result of the fact that intellectuals from the three groups were familiar with each other’s ideas.

The literature suggests that both An-Nabhani and Mawdudi were deeply inspired by the writings of Sayyid Qutb, one of the most important members of the Muslim Brothers (Ataman, 2015; Friedland, 2015; Gul, 2010). He was an Egyptian intellectual and school teacher, who wrote Milestones during his 10-year-long imprisonment under Nasser’s rule. Milestones was first published in 1964 as a manifesto of contemporary Islamism, which has inspired several Islamic revivalist groups, both violent and non-violent.\(^\text{88}\)

The book is written as a guide for pious Muslims on what Qutb saw as the right Islamic values (Ataman, 2015). He thought that a fight to establish the right values in society was necessary to avoid a further decline of Islam. Even if

\(^{88}\) Qutb’s stress on the need to restore the glory of Islam and to separate Muslims from the pervasive jahiliyyah (state of ignorance characterising unbelievers) surrounding the ummah was also accompanied by his support for jihad and martyrdom. While Qutb’s belief in the need to go back to the purity of Islam is strongly shared by vocal Islamist groups, the focus on violence as a viable strategy was soon adopted by terror groups like Al-Qaida, which has incorporated parts of Qutb’s Milestones in its manual (Suarez-Murias, 2013).
Milestones was officially published after the creation of HT and JeI, Qutb’s ideas were already well known in the Muslim world before 1964. Undoubtedly, Qutb played an essential role in shaping the nature of MB in Egypt, and he also had a significant impact on all the groups that followed, such as JeI and HT.

Ataman (2015), Hamid (2016), and Taji-Farouki (1996) all point out that these groups had both physical and intellectual contact with one another; while the debate on whether An-Nabhani was ever a member of the MB is still open, it is certain that he had interactions with members of MB delegations who travelled to Haifa in Palestine (Hamid, 2016). Mawdudi’s contact with the MB was purely intellectual and was initiated by one of his disciples, Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi. He met with Sayyid Qutb and translated Qutb’s writings for Mawdudi and also translated Mawdudi’s writings into Arabic for Qutb (Gul, 2010; Roy, 1994).

Contact between the groups led to common ideas, such as the critique of the West and specific target groups for recruitment. These similarities resulted from reflexive monitoring, which demonstrates the agency of the three groups.

5.2.1 Western Enmity against the Muslims

HT’s holistic negative vision of the Western system, highlighted in Chapter Four, is also shared by the MB and JeI. The three groups all hold that the Western system represents a danger to Muslims, since it aims to use both militarily and ideological force to annihilate Islam. The three groups urge the ummah to go back to the fundamentals of Islam, not as a religion but as a din (a way of life), and to present strong anti-colonial arguments that often overlap or complement anti-imperialistic and anti-American arguments. All three groups

89 A detailed account of HT’s arguments used to attack the West as a system in the political and social fields has already been presented in Chapter Four.
see Western presence in the Muslim world as a form of neo-colonialism, aimed at keeping Muslims under Western economic and cultural influence.

These criticisms focus not only on the Western military presence in the Middle East, but also on the number of multinational companies, NGOs, and religious organisations in those territories, which are seen as ways for former Western colonial powers to maintain their grip over Muslim-majority countries. HT, the MB, and JeI often express their bold stance against Western banks (e.g. City Bank, American Express), food companies (e.g. KFC, McDonalds, Coca Cola), and large international organisations (e.g. the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund).

These Western entities are portrayed by the three groups as oppressive Western expedients for continuing the subjugation of Muslims by undermining Islamic identities through the introduction of haram practices and ideas and leading Muslims to progressive decline (Gul, 2010). According to three groups, the most dangerous anti-Islamic Western ideas are democracy, secular laws, and capitalism, which are regarded as serious threats to the population under their rule:

Celebrities that have committed suicide include legends in their industry like Kurt Cobain, Robin Williams and Marilyn Monroe...celebrities that have suffered severe bouts of depression include Brad Pitt, Eminem, Nicki Minaj, Lady Gaga, Miley Cyrus and the list continues. The reality is that the capitalist system has not been able to provide happiness to people who are deemed as having everything which is material...money has not bought happiness to people who have immense wealth in monetary terms...the Western celebrity approach of “sex, money and drugs” has produced depressed, suicidal and unhappy individuals, it has brought misery to their lives, whilst ironically thousands look to them as the pinnacle of success...happiness has not been found at the bottom of a wine bottle and overflowing bank accounts...emptiness has overwhelmed them, because there is a vital aspect in their lives which is missing—their actual purpose in life (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017c).

As highlighted by this recent HT Britain post, the organisation sees the capitalistic ideology in Western democracies as producing an unhealthy
environment, creating unhappy people who build their life on concepts that lead them to depression, anxiety, and misery. Both the MB and JeI agree with HT on the excessive materialism in the West at the expense of the spiritual dimension. Materialism is regarded as sinful also by members of the MB, following the teaching of their founder Al-Banna:

The Europeans worked assiduously in trying to immerse (the world) in materialism, with their corrupting traits and murderous germs, to overwhelm those Muslim lands that their hands stretched out to...you are a new spirit making its way into the heart of this nation—reviving it with the Qur'an; a new light dawning, dispelling the darkness of materialism through the knowledge of Allah (Al-Banna, 1978, pp. 9,13).

In his message *Between Yesterday and Today*, Al-Banna exposes the effects of colonisation in the Muslim world, defining the European-imported concept of materialism as a “tyranny on Muslim lands” (Al-Banna, 1978, p. 9). According to Al-Banna (and An-Nabhani), the most dangerous kind of tyranny is the ideological kind established by colonial powers by introducing their haram practices into the *Daral-Islam*. Among these haram practices, Al-Banna includes the display of semi-naked women, drinking alcoholic beverages, the presence of theatres and dance halls, and the multitude of Western “silly games and vices” (Al-Banna, 1978, p. 9).

Al-Banna strongly despised Western cultural imperialism and saw it as a form of subjugation and as way to contradict Islamic tenets. Al-Banna created the MB to be a group of sanctified individuals capable of leading their nation (Egypt) out of the darkness of materialism and Western influence to an Islamic revival based on a deeper knowledge of Allah. Mawdudi’s view was also in line with An-Nabhani and Al-Banna’s ideas concerning materialism and Western cultural subjugation of Muslims in their home countries:

This new civilisation reached the height of its materialism and unfaith, where most of the Muslim nations are subjugated by the West...Muslims were invaded by the Western pen and the sword simultaneously...the minds that
had already succumbed to the political dominance of the West quite easily also became impressed by Western knowledge (Raja, 2007, p.183).

As illustrated by this quote, Mawdudi was also concerned about the serious dangers of Western colonisation in Muslim lands. Having himself experienced the British invasion in India, Mawdudi expressed his most serious concern, namely the spread of Western lifestyle, culture, and knowledge in Muslim majority countries where he thought Islam might be neglected in favour of new kuffar and haram practices. Like An-Nabhani and Al-Banna, Mawdudi thought that the only way to resist a slow but pervasive kuffar contamination was to establish a group to lead a revival of Islam and instruct people on their religious obligations, Islamic tenets, and the divine rewards for those who remained faithful to their Islamic ‘Aqeedah.

The Western focus on materialism was therefore criticised by all three groups, which instead emphasised the importance of the spiritual dimension for the person as well as the necessity of abiding by Islamic law. The three groups share the assumption that religion is essential for properly regulating human conduct and structuring the economic and education systems and other specific fields such as military training and sports (Ataman, 2015).

Shari‘a is a comprehensive way of life that seeks to create good individuals....shari‘a further aims to create a cooperative, supportive society based on equality, justice and mutual respect, and the establishment of good governance that focuses on serving the people, achieving justice between citizens, establishing balanced and independent international relations, seeking to establish peace and humanitarian cooperation, and affirming human rights – thus honouring the meaning of the Verse: “O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, so you may get to know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you, in the sight of Allah, is the most pious amongst you. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” (Qur‘an: 49:13)...thus shari‘a awakens faith, reforms behaviour, improves the general environment of the whole society, and polishes morals, through persuasion and education, with no coercion whatsoever (The Muslim Brotherhood, 2012).

This quote from the MB clearly illustrates the Islamist vision of shari‘a as a fundamental element of life for individuals in all fields. Unlike the Western trend
of relegating religion to the private life of a person, the three groups consider shari’a as a “comprehensive way of life”, the only one capable of producing a just society, with equality and respect among people. To emphasise the spiritual dimension of life over materialistic aspects, the three groups believe that shari’a should be implemented holistically to build just institutions, a fair economic system, and a society made up of sanctified individuals who abide by Islamic principles.

The MB’s statement also mirrors HT and JeI’s idea of shari’a as the best national and international regulation system, since the principles of Islamic law foster “balanced international relations” and solidarity. Lastly, this statement illustrates the groups’ shared belief in the power of shari’a as a “kind force” capable of changing people’s behaviour, leading them towards the good and causing them to reject what is evil. The MB, HT, and JeI strongly believe that individuals should abide by shari’a not only because it is a religious obligation but because it gives a purpose to life and leads to real happiness.

As pointed out by the data presented so far, all three groups agree that the Western “sex, money, and drugs approach” does not lead to joy but only to greater wretchedness, leaving the individual with a deep sense of emptiness that no man-made system of values or regulations could ever fulfil (Ataman, 2015; Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017c). As mentioned before, the MB, HT, and JeI all share the same conviction that only shari’a is capable of assuring a good life, as it works as an intellectual (not coercive) regulating force for all realms of life.

These realms include the personal sphere (where the government is supportive of citizens, ensuring the population’s basic needs and the protection of disadvantaged social categories), and the international sphere (where a nation grounded on Islamic law should serve as an example of conduct for others,
advancing international cooperation and working for the common good). Given the several advantages of a system based on *shari‘a*, the MB, HT, and JeI are confident in presenting the caliphate as the only system that can holistically improve life for mankind (Women & Shariah, 2017).

At the same time, the three groups see Western former colonial powers as the main obstacle to its re-establishment. As mentioned before, since the early stages of their foundation, the three groups have argued that Western states have tried to culturally dominate Muslims and convince Muslim elites of the superiority of Western models of government, economy, and liberal society, while instilling in Muslim minds the idea that Islam is defective. As explored in Chapter Four, HT’s paranoia about an alleged “Western hidden agenda”, aimed at the demolition of Islamic identity to weaken the main strength of Muslims, played an important role in the organisation’s rhetoric and arguments (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996; Hizb ut-Tahrir Central Media Office, 2017; Wahid, 2017).

Al-Banna and Mawdudi were both severely critical of colonialism and its impact on Muslim identity and shared An-Nabhani’s belief in a Western hidden agenda to annihilate Muslims:

The aim of colonialism was to create a generation of Muslims enslaved by Western culture and advocates of the Western system to further their colonial objectives in the region...Muslim puppet rulers continued to implement secular reforms, fostering the continuous process of decay and restricting the teaching of Islam...the result of this actions was a disastrous impact on Muslims’ identity especially on youths. This hidden agenda has intensified in the last few years pursued under the umbrella of the war on terror and prevention of extremism...in addition, decades of poor organization, ineffective teaching methods, under investments due to fraud capitalistic systems and visionless regimes compounded the education crisis (Women & Shariah, 2017).

The alleged Western hidden agenda to destroy Muslims is a common theme of HT publications, events, and speeches even today. As illustrated by the above quote from the women’s section of HT, the group believes Western former
colonial powers are determined to maintain their hegemony of Muslims by using soft power, such as the use of “puppet rulers”, the restriction of Islamic teachings, and the numerous measures that have taken place under the banner of the War on Terror. HT, the MB, and JeI maintain that Western colonial powers have “enslaved” Muslims not only through military, cultural, and political means, but also through an education crisis, which is held up as another core cause of decay fostered by Western colonisers (Women & Shariah, 2017).

Given the numerous ideological similarities among these three groups, it appears that the reflexive monitoring process that HT, MB, and JeI are continually engaged with as collective agents has impacted the activities of the groups, creating similar patterns of behaviour as a result of their similar worldviews. In addition to seeing the West as a cultural, political, and social enemy whose aim is to keep its control over Muslims and to annihilate their Islamic identity, the three groups also share one core premise on which they base their actions: the need to focus on education to start an Islamic revolution.

The three groups argue that only by educating Muslims on the “true Islamic principles” will they begin to understanding the caliphate not as more than a mere “historical relic”, as the ideal system, superior to any man-made form of government (Mohammad, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016).

5.2.2 The Target Group for Recruitment

The need to make the ummah familiar with the “authentic Islamic principles”, and not a blurred Westernised version, has pushed the MB, HT, and JeI to perform the role of “educators of the masses” in the Muslim community. With this goal in mind, all three groups, in different areas of the world, have
identified the same target group for recruiting their potential members: young Muslim intellectuals. This target group represents the second element resulting from the reflexive monitoring process of the three groups.

Given the nature of their founders (Al Banna, Mawdudi, and An-Nabhani were all prominent intellectuals of their time) the MB, JeI, and HT have always distinguished themselves by their ability to attract young Muslims, especially politically-minded university students who are disenchanted with the democratic system and are looking for an alternative model to address their current problems, individually and collectively (Hanif, 2012; Iqbal & Zulkifli, 2016; Iqtidar, 2011; Wali, 2013).

The author’s fieldwork also confirmed this profile for HT recruits. As shown in Table 1, the majority of members of HT Australia interviewed by the author (13) possess a university degree and some of them are currently active within the education sector as teachers or graduate researchers (8). Others are doctors (2) and entrepreneurs (2), and housewives (3), all with an extensive knowledge of Islamic law. When asked how they joined HT, more than 90% of members interviewed (14) answered that it was during their time in university when they came across HT activists on campus.90 The activity on university campuses and intellectual circles was a common element produced by the reflexive monitoring process of the three collective agents, which is also reflected in their recruitment strategies.

Like HT, JeI, and the MB are all very active in the academic world because of their desire to create a group of brilliant minds, educated on the group-

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90 Many HT Australia members in Sydney attended the University of Western Sydney (UWS) where HT is very active in organising lectures and talks on all campus. The author spent three months at the UWS campus in Milperra where several current HT members graduated and where the presence of the organisation is still relevant today.
sponsored tenets, who would then constitute the “vanguard party” challenging the Western social, political, and economic model (Al-Banna, 1975; An-Nabhani, 2001; Mawdudi, 1985). With this aim in mind, the current leadership of the three groups encourages activists to constantly engage with society. While HT “knocks at society’s door” (Taji-Farouki, 1996, p. 19) with its publications, rallies, talks, lectures, public events and also through specific sister organisations that work with young adults, the MB and JeI have built a solid network of infrastructures in the territories they operate.91

These infrastructures mostly concern schools, colleges, dispensaries, and hospitals and provide services to the population that the central government would normally offer (Ataman, 2015; Friedland, 2015; Vidino, 2010). By focusing on a variety of community support activities, all three groups aim to convince their audience of the benefits of re-establishing the caliphate. This idea is not only fuelled by the ongoing education of members to the main tenets, but given that most members are well educated these concepts are also intellectually consolidated through a process of historical comparison of the time of the Khilafah al-Rashida with the current troubled status of the Middle East.92

Therefore, by contrasting the glory of the caliphate with the decadence of the West, and supporting their arguments with historical data and facts, the Hizbis, the MB, and the JeI all look for young intellectual minds from which a revolution of thought might originate, since these minds are best placed to spread Islamic knowledge to the masses, educate Muslims on their religious

91 An example is Hizb ut-Tahrir’s sister organisation Ansar-Sisters for Revival, discussed in Chapter Four.
92 See Chapter Six for further discussion of the acculturation of HT members to its organisational values.
obligations, and present the caliphate as the only government that can “prevent anarchy and chaos” in the Muslim world (Ataman, 2015, p. 57).

5.3 Rationalisation of Action: The Intentionality of Hizb ut-Tahrir as an Agent

While reflexive monitoring was used in the present chapter to explore the similarities between HT, the MB, and JeI, rationalisation of action and motivations for actions are two useful agency variables here used to uncover the differences between HT and its two competitors. This section uses rationalisation of action—previously defined as an agent’s awareness that specific actions will lead to specific outcomes (Cohen, 1989)—to point out HT’s intentionality as a distinguishing feature of the group vis-à-vis similar groups.

HT’s strong intentions, best exemplified by the group’s unchanging priorities, are a unique characteristic of the organisation. HT’s strong intentionality constitutes a core part of HT’s competitive advantage, defined as all elements that differentiate the organisation from the MB and JeI and drive specific groups of Muslims to choose it over its competitors. The interviews conducted with current HT members pointed out both HT’s strong intentionality—expressed by the group’s will to pursue the same goal over the years and across the countries—and the group’s competitive advantage.

The latter is made up of three specific elements of the group: its precise method, detailed vision of the caliphate, and high degree of consistency over time.

5.3.1 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Competitive Advantage: A “Rational, Clear, and Effective Method”

In his interview with the author, Mohammad, a HT member for 15 years, described the group’s method using three simple adjectives: “rational, clear, and
Mohammed revealed how HT’s method was the main driver in attracting him to the Hizb when he was a university student in Islamic studies, an experience that was common among other interviewees, who all identified HT’s method as one of the elements that first attracted them to the group. Mohammad’s idea on the method of the Hizb was also shared by Nuha, senior member of HT Australia:

No other group has such a rational, clear, and effective method as the Hizb, for whom the caliphate is not mere utopia, but it is the main goal activists work for everyday following a detailed method (Nuha, HT Australia, personal communication, March 13, 2016).

Undoubtedly, both Mohammad and Nuha were impressed by the work of HT activists to re-establish the caliphate, and especially the precise method employed to achieve this goal. HT’s current method is the same as the one proposed by the founder An-Nabhani in his seminal book *Islamic State* (1998), still read as part of the training and education of HT members today. HT’s founder envisaged five phases for the re-establishment of the caliphate. In the first phase, known as the *starting point*, HT addresses its call to a small group of Muslims intellectuals, educating them on the main ideological tenets of the organisation. This first group of intellectuals constitutes the first nucleus that will then perform the role of protagonist in the second phase: the *phase of indoctrination*.

In the second phase, the nucleus carries HT’s message and ideology outside the in-group to recruit new members. Members of the early nucleus are to be chosen among intellectual elites to use their culture and intellectual authority to convince others of the validity of HT’s ideas. The third phase, called the *take off point*, marks the beginning of HT’s role as a recognised collective presence in a
population that is aware and sensitive to the main local issues and is willing to advocate for the right of the ummah (An-Nabhani, 1998).

Following the establishment of the group as a counter-political presence challenging the current political establishment,93 is the phase of interaction, the point when An-Nabhani thought that his organisation would be ready to start controlling the society in which it operated by replacing Western-sponsored ideas with the Hizb-sponsored ones. The last phase or the phase of government marks the success of the previous phases and the movement’s ascent to power (An-Nabhani, 1998). These five phases were later reorganised by HT leaders into three crucial stages known today as the “culturing stage, the interaction and the revolutionary stage” (Hamid, 2016, p. 39). The “culturing” stage includes both the starting point and the phase of indoctrination discussed above and it marks the moment when HT acculturates a selected number of individuals to the group’s ideology and goals.

The interaction stage includes both the take off point and the phase of indoctrination, and it occurs when the organisation tries to intellectually persuade the broader Muslim community to accept HT’s ideological tenets and to participate in activities aimed at re-establishing the caliphate. Finally, the revolutionary stage corresponds to the phase of government when HT assumes power by overthrowing allegedly corrupt governments and establishing the Islamic state (Hamid, 2016). While many scholars only address the three stages as we know them today, this work considers all five stages as originally outlined

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93 As already discussed in Chapter Four, the term “establishment” is used in the present research to identify a leading group or elite that holds power and authority not only in a nation but also at the international level.
by An-Nabhani to examine his original ideas and how they have evolved over time.

The present work also highlights HT’s different methods and goals in the Muslim world and the West. This differentiation helps to clarify the alarming idea of an HT-sponsored caliphate in the Western world. In particular, the author’s interview with Uthman Badar provided several details elucidating HT’s method and how it constitutes an essential element of its competitive advantage.\(^\text{94}\) As also stressed in the interview with Mohammad, the “clear, rational and effective” character of HT’s method is expressed by the systematic organisation of the group’s activities according to the areas in which it operates.

On this subject, Badar made it clear that HT’s three-stage process to re-establish the caliphate discussed above specifically concerns the Muslim world (specific \textit{majaal} areas) and not the West. In the Muslim countries, HT aims to assume power through a “non-bloody” coup; however, in the West the group aims to “call Muslims to the \textit{da’wah}” (Uthman Badar, HT Australia personal communication, March 12, 2016). The interview with Badar confirmed the organisation’s intention to re-establish the caliphate only in the \textit{majaal} areas (Hanif, 2014). Therefore, HT’s goal is not to expand Islamic rule throughout the world but to establish a caliph to rule the Muslim world, especially in the Middle East.

When commenting on HT’s work in the West, Badar stated: “we aim to complement the work done in the Muslim world, affecting public opinion everywhere by spreading information and organising events such as conferences and rallies” (Uthman Badar, HT Australia personal communication, March 12, 2016). Therefore, in the West HT is mostly engaged in a process of culturing

\(^{94}\) As mentioned in Chapter Four, Uthman Badar is one of the leaders of HT Australia.
(part of the interaction stage) where the group attempts to discredit the Western system and to promote HT-sponsored ideas. The culturing process in the West is a support activity for the work of HT branches in the Muslim world, which is used to familiarise Muslims diaspora communities with HT specific claims to recruit new members.

Conversely, in Muslim majority countries HT aims to assume power, a process characterised as a “coup” in the interview with Badar. As alarming as the word “coup” might sound, Badar frequently emphasised that HT’s coup will not be like those instigated by violent groups, which build their authority on fear and violence. On the contrary, Badar defined HT’s coup as “consensual and non-bloody” since it would be preceded by the two phases of culturing and interaction, essential for paving the way to the caliphate in the Muslim world. To achieve the goal of seizing power through a non-violent coup, HT is committed to taking the da’wah to the people who hold power through a bottom-up approach: from a small nucleus, to the larger society, and eventually to powerful elites.

Once the elites are convinced of the imminent necessity of living under the caliphate as their Islamic obligation, Badar said that “they will then be ready to pass the power on to HT who will then initiate the coup” (Uthman Badar, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016). The very fact that the political elites themselves will give the power to HT, according to Badar, makes the coup non-violent, since both the society and the rulers will acknowledge the role of HT as the “legitimate actor” leading the change. Thus, the educational preparation of the population will prevent any significant objections resulting in civil strife.

The process described by Badar is what HT endeavours to create in all Muslim countries where it operates, even though the group is proscribed in all of
them except Lebanon. Regardless of the governmental bans, Badar stressed that HT continues to operate in these areas and implement the phases of its plan. To give substance to these statements, Badar pointed out the work HT is conducting in Pakistan and its goal for the country:

In Pakistan (where HT is banned), the General runs the show and HT is working to reach him—who is a Muslim—in order to convince him that to fulfil his Islamic obligations, he needs to live under the caliphate...once the General and the army are convinced about the necessity of bringing the caliphate back, they will pass the power onto HT and the coup will take place (Uthman Badar, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).

With this example, Badar highlighted the relentless effort made by the Hizb to achieve their goal in the Muslim world. Much work has gone into implementing these phases as originally outlined by An-Nabhani over the last six decades. As a result, the group has faced a strong political opposition that has frequently led to imprisonment of HT members. On this subject, Marwa, a 23-year-old member of HT Pakistan, stressed in her interview with the author the multiple dangers and backlash she suffered from being a member of HT in her country of origin.95

Marwa stressed the fact that her father has been to jail several times, where he was abused and tortured. At the moment of the interview (March 12, 2016), Marwa’s father had been gone for a year, after he was taken from his home by the police, and nobody knew what was going to happen to him. Commenting on her father’s situation with a broken heart, Marwa also stated “unfortunately, we are used to seeing him disappear from home [the father] then have him back in very bad conditions...sometimes he might not come back at all” (Marwa, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).

95 Marwa and her family are long-time members of HT Pakistan and she has attended the group’s events since she was a teenager.
Besides Marwa’s personal experience, HT members often post online news concerning HT members’ arrest and violence in several countries, exposing the brutal treatment HT members face in some countries for their beliefs (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2016). In spite of these dangers, HT members are committed to continuing their work in the Muslim world and strongly believe in the power of their ideas. The data collected for this study highlighted the connection between the HT branch operating in Australia and the branch in Pakistan; some ethnically Pakistani members of HT Australia’s leadership often visit Pakistan to support local activists.96

At the same time, HT Australia strongly advocates for the Pakistani branch of the organisation through official institutional channels in Australia (such as the embassy and consulate) to ask for the release of HT activists in Pakistan and to expose their brutal treatment in prison, which includes “sleep deprivation, merciless beatings, forced mind-altering medication and electric shocks” (Badar, 2016).

### 5.3.1.1 Differences with the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-e-Islami

The data collected for this study shows that HT’s method also functions as an important recruitment tool for the organisation and is what pushes Pakistani activists to choose HT over JeI, the main Islamist party in Pakistan and what one would assume to be a more natural choice. While HT promotes a bottom-up approach that begins with a revolution of thought followed by a non-bloody coup to re-establish the caliphate, Mawdudi believed that an Islamic revolution should initiate a process of societal reform within the governance of an Islamic state.

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96 Uthman Badar and Hamzah Qureshi both have Pakistani ancestry.
Hence, Mawdudi’s method is essentially a top-down approach, which emphasises political struggle rather than working on individuals to first “make them perfect Muslims” (Ataman, 2015, p. 63) and then to change society and eventually the entire political system. In Mawdudi’s view, social change happens when political power is seised, which allows the implementation of large reforms. Furthermore, Mawdudi envisaged the rise of an Islamic governance within the structures of Western democracies, assuming that with some significant adjustments the Islamic state would emerge as a “theo-democracy” or a “democratic caliphate” (Ataman, 2015, p. 63; Binder, 1963, p. 91).

Such claims are absolutely *haram* for HT since the two terms (democracy and caliphate) are mutually exclusive. Given these premises and JeI’s rejection of violence, Mawdudi thought that engagement in politics was the main viable path towards re-establishment of the caliphate. For these reasons, JeI became a recognised and influential political party in Pakistan, capable of mobilising the masses around specific issues. At the same time, the group exhibited contradictory behaviour: while advocating for social justice and a pious Islamic ruler, Mawdudi himself became a senior statesman subject to man-made laws (Rahnema, 2008).

JeI’s method is considered by current HT members as too accommodating of *kuffar* politics. Though it strongly criticises the state and the political establishment, JeI still accepts the political process as a viable path to an Islamic state. This mixed attitude accompanied by a top-down approach is what has pushed several individuals away from JeI and towards HT. This is the case of Farah, one of the most prominent female activists of HT Australia:

I have always been political minded since I was a teenager and—before joining the Hizb with my husband 10 years ago—I was a member of the JeI in India. What drove me away from that group was the confusion among several
concepts and stances, which all coexisted together...HT is very different: everything is clear and there is only one stance corresponding to the main plan...the individual is the centre of HT’s actions because it is impossible to change a system from above in a long-lasting way without working on its constitutive elements to make the change stable...and the smallest units of a system are the individuals (Farah, HT Australia, personal communication, March 6, 2016).

Farah’s words stress the two core elements of HT’s method that made HT more attractive than JeI in her eyes: its immutable plan and the bottom-up approach. These two elements also form part of HT’s competitive advantage compared to the MB. For individuals like Farah who long for the caliphate and a reliable actor to lead the Islamic revival in the contemporary world, the stability of HT in terms of method and main goals, made HT a more attractive option than the MB.

HT members criticise the MB for the same reasons, namely that it is too accommodating to kuffar politics. Over the years, the MB has engaged with national governments, created parties, run for elections, and participated in a system which, according to the Hizb, is nothing but corrupt (Huq, 2017). On this subject, the words of Karyme’s (HT Australia) words are very strong:

The MB's political participation in kuffar systems has marked the end of their role as a reform group advocating for Islamic revival...how can they talk about purity, about the need to go back to the sources of Islam and about reforms when they participate in a corrupted system, playing by corrupted rules and sitting in corrupted parliaments? (Karyme, HT Australia, personal communication May 20, 2016).

Karyme expressed disdain for groups like MB who formally stand as Islamic revivalist groups but which also actively participate in a system they consider corrupt. Again, Karyme’s interview points out HT’s rigid stances on many relevant themes such as political participation, which have remained unchanged and have served as a strength. HT members often point out the fact that, unlike
the MB, decades of repression have never altered HT’s method or plan. Moreover, under the umbrella of the MB, there are many different groups.

For instance, the Egyptian Freedom and Justice Party (having a parliamentary setting and calling for reformism) coexists with groups that are considered terror organisations (like Hamas). HT members dismiss the MB and JeI for their involvement in allegedly corrupted systems, for changing their methods and goals, and for compromising with the West. The stability of HT and its “one mind” worldview is something that HT members are proud of and continues to attract new members and support.

5.3.2 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Competitive Advantage: A Detailed Vision of the Caliphate

“Many groups advocate for the caliphate but they have no plan and no idea on what the caliphate should look like once established... not only HT has a plan but it also has a constitution ready” (Sadiqa, HT Australia, personal communication, Mach 6, 2016). The words of Sadiqa, a senior member of HT Australia, illustrate another constitutive element of HT’s competitive advantage over its peer groups, namely HT’s detailed vision of the caliphate. During the interviews, current members of the Hizb stressed the high rationalisation of action of their group based on HT’s thorough understanding of the future Islamic state, differentiating the caliphate from kuffar models.

HT members often criticise both the MB and JeI for not having a clear vision of the caliphate and for not producing specific literature on how an Islamic state should function. This is the case of Farah (HT Australia):

We can’t advocate for something we do not even have clear in our mind...what kind of caliphate do they [the MB and JeI] want? It seems to me that what other Islamic revivalist groups advocate for is more of a blurred image drawn from Western parliamentary democracies (Farah, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).
This “blurred image” linked to the Western system of government, mentioned by Farah in her interview with the author, is linked to some particular aspects of the MB and JeI that deeply differentiate these two groups from HT. The MB consider the re-establishment of the caliphate as a secondary element: they have always been more concerned with the diffusion of Islamic morals within the society by providing education, healthcare, and other welfare services (Ataman, 2015; Høigilt, 2014; Vidino, 2010). The MB formally advocate for the Islamic state but also think that the Islamic state can take several forms, such as a parliamentary democracy, and see no contradiction between Islam and the “government of people”.

Mawdudi’s caliphate appears to include many Western elements. Although he did not write any draft constitution on the political apparatus of the future Islamic state, the founder of JeI borrowed Western concepts, such as the vision of the Imam as an elected president and the establishment of a parliament and an independent judiciary power (Ataman, 2015). Conversely, HT leadership attempted to map out all aspects regarding the future caliphate and its functioning, not only on a theoretical and conceptual level through the works of An-Nabhani, but also by drafting a specific constitution for the Islamic state in 1979.

This document confirms the holistic approach adopted by HT, where political ideology and religion are deeply intertwined. This constitution has been a source of strength for HT, but few know that it was not originally written by An-Nabhani. Instead, he drew much inspiration from the political system elaborated by the 13th century Muslim author al-Mawardi, who was in turn inspired by the legal codes of Byzantium and Persia (Husain, 2007). Nonetheless, HT’s
constitution is important to HT members and is held up as evidence of the rationality and credibility of the organisation compared to its competitors, especially the MB and JeI.

The first version of the “Proposed Constitution for an Islamic State” was issued right after the creation of the Party (in 1953), and an English version appears as an appendix in An-Nabhani’s book *The Islamic State* (1998). The version available today is not the same as the original 1953 version because it was amended during the period of the establishment of the Islamic state in Iran (1979). At that time, members of the Hizb were very enthusiastic and advised the Iranian government to use HT’s constitution as a way to put into practice an effective version of the Islamic state, although in the end it was not accepted.

Despite the Iranian refusal, HT's constitution continued to be a point of pride for the group since it “include[ed] a combination of elements all devoted to exalting Islam, rule of law, accountability and social justice” (Sadiqa, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016). Sadiqa’s words again mirror the common opinion of HT members of the constitution, which made the group stand out as the “only organisation proposing an effective and real model of the Islamic state” (Mohammad, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016).

HT's constitution is organised into the following 14 parts: General Rules, the Ruling System, the Khalifah, Deputy Assistant, Amir of Jihad, The Armed Forces, The Judiciary, The Governors of the Provinces, The Administrative System, Assembly of the Ummah, The Social System, The Economic System, Education Policy, and Foreign Policy (An-Nabhani, 1998). As suggested by the titles of the sections, HT has set up specific provisions regulating all important
aspect of life within the caliphate. The major role played by Islam is stated in the first part of the constitution (General Rules) in Article 1 and clearly states:

Islamic ‘Aqeedah is the foundation of the state’s constitution and laws. Therefore, nothing is permitted to exist in the State’s structure, system, accountability, or any other aspect connected with the State that does not take the Islamic ‘Aqeedah as its source” (An-Nabhani, 1998, p. 240).

As a result, the opening is very clear: the foundation is Islam and only Islam, and every single aspect of the state should develop accordingly. This first article serves as a guarantee of a just system of government for HT members since “knowing Islam as the basis of the state is something that reassures us because our existence will not be regulated by man-made laws but by what God has established” (Farah, Sadiqa and Mahmoud, HT Australia, personal communication, April, 2016). HT members strongly believe that everything that was divinely established is good and balanced. During the interviews, all members quoted examples from the constitution allowing non-Muslims to live according to their religion and practices (within the limits set by Islam).

Moreover, the constitution also forbids torture and brutality, which differentiates HT’s caliphate from that of ISIS.97 In the second part of HT’s constitution—concerning the Ruling System—eight institutions are identified as the basis for the Islamic state, namely the caliph (khalifah), deputy assistant (Mu’awin Tafweedh executive assistant (Mu’awin Tanfeedh), commander of Jihad (Amir of Jihad), judiciary (Al Qada), governors (Wulah), administrative system (Masaliduh Dawlah), and assembly of the ummah (in Arabic Majlis al-Ummah) (An-Nabhani, 1998, p. 243). An-Nabhani also illustrated the tasks and responsibilities of each of these actors as specifically as he could.98 The concept of accountability that emerged from analysis of this text was particularly

98 See Articles 16-17 (An-Nabhani, 1998, p. 244).
interesting, according to which all people occupying a position of power are responsible for all citizens equally and must not discriminate among groups.

On this subject, HT’s constitution establishes that “non-Muslim citizens have the right to voice their complaints for any injustices or misapplications of the Islamic rules upon them by the rulers” (An-Nabhani, 1998, p. 243). Moreover, the multi-party system, articulated in Article 21 of the constitution, is something that HT members are very proud of because it distinguishes their Islamic state from the Islamic dictatorships characterising many Muslim countries today and boldly declares these governments “kuffar and far from the Islamic ‘Aqeedah” (Mahmoud, HT Australia, personal communication, April 14, 2016).

The constitution then addresses elements concerning the social and economic system. The specific provisions of HT’s caliphate call for gender segregation and to preserve the role of women as “mothers and home makers”. Thus, the constitution guarantees the same rights for men and women but distinguishes different gender roles. Differing significantly from Saudi Wahabism, HT allows caliphate women to “conduct all of life’s affairs” including participation in politics and working as public servants. The only limitation imposed concerns governmental positions, which women are barred from.

While prohibiting seductive dress and make-up, HT’s constitution appears to be open minded in its conception of marriage as a set of mutual responsibilities between husband and wife, where the husband’s primary role is to take care of rather than rule over his wife. The Marxist/Leninist influence on An-Nabhani’s thought is evident in the regulations of the economic system. In

100 See Article 111 (An-Nabhani, 1998, p. 262).
HT’s caliphate, all individuals are able to meet their basic needs, and the state has the primary role of distributing funds to citizens, ensuring an equitable distribution of resources.  

For this reason, capitalistic companies and monopolies are absolutely forbidden, together with some other practices like usury, gambling, and squandering. While allowing private ownership, the Hizbi caliphate advocates for a strong welfare state based on solidarity, making it a quasi-communist economic system. For instance, HT’s constitution establishes that salaries will not be determined by the “knowledge or qualifications of the employee” but by the “value of his/her work or the benefit expected by the employee”.

The document also defines specific social responsibilities for the Islamic state, such as the public duty to give adequate support for those who have no funds and no job and to provide housing for the disabled. These regulations are often discussed by HT members at their events and in their publications in order to attract disillusioned Muslims (and non-Muslims) who long for social justice and a welfare system to support them in a world that “looks more and more to be neglecting the needs of the individual” (Ayda, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).

The idea of a caliph and a caliphate apparatus caring for every individual is for many a very attractive aspect of the group. In addition, the fact that this intention is not tacit but written down in a constitution makes HT even more credible and gives it a significant advantage over its competitors. Lastly, HT’s constitution also addresses education and foreign policy. HT’s rationalisation for

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its actions, as having and pursuing a clear goal, is here highlighted by the provision of a state school curriculum, reminiscent of some authoritarian regimes, such as Italian Fascism, whose primary goal was to create a “Fascist personality”; similarly, the main aim of the HT’s caliphate is to create an “Islamic personality.”

For this reason, the constitution establishes that Islamic culture and Arabic are to be taught at all levels of education and classes would be structured according to strict gender segregation. While keeping the strict attitude that all schools should cooperate to achieve the state’s main goal, namely the creation of Islamic personalities, the constitution also makes it clear that education should be provided freely, as an essential right for all citizens. This vision opposes what HT members often label as “the elitist Western view” that private education providers are better, since they are characterised by restricted access and high annual fees.

By establishing these regulations, HT aims to emerge as a “justice promoter” and an equal opportunity provider by promoting a model based on the “care of people, on their growth and development both individually and as a community” (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016). Furthermore, one of the caliphate’s foreign policy goals would be “protecting Muslims against the former colonisers and oppressors” (Bsis, 2015; Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2016b; Qureshi, 2016). Due to force majeure, the state’s responsibility to protect the individual, no party, group, or organisation within

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109 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
the caliphate would be allowed to have any sort of autonomous relationship with a foreign state.\textsuperscript{110}

Everything must be conducted at the central level to assure the consistency of foreign relations with Islamic tenets and to make sure that the aim of the caliphate (to carry the \textit{da’wah} to other people) would remain unchanged. HT members are also proud to have a very clear idea on foreign policy compared to their competitors. The constitution also provides instructions on the freedom of movement for people coming from four different groups of states: people living under the \textit{khilafah}, people not living under the \textit{khilafah} from regions that have agreements with the Islamic state, citizens from the former colonial states, and citizens of belligerent states.\textsuperscript{111}

People belonging to the first group would be allowed to travel anywhere in the caliphate as if it were a single state, similar to the Schengen Agreement within the European Union.\textsuperscript{112} The analysis of these foreign policy regulations is also very useful for getting a full sense of HT’s vision of the caliphate. The presence of different states within its borders tells us that it would be similar to a confederation, where single states (in this case, \textit{wilayaat}) would still keep their specificities as provinces but would be united under the caliph.

Furthermore, the fact that HT’s caliphate would have treaties and agreements with other states outside the Islamic state leads to two important conclusions: first, the aim of the Hizb is not to subjugate the world under the power of Islam within a global caliphate and, secondly, HT’s Islamic state would maintain peaceful and collaborative relationships with other non-Muslim states.

\textsuperscript{110} See Article 177 (An-Nabhani, 1998, p. 274).
\textsuperscript{111} See article 184 (An-Nabhani, 1998, p. 275).
\textsuperscript{112} The Schengen Agreement became effective on March 26, 1995. It establishes the Schengen Area in Europe where border checks have largely been abolished (The Schengen Area and Cooperation, 1985).
These two conclusions provide insights into what some HT members have defined as “the anti-caliphate paranoia” and about the significant differences between HT’s caliphate and Al-Baghdadi’s one.\textsuperscript{113}

Going back the subject of freedom of movement, citizens of the second group of states (with whom the caliphate has some sort of agreement) would be able to travel within HT’s caliphate using only their identity card, with no passport required, like the citizens of the Islamic state within partner countries.\textsuperscript{114} Despite the friendly attitude towards the aforementioned group of states group of states, HT’s Islamic state would adopt severe restrictions towards the citizens of the third and fourth groups of states.

The former colonial states (such as Britain, France, the US, and Russia) are considered dangerous for the caliphate according to the constitution. Therefore, their citizens will be required to have both a passport and a visa to enter and travel within the caliphate territory. Citizens from belligerent states (such as Israel) will face the most severe restrictions and will be banned from entering the Islamic state.

\textbf{5.3.3 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Competitive Advantage: The Organisation’s Consistency over Time}

“Consistency is an essential element...a group cannot be considered reliable if it is not consistent overtime” (Mohammad, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016). Mohammad’s words introduce the third constitutive element of HT competitive advantage: the organisation’s consistency. While many actors, such as national politicians or Muslims outside

\textsuperscript{113} From the interviews with current HT Australia members, it emerged that HT sees a widespread “anti-caliphate paranoia” in the West. Members of the group see most Westerners today as enemies of HT because of Western fear and paranoia that Islamist groups like HT will one day colonise the West and impose Islamic law there too.

\textsuperscript{114} See article 184 (An-Nabhani, 1998, p. 275).
of HT, often criticise HT for its rigidity compared to other Islamist groups, which participate in the political process, HT’s rigidity was an appealing characteristic for all the members the author interviewed.

All interviewees, like Mohammed, proudly defined their organisation as stable and unaffected by change in any substantial way: “we are well aware of social, political, and economic changes of modern times but our aim and methodology do not change and never will” (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016). What Khalida stressed here perfectly epitomises the position of HT members throughout the history of the organisation: while being very politically minded and engaging in all the most pressing contemporary debates, HT members do not change their positions on salient themes, such as political participation or the re-establishment of the caliphate (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2017a).

According to members, these positions are the essential characteristics of HT, and to change them would mean “alter[ing] the nature and the very essence of HT” (Nuha, HT Australia, personal communication, March 13, 2016). While this rigidity may be considered a disadvantage by some Muslims who see modernisation as an essential requirement for the success and appeal of a group, members of the Hizb represent that subgroup of people who look at structural rigidity as a great advantage for the organisation’s effectiveness. In fact, the Hizbis’ main argument here is that a group should be able to embrace modernisation, using it to improve its performance by adopting new tools, such as new technologies, but it should never let it alter its personality, in this case the “Hizbi personality”.

As it will be discussed further in Chapter Six, HT conveys strong organisational values and builds a strong group identity, which bind the
individual to the group and assures the “same mind” among the several branches around the world. HT’s rationalisation of action—understood as the agent’s understanding of the grounds of the activities performed—is widely applied by HT at both the group and individual levels. The organisation devotes a significant amount of attention to individual members, familiarising them with HT’s main ideological tenets, through a continuous process of acculturation in which each member develops a personal understanding of the group’s actions and motivations.

For this reason, the study of HT’s official adopted literature is a constant feature of HT membership that begins as soon as one joins. In addition, new members are required to pledge an oath, stating that they are ready to adopt everything that HT calls for, even if they are not fully convinced of the validity of HT’s arguments (Wali, 2013, 2016). The need to always agree with HT leadership has assured the group a high level of consistency over time and has made it appealing to those people looking for a stable and invariable advocate for Muslims. Unlike HT, the rationalisation of action of the MB and JeI has taken various forms over the years, and both groups have changed several of their positions over time. Three of these changes are discussed below: the use of violence, the vision of nationalism, and political participation.

5.3.3.1 The Use of Violence
HT has always presented itself as an “intellectual group”, rejecting violence and terror acts. Even more recently, after the ISIS terror attacks in Europe, senior HT members have emphasised that they do not support violent organisations, describing individuals perpetrating brutalities as unrepresentative of the Muslim world and their din. On this subject, Nazreen Nawaz - senior and
prominent member of HT Britain – clearly depicts the terrorism of ISIS as not part of the *ummah*, but as a result of “misguided individuals and organisations”, who harm innocents:

I apologise that in the absence of the true *Khilafah Rashidah*, many of your citizens have come to view the great *din* of Islam through the violent actions of a few misguided individuals and organisations, rather than being able to witness its sublime values, mercy, justice, sincere care for humanity, and high regard for the sanctity of human life through the laws and actions of a state which rules upon it comprehensively... as a Muslim, this is what I will apologise for...I will not apologise for the actions of a few individuals or groups whose acts of violence against innocents does not represent my *din* or my *ummah* (Nawaz, 2015).

Nawaz’s opinion is widely shared among HT Australia members interviewed by the author, who harshly condemned terror groups for disrespecting the “sacredness of life” and the role of God in deciding “who dies and who lives”, and many quoted the *Qur’an*: “there shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion” (*Qur’an* 2:256). Given these ideas, HT’s condemnation of terrorism has always been accompanied by a direct attack against Western governments, which are deemed responsible for the emergence of terror groups.

As mentioned previously, HT members have no hesitation in presenting terrorism as a natural outcome of centuries of Western occupation of Muslim lands and and military, economic, and political subjugation of the *ummah*. As highlighted by Nazreen Nawaz’s statements, HT’s condemnation of terrorism is always followed by harsh criticism of Western foreign policy, which is used as an introductory argument to speak about the glory of the caliphate and the prosperous life all individuals will enjoy under it. Nazreen Nawaz pointed out the group’s emphasis on “sincere care for humanity”, which is regarded by HT

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115 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
116 See Chapter Four.
members as one of the unique prerogatives of the Islamic state, grounded in “the
divine law of Allah (swt) who cares for the single individual.

Therefore, so will the Islamic state and the caliph” (Aysha, HT Australia, personal communication, May 22, 2016). Given these premises, HT members have always maintained “one mind” even when dealing with such delicate topics as the use of violence. The unity of HT members as a shared intentionality, deriving from the same ideological sources as its rationalisation for action, has prevented the organisation from experiencing significant differences of opinion as well as the emergence of more extreme factions within the group.

If somebody from HT were to develop more violent inclinations, as in the case of Omar Bakri, he or she would be immediately expelled from the organisation.\footnote{Omar Bakri’s position in HT Britain was previously explored in Chapter Four.} The same cannot be said for the MB, who have split into several cells over the years and today is barely connected to the central Egyptian leadership (Ataman, 2015). The lack of centralisation in the group has fostered several trends within the MB, allowing the rise of cells that are very different from one another. The significant differences among the cells are mirrored by the different attitudes they have towards violence.

Unlike HT, the MB have always accepted the use of violent means to achieve political goals. For instance, in December 1948, the MB’s secret apparatus killed the Egyptian Prime Minister Mahmud Fahmi al-Nuqrashi to counter the opposition by the government (Rahnema, 2008). This event paved the way for several violent retaliations by both the group and the Egyptian national authorities, leading to the assassination of Al-Banna in 1949 and Qutb in 1966.\footnote{Sayyid Qutb was one of the most prominent members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, an international symbol of Islamic activism and resistance against foreign Western occupation of Muslim lands. His masterpiece, \textit{Milestones} was first published in 1964. \textit{Milestones} is a manifesto}
Executed under President Nasser’s rule, Qutb strongly believed that violence and martyrdom were essential to re-establishing the true Islamic state and that the da’wah alone was not enough (Qutb, 1978).

In addition to the remarkable focus on education and social works characterising the MB all over the world, Qubt’s ideas have produced operative branches of the group that are considered terror organisations. A well-known example is Hamas, founded by the MB in 1987 after the beginning of the First Intifada to fight Israel and its occupation of Palestine. Over the years, Hamas has perpetrated frequent suicide attacks against Israel, affecting the civilian population. At the same time, and in perfect harmony with the MB’s attention to social programmes, Hamas runs many support programmes for the people of the Gaza Strip and has built hospitals, schools, and libraries throughout the area; as a result, Hamas has achieved widespread support among locals (Giorgi, 2006).

Jamaat-e-Islami is also a very heterogeneous group with multiple coexisting organisations operating under the umbrella of JeI. For instance, in Pakistan, there are over a dozen organisations connected to the JeI, but only two of them are active through political channels. Four organisations are violent groups perpetrating violent acts and one represents a union of religious scholars (Gul, 2010). This significant variety in just one country is a marker of the many trends existing within the same group. In addition to the aforementioned groups, JeI also includes a significant number of youth and student organisations operating throughout South East Asia.

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of Islamic activism written during Qutb’s 10-year imprisonment in Nasser’s Egypt, which culminated in Qutb’s execution by hanging in 1966.

The First Intifada is the name given to the first Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The first uprising lasted from 1987 until 1991.
While it is fully involved in the political scene in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, JeI has adopted strong pro-Taliban attitudes, cultivating links with Al-Qaeda and strongly opposing interventions in the global War on Terror (Nazar, 2016). The different attitudes and positions of JeI branches even within the same country suggest a high degree of fragmentation and a low rationalisation of action, given the different intentions of the branches and the individuals leading them. In fact, Jamaat-e-Islami is also a very heterogeneous group with multiple coexisting trends, far from HT’s “one mind” approach.

At present, there is a wide number of organisations operating under the big umbrella family of JeI. For instance, in Pakistan, there are over a dozen organisations connected to the JeI, but only two of them are active through political channels. Four organisations are jihadi groups perpetrating violent acts and one represents a union of religious scholars (Gul, 2010). This significant variety in just one country is a marker of the many trends existing within the same group. Besides the aforementioned groups, JeI also includes a significant number of youth and student organisations operating throughout South East Asia.

While being fully involved in the political scene in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, JeI has adopted strong pro-Taliban attitudes, cultivating links with Al-Qaeda and strongly opposing military intervention from the global War on Terror (Nazar, 2016). The different attitudes and positions of JeI branches even within the same country suggest a high degree of fragmentation, revealing a low rationalisation of action, given the different intentions of the branches and the individuals leading them.
5.3.3.2 Nationalism and Political Participation

Another unique aspect of HT is the group’s consistent stance on nationalism and political participation, which are deeply intertwined. As discussed in Chapter Four, HT has always fought against the concept of the modern state, depicting it as a Western construction aimed at dividing Muslims and weakening the ummah (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996; Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017d). HT members have remained faithful to An-Nabhani’s position on the illegitimacy of Westphalian states in the West and even more so in Muslim regions.

In Muslim regions, HT members argue that all matters should be ruled by Islamic law (shari’ah) with an Islamic system of government (khilafah). For this reason, since the 1950s, HT has been calling nationalism a “haram and dangerous ideology for Muslims, fostering people’s solidarity towards a wrong system of government, idolising the idea of nation instead of worshipping God” (Noura, HT Australia, personal communication, April 9, 2016). Noura’s words point out the notion of a “wrong system of government”, which is not legitimate in the eyes of HT, since only the Caliphate can assure the rule of shari’ah.

HT members do not recognise the Western division of the world into nation-states and still uses the Ottoman caliphate terminology to refer to geographical locations. For example, HT members use the term wilaya (province) to identify a territory, which can correspond to a nation or a region.120

The uncompromising refusal to recognise the concepts of nation and the modern state also entail HT’s refusal to directly participate in the political process. As highlighted in Chapter Four, HT prohibits its members from voting and running

120 See the division of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s branches between “Muslim Lands” and the “West” on the official Central Media Office website (http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.info/en/index.php/leaflet/hizb-ut-tahrir.html).
for elections. It also prohibits individuals from forming political parties in what is for them an “illegitimate kuffar system.”

While keeping up to date on the most pressing political issues by publishing daily news commentary and providing lectures and talks on the most relevant national and international matters, the Hizb has not given in to the temptation to become a political party; however, both MB and JeI have become political forces in several countries and have participated in the Western system of the modern state, while advocating for the implementation of shari‘a. As stated above, while occasionally pointing out the need for a caliphate to re-establish order and peace in the Middle East, neither the MB nor JeI shied away from playing a protagonist role in national politics.

In fact, the MB has not opposed the concept of nation states and has even declared itself in Egypt as a “popular national movement” (Høigilt, 2014, p. 514). Not only has the MB established several political parties to take an active role in the decision-making process but it has also promoted a concept of “national Islamic economy.” This concept was firstly introduced by the founder of the MB, Al-Banna. He believed that economics was an essential element for the revival of Egypt, and therefore it was crucial to fight foreign exploitation of local companies.

Al-Banna called not only for the nationalisation of Egyptian companies owned by Western investors but also established businesses directly owned by the MB, such as a spinning and weaving company, a commercial and engineering work company, and an Islamic press, which were confiscated by the government.

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121 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
122 “Concepts of Islamic national economy” were often mentioned by MB members during Egypt’s political crisis in 2012 and 2013 (Joint Statement of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Freedom and Justice Party, 2012).
a few years after they were established (Al-Abdin, 1989) With regard to political participation, the MB has always struggled to be part of the political scene and to foster an Islamic revival in the countries they operate in through reforms. Towards the goal of reviving Islam in society and the state, MB members founded several, highly-supported political parties throughout the Middle East and the Muslim world.

Some examples of MB-sponsored political parties include the Freedom and Justice Party (in Egypt), Iraqi Islamist Party, Kurdistan Islamic Union (Iraq), Islamic Action Front (Jordan), Hadas (Kuwait), Movement of Society for Peace (Algeria), Justice and Construction Party (Libya), Justice and Development Party (Morocco), and Ennahda Movement (Tunisia). Al-Banna’s desire for nationalism and political participation was also shared by the founder of JeI, Mawdudi, who supported Indian nationalism and the Indian National Congress Party, the first modern nationalistic movement in British India, established in 1885.

In spite of his initial excitement for nationalism, Mawdudi quickly became sceptical of it. The turning point was the fall of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924, when he began to think that nationalistic sentiments undermined the unity of Muslims globally, causing the fall of the khilafah (Ataman, 2015). In line with HT’s conceptions of nationalism, these new convictions led Mawdudi to increasingly dislike nationalist groups, but he continued his involvement in politics. The JeI enjoys a high degree of support in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, and has engaged with the electoral process in these countries since the 1950s. In countries like Pakistan, JeI has become an influential national political party. It has formed alliances with other groups to reinforce its power such as the army, which due to JeI’s influence adopted an Islamic code of conduct (Iqtidar, 2011).
5.4 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Motivations for Actions

A group’s motivations for actions is the third agency variable used in this chapter to analyse HT’s uniqueness. While MB, JeI, and HT all aim to return to the “Golden Age of Islam” that will end the subjugation of Muslims and halt societal decline, their actions are differ significantly (Wahid, 2016; Women & Shariah, 2017). As stressed in the previous sections, the MB and JeI have changed their positions over time and have participated in the political process to Islamise society through reforms. Conversely, the HT has not changed its action or motivations for action since 1953. Yet, the three Islamist groups share the conviction that the need to re-establish the caliphate is driven by three main reasons.

First, the khilafah is the only way to fulfil a crucial religious obligation for Muslims, allowing them to live within a system based on shari‘a. The MB, JeI, and HT all consider shari‘a the only law that allows men and women to live a good life and to prosper on earth, since it was divinely provided. Moreover, they all consider European colonial expansion in the Arab world to be the main cause for the fall of the caliphate. Secondly, the re-establishment of the caliphate is considered the only way to prevent the falling-off experienced by the ummah after kuffar influence and contamination.

In Islamist discourses, the influence of Western colonisers in the Muslim world produced a gradual secularisation of societies through the introduction of kuffar thoughts, which contradict Islamic principles, triggering the ummah’s stray from “God’s true path (Sirat-ı Mustakim)” in favour of the progressive adoption of un-Islamic practices and values (Ataman, 2015, p. 46). All three groups have boldly spoken not only against Western colonial powers but also
against Muslim rulers, who have been corrupted by the kuffar and have started leading their populations in a manner inconsistent with shari’a.

In line with what the founders of the three groups believed decades ago, current members have been persuaded that the abandonment of Islamic principles has damaged the ummah globally:

The ummah is like the human body: if one part is suffering, the whole body is in pain...and, when Islam is not correctly implemented, Muslims unavoidably suffer” (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016).

This powerful comment was made by one of the senior members of HT Australia in her interview with the author and is typical of the position of the three groups compared in this chapter. The common thought among the groups is that the ummah is suffering because of the bad choices made by people in power who have neglected the divine law. Therefore, the MB, JeI, and HT all have the main goal of re-establishing the caliphate, which they see as urgent and absolutely necessary because of the discomfort the ummah is experiencing:

The unified call for the khilafah was awe-inspiring, humbling and mesmerizing. From all around the world, from the rich to the poor, from the famous former Indonesian rock star Hari Mukti, to your everyday Muslim, there was only one thing on the minds of the people at the conference, and that was the khilafah (5 Pillars, 2013).

The demands of the “Arab Spring” in the last few years were a manifestation of the ummah’s resistance and perseverance. Their cries of “As-Sha’b yureed isqaat an-Nizam”, “the people demand the fall of the regime!” were not only chanted in the streets and squares of the Arab world, but echoed throughout the Muslim world (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017a).

You can see the massive change in the Muslim world today, the Indonesia conference (100.000 attendees) is the perfect example of the largest conference supporting khilafah in history... also many recent studies and surveys—such as the one of the University of Maryland in the US (April 2007)—published a report that said that 70% of people in the Muslim world would support a strict application of shariah and the unification of the Muslim states into one, i.e. the caliphate...this is something inevitable (Nawaz, 2009).

As stressed by these three extracts from HT official communique, textual posts, and videos, the organisation is constantly engaged in producing visual and textual material to claim that the ummah throughout the world is longing for the
caliphate and is deeply unhappy about the political, social, and economic status quo fostered by capitalism and Western powers. Nevertheless, while HT advocates daily for the caliphate, orienting all its actions towards this goal, the MB and JeI have slowly adapted to the Western political context and campaign as a political party from within the system.

While HT regularly organises Khilafah Conferences around the world to familiarise Muslims with the glory of the caliphate, its two competitors appear to have moved the caliphate to the bottom of their political agenda and instead campaign for reforms and social justice within what HT members call a “kuffar system”. Although there are common motivations for the actions of HT and its two competitors, the importance of their various motivations differs, and these differences determine different attitudes. More specifically HT has never changed its priorities, which is a direct result of its unchanging motivations for action; however, the MB and JeI have gone through several changes over the decades.

Apart from some minor adjustments, mostly dictated by national opportunities and restrictions in which the group operates, HT has not changed its motivations, goals, or methods, and as argued above, it has been this rigidity that has been one of the core elements constituting its competitive advantage. The desire not to change can be better explained by the notion of a “base security system” (Cohen, 1989). When studying agents’ behaviour, Giddens borrowed concepts from ego-psychologists to better understand why agents continue to reiterate daily social routines.

The base security system is a useful idea for this purpose and is defined as “a set of unconscious mechanisms to guard against anxiety-provoking stimuli

123 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
including mistrust, shame or doubt and also guilt” (Cohen, 1989, p. 52; Giddens, 1984, p. 57). Interestingly, the base security system is connected to unconscious motivations, which foster the individual’s engagement in quotidian routines as a way to control anxiety, regarded by Giddens as the central motivational source of human behaviour. While HT members today do not have the same information or pressures of HT members in the 1950s, they have continued to act in a similar way across time and space.

This daily engagement of leaders and activists in routine activities to re-establish the caliphate can certainly be regarded as a consequence of the base security system characterising the life of HT members. After years of training in the group’s tenets and ideology, the individual develops the unconscious belief that working for the caliphate is the right thing to do for Muslims wherever they are. As discussed above, HT members strongly believe that the re-establishment of the caliphate is a religious obligation and that they will receive a divine reward for their efforts towards this goal.

Therefore, the kind of daily activities they engage in are enough to provide them with a sense of security, deriving from being righteous before God, which significantly reduces their anxiety, shame, and guilt because they are persuaded that they are fulfilling God’s will.

**Conclusion**

The present chapter examined the specific elements that make HT attractive for certain segments of Muslim communities in the West vis-à-vis its competitors. Through comparing the group with the Muslim Brotherhood (MB)

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124 HT members’ culturing process to the organisation’s tenets will be further analysed in Chapter Six.
125 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
and Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), the present chapter analysed HT’s uniqueness by using three agency variables: reflexive monitoring, rationalisation of action, and motivations for actions. While reflexive monitoring was useful for elucidating the common ground between the MB, HT and JeI, rationalisation of action and motivations for actions were used to identify the main differences among the three Islamic revivalist groups.

The present analysis concluded that HT’s rigidity—best expressed by the group’s rationalisation and motivation for actions—was the main element constituting HT’s competitive advantage over the MB and JeI. More specifically, the group’s unchanging method (following the steps outlined by An-Nabhani in the 1950s), its detailed vision of the caliphate (supported by a constitution), and HT’s stable premises for actions (with the caliphate as the group’s number one priority) conveyed an image of HT as a stable and reliable actor, advocating for a global Islamic revival.

This HT-sponsored image is an attractive element for a number of Muslims in the West, who decide to join HT rather than JeI, the MB or even other violent groups because of HT’s ability to stand as an ideal arena where members feel safe and fulfilled in their role as zealous Muslims. Furthermore, HT emerges as a stable group through which Muslims can oppose Western (cultural, social and political) domination, not through engaging in violent acts but through a war of ideas based on the view of the caliphate as a panacea for the hardship experienced by the ummah in the world.

As stressed in this chapter, HT advocates for the caliphate and has a draft constitution ready, which provides useful information on what kind of caliphate it envisages. Since this is the first study presenting an overview of HT’s constitution, this analysis was both useful and necessary for a full understanding
of HT’s competitive advantage over the MB and JeI. The focus on HT’s proposed constitution for the caliphate provided insights into the group’s clear vision of the caliphate and identified how it differs from ISIS’s version of the Islamic state. HT members’ strong conviction of the caliphate as the best system of government is an essential tenet of HT’s organisational culture, which is explored in the following chapter.
This chapter argues that HT’s appeal to Muslims in the West is also determined by the organisation’s ability to behave as a structure for its members. The connection of HT with structures is inherent in the nature of structures as “some kind of patterning of social relations”, usually referring to the ensemble of rules, conventions, institutions, procedures, and resources individuals are subject to, which constrain and enable their agency (Giddens, 1984, p. 17). Therefore, a structure is a set of external constraints, which dictate the agents’ behaviours; these constraints can be rules, norms, and values which “enter in the constitution of the agent and social practices” (Giddens, 1985, p.5).

Given the well-defined ideology of HT, and its capacity to produce rules, control behaviours, identify priorities, and create macro-categories along the dichotomous line of what is “right/good” and what is “wrong/bad”, the present chapter examines HT’s role as a structure and how this impacts its members.
Specifically, this chapter illustrates HT’s capacity to provide meaning and a new identity for its members, while fostering long-term loyalties. Unfolding the analysis on the agent-structure debate, HT is compared to specific kind of structures, namely transnational corporations.

This comparison yielded significant findings, such as an understanding of the organisational culture and values as the key elements used by the group to create a new organisational identity for members and to influence their behaviour in multiple fields. This chapter also reveals the specific strategy used by HT to acculturate its members to new values and meanings sponsored by the group, here referred to as the “Shock, Demolish and Rebuild Strategy”. After examining the way HT creates a new group identity for its members, this chapter reveal three mechanisms used by the group to foster long-term membership: the internalisation of ‘Aqeedah, self-efficacy, and positive intergroup differentiation.

This chapter shows how HT, behaving as a structure, works as an ideal arena for its members, where they feel safe and fulfilled. The members, espousing HT’s tenets, ideology and goals, rarely leave the group, instead, they act as recruiters for new members, sponsoring HT as a unique arena where Muslims can expose the evils of the West, advocate for the caliphate and fight for their rights without using violent methods.

6.1 Hizb ut-Tahrir as a Structure: Behaving as an Organisation

Acting as a specific kind of structure—an organisation—HT familiarises its members with its ideology, main tenets, and goals. By exposing members and new recruits to a continuous learning process, HT aims to produce a growing sense of belonging to the group. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the comparison between HT and transnational corporations is not only useful for
enriching the analysis of HT’s role as a structure, but it is also beneficial for uncovering specific elements that determine HT’s appeal to Muslims in the West.

As highlighted by Jones (2007) in his study of transnational corporations as organisations, corporate leadership is strongly committed to fostering employees’ emotional and intellectual attachment to the corporation. This attachment benefits the corporation because, as soon as employees become familiar with the corporate culture and practices, they begin to see themselves as part of an organisational system that regulates their behaviour and choices. This process of progressive attachment of the employees to the corporation is essentially determined by the values conveyed.

Values are “general criteria, standards or guiding principles that people use to determine what kinds of behaviours, events, situations or outcomes are desirable or undesirable” (Jones, 2007, p. 178). Within the broad category of values, organisations emphasise terminal values and instrumental values. Terminal values relate to actors’ goals, which serve as guiding principles for their actions, such as profitability, excellence, and responsibility. Instrumental values are modes of behaviour an organisation advocates for, such as respect for authority and tradition, hard work, and productivity (Michael et al., 2002).

Together, terminal and instrumental values determine the “organisation’s culture” (Jones, 2007, p. 178). The latter is therefore the outcome of the organisation’s goals combined with the conduct encouraged by the organisation to achieve these goals. Instrumental values are ideally conceived to help the organisation to achieve its terminal goals. For instance, a corporation like Apple, whose culture exhibits the terminal value of innovativeness, might achieve this through the instrumental values of hard work and creativity.
Since all members of the organisation should have a clear understanding of the organisational culture, the organisation establishes specific norms and rules useful for developing the instrumental values the organisation has adopted. For example, the norm of being kind to co-workers certainly encourages a helpful attitude among employees (Jones, 2007). Finally, it should be emphasised that most organisational values are not written down, instead they exist through “norms, beliefs, assumptions, and ways of thinking and acting that people within an organisation use to relate to each other and to the outsiders” (Jones, 2007, p. 179).

Therefore, once the individual becomes a member of the organisation, (s)he will be influenced by senior members’ conduct, beliefs, and ways of addressing problems, which initiates a process of learning these unwritten norms. As a result, through a process of continuous acculturation, members of the organisation internalise the organisational culture, whose constitutive values not only drive their behaviour within the organisation but also outside, as the values become part of their worldview and thus affect their interpretation of reality.

6.2 When the Organisation’s Culture Determines Long-Term Social Identity

Once it is fully embraced by the individual, the organisational culture controls members’ behaviours and helps form a new encompassing identity referred to here as a “social identity”. Social identity derives from “the persons’ knowledge that they belong to a certain group together with some emotional value and significance to them of this group membership” (Tajfel, 1972, p. 72). Belonging to a specific group (or organisation) has a significant emotional impact
on the individual, and the more the organisation works to strengthen the organisational culture, the longer the individual’s membership will last.

Behaving as structures, organisations sets the boundaries of agents’ actions (through specific norms and values), while determining the agent’s interpretation of reality. As mentioned above, by conveying a new social identity to its members, organisations ensure long-lasting membership. While implementing specific strategies to foster *fidelisation*, which differ from organisation to organisation, two expedients are widely used by organisations to foster long term membership among their affiliates, namely self-efficacy and the positive intergroup differentiation (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Guan & So, 2016; Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Zimmerman, 2014).

The two aspects are tightly connected. They both ensure that the process of categorisation takes place as soon as the individual becomes part of the organisation. Self-efficacy is defined as “the conviction that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the outcomes” (Bandura, 1977, p. 193; Guan & So, 2016, p. 590). Strong categorisations—such as the HT-sponsored labels of “true Muslims”, “caliphate supporters”, and “educators of masses”—promote the belief that membership is the most effective way to achieve their goals.

Since “people are motivated by the need to be efficacious in their actions” (Abrams & Hogg, 1990, p. 8), the categorisations promoted by the organisation impact the way their self-image and self-conception are measured: the more the organisation is perceived as just, reliable, stable, and effective by the individual, the more (s)he will enhance his/her self-conception and self-image and have more incentives to remain within the organisation (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Oakes

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226 The concept of “fidelisation” is also borrowed from the corporate world, where it means to develop loyalty to a brand or company (Oliver, 1999).
& Turner, 1980). The categorisation process produced by the organisational culture also impacts members’ perception of the in-group, which is here referred to as “positive intergroup differentiation” (Oakes & Turner, 1980).

The more the individual embraces the terminal and instrumental values, the more his/her perception of the world is driven by precise categories promoted by the organisation. In so doing, the individual progressively identifies him/herself with the organisation, becoming almost “depersonalised” (Hogg et al., 1995, p. 261). In some cases, the process of accepting the organisation’s categories leads to the adoption of a social identity, which might undermine the person’s previous individual identity. As soon as the person develops a new social identity, (s)he becomes “an extension of the collective whole” (Al-Raffie, 2013, p. 78).

Given the strong identification of the individual with the group, (s)he will be more prone to negatively evaluate the out-group in favour of the in-group. Since groups are defined in “contradistinction to out-groups and their status is measured as a function of perceived relations between the group and the out-groups to which it compares itself” (Al-Raffie, 2013, p. 78), organisations use specific elements, such as their ideology, methods, and goals, to argue that they are unique and that their members are privileged to be part of such an exclusive group. Therefore, the organisation (working as a structure) constantly conveys to its members an extremely positive self-image, promoting a vision of excellence among affiliates.

6.3 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Terminal and Instrumental Values

As an organisation, HT instils in its members strong organisational values, creating new meanings and providing new frames for the interpretation of
reality. Through its structure, the group provides its affiliates with specific terminal and instrumental values, which together constitute HT’s organisational culture.

*Figure 3. Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Organisational Values*

Figure 3 illustrates HT’s system of organisational values, which shapes members’ identity through precise mechanisms. HT’s desired outcomes (terminal values) determine the desired behaviours for HT affiliates (instrumental values) and are encouraged by the organisation through specific norms and rules that reinforce HT-sponsored attitudes and goals. Therefore, HT’s structure can be thought of as a virtuous circle, where its goals determine members’ behaviours, which in turn help the organisation achieve its goals.

The most relevant goal (terminal value) of the group is the re-establishment of the *khilafah*, uniting all Muslims under an elected and just leader: the caliph. While the group has some minor goals—such as educating the masses—HT’s main relevant terminal value is undoubtedly the re-establishment of the
caliphate, and the group has developed some specific behaviours, serving as instrumental values towards this goal. The first two of HT’s instrumental values for its members are living according to HT’s understanding of pure Islamic teachings\textsuperscript{127} and opposing the illegitimate nation state system.

For this reason, HT members globally continue to show their dissent through relentless anti-Western propaganda, accompanied by “passive citizenship” (Turner, 1990). The latter describes HT members’ lack of participation in activities such as voting, running for elections, and supporting political parties. Unlike other Islamic revivalist groups—such as the Muslim Brotherhood—that have chosen to take part in the political scene through the creation of Islamist parties that advocate for the implementation of shari’a within a nation-state system, HT has remained consistent over the decades in its rejection of any form of political participation for its members other than dissent.

The third core HT-specific instrumental value is activism in the group through involving members in many activities, such as proselytizing, distributing leaflets, organising lectures, writing political essays denouncing the “evils in the West”, and emphasising the immediate need for the caliphate (Mahmoud, HT Australia, personal communication, March 18, 2016). HT uses the terminal value of re-establishing the caliphate as a way to promote activism among members within the group. HT presents the khilafah as “part of our din, our dignity and our hope for all humanity” (Wahid, 2017).

As stated before in this thesis, HT members have been successfully persuaded that working to re-establish the Islamic system of government is a

\textsuperscript{127} As mentioned earlier in the thesis, HT has adopted a specific Quranic verse to assert its role as a “blessed leader” literate in Islamic teachings that knows the difference between right and wrong: “And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful” (Qur’an 3:104).
religious obligation, and those “Muslims who are willing to work for the caliphate will certainly be rewarded by Allah (swt)” (Leyla, HT Australia, personal communication, April 20, 2016). This belief encouraged HT’s third instrumental value, namely activism within the organisation. Members, both senior and new recruits, are called to dynamically operate within the organisation in various ways, according to their hierarchical levels, capacities, and commitment.

For instance, some of the most common activities members are involved with are leaflet campaigns, organising conferences and talks, and spreading the call to Islam (da’wah) to both non-Muslims and Muslims with views different from HT. On the need for all HT members to work hard to achieve the common goal Amina’s words, member of HT Australia for 12 years, are very remarkable:

We all need to work for the cause of Allah (swt), to set Muslims free from oppressors all over the world...the re-establishment of the caliphate is not a preference, it is a necessity because it is the only system able to assure protection to Muslims [...] all brothers and sisters should work towards this aim — according to their capabilities and means available—and their efforts will certainly be rewarded by Allah (swt)... (Amina, HT Australia, personal communication, April 9, 2016).

Amina was 32 years old at the time of the interview and had been a member of HT Australia since she was 20. She strongly stressed the need for all Muslims to participate in the ideological struggle for the re-establishment of the caliphate. Her words confirm HT members’ vision of the caliphate as the top priority, the terminal value of the organisation. Amina developed this conviction during her first encounters with HT, which led to her membership in the group. Before discovering HT, Amina had never thought about the caliphate as a viable political system in the contemporary global context.

Amina’s experience demonstrates HT’s role as a structure, instilling new meanings, values, and frames to its who often become long-term members as a
result. With the overarching aim to re-establish the caliphate in the background, HT also encourages its members to live with fellow Muslims, especially with other people from the organisation to reinforce this shared worldview. Spending so much time with people from the in-group is also encouraged by HT leadership to limit HT members’ contacts with kuffar thoughts and lifestyles.

Living in communion with other Muslims represents the fourth instrumental value promoted by HT and it makes a clear distinction between the in-group and out-group, while fostering members’ solidarity and a sense of belonging entirely to HT and the global ummah.

6.3.1 The Origin of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Terminal Value: The “Way to Belief”

Before exploring the implications of specific instrumental values adopted by HT members in the 21st century, this chapter sheds light on the ideological source of the group’s terminal value (the re-establishment of the caliphate), regarded as the main trigger for the adoption of specific behaviours. The ideological source of HT’s terminal value is An-Nabhani’s book The System of Islam (2002). The first chapter of the book “The Way to Belief” reveals a set of persuasive, logically presented arguments on Islamic faith and obligations exalting the glory of the caliphate.

These powerful convictions transform the re-establishment of the caliphate into something real, desirable, and concrete for HT members. Not only have the Hizbís imagined the re-establishment of caliphate since 1953, but the group’s strong organisational culture has allowed HT leaders to tangibly express their strong convictions by drafting the constitution for the caliphate in 1979. At that time, no one could have conceived of a group like ISIS and its violent campaign
for the Islamic state; yet, HT was already advocating for the caliphate and presenting it as the best political, social, economic, and religious alternative to capitalism and its world order (An-Nabhani, 2007).

The interviews conducted with HT current members in Australia revealed that one of the elements that attracted current members to HT (rather than to other Islamist groups) was HT’s intellectual rigour in presenting the main points of its belief system. When speaking about the organisation’s core terminal value (the re-establishment of the caliphate), members would use facts accompanied by historical examples and sometimes lead their interlocutor through complex syllogisms. This method is rooted in “The Way to Belief” and rests on An-Nabhani’s assumption that individuals should not passively accept a set of norms, but they should be able to fully understand the reasons behind specific prescriptions.

Only through this understanding can members espouse the group’s view and make it their own. To create a strong basis for the acceptance of HT’s terminal value, the interviews revealed that HT members are continually exposed to complex reasoning regarding essential concepts, such as life, death, existence, and priorities as expressed in An-Nabhani’s “The Way to Belief” (An-Nabhani, 2002). In line with An-Nabhani’s opinions, interviewees highlighted the central role played by “concepts” in the life of an individual, arguing that concepts shape the person’s ideas and determine his/her behaviours.\textsuperscript{128}

For this reason, it is essential that, before someone becomes a member of the group, (s)he goes through a process of purification of ideas, replacing old and incorrect concepts with new and correct ones. This conviction is rooted upon An-Nabhani’s words:

\textsuperscript{128} Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
The true solution cannot be reached except through the enlightened thought (al-fikr ul-mustaneer) about the universe, man and life. Consequently, those who yearn for revival (nahdah) and pursue the path of elevation (ruqiy) must first solve this problem in a correct manner by utilising enlightened thought (An-Nabhani, 2002, p. 6).

Therefore, in the eyes of the Hizb, people cannot access true faith, learn the right behaviours, and adhere to the right principles until they have changed their thoughts. According to An-Nabhani’s “The Way to Belief”, the most important concepts influencing human behaviour are those about man, life, and the universe (An-Nabhani 2002). These three pillars constitute the intellectual basis on which all other concepts are built. Interviews with HT members have also confirmed the great attention devoted by HT members to these three primary concepts as the foundation for all other concepts.

The interviews specifically revealed members’ desire to instil the correct primary concepts—in line with An-Nabhani’s thought—not only in new HT recruits but also in the minds of their children. This is the case of Khalida, senior member of HT Australia and a primary school teacher, whose entire family is active in HT:

A person’s actions, views and lifestyle are led by his/her concepts of life...for instance, the concept of freedom can lead you to sleep with anyone, to get drunk and to use drugs...also, the absence of the sense of life, of meaning and a purpose lead many people to suicide...I don’t want my children to grow up building wrong concepts in their minds under the inputs of a corrupted kuffar society and system of laws...the solution is Islam: my children need to know about their religion, their religious obligations and the things they should abstain from...in so doing, they would please Allah (swt), do what is halal and live their lives for the better (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016).

During the interview, Khalida frequently quoted An-Nabhani’s arguments from “The Way to Belief”, providing evidence that her conviction of the need to re-establish the caliphate (HT’s terminal value) was instilled by the HT teachings she had been continuously exposed to for 15 years. Khalida strongly believed that before the caliphate is established and prior to membership into HT, Muslims
should have a clear understanding of the correct Islamic concepts as well as their religious obligations and duties.

This conviction is very powerful because, once it is fully embraced, HT members will work hard to diffuse it to all the people close to them. For this reason, Khalida started teaching An-Nabhani’s “The Way to Belief” to her children: three boys and a little girl. While the boys regularly attend *halaqaat* with their father, the girl studies with her mother. Khalida has often stressed the need for her children to know more about their faith in order to develop an Islamic worldview, which is Islam-centric so that they can avoid being contaminated by *kuffar* thoughts, values, and practices.

The ideas that emerged from the conversation with Khalida conveyed an image of An-Nabhani’s “The Way to Belief” as a sort of shield all HT members should be equipped with to defend themselves from Western ideological and cultural attacks. This shield is also relevant for HT members’ children who need to develop an identity shaped by the Hizb to resist Western assimilation. As a result, not only is HT as a structure able to provide its members with a precise system of values that determine their behaviours and priorities, but it also pushes its members (as agents) to expand that system of values to the people they are close to.

Apart from acquiring HT’s system of values, Khalida’s children are also educated on how to believe and structure their Islamic faith according to An-Nabhani’s chapter. When asked if it was appropriate for children to study An-Nabhani’s writings, she replied: “It is useful to teach the children how to respond and structure their arguments against any objection towards Islam...‘The Way to Belief’ teaches them the right concepts” (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016).
As confirmed by Khalida’s words, HT uses An-Nabhani’s argument to provide new recruits with a certain system of primary beliefs that serve as a basis for all other thoughts and concepts. The analysis of An-Nabhani’s “Way to Belief” highlights the group’s ability to create a solid basis for the terminal value of re-establishing the caliphate. As previously mentioned, through a process of acquiring the “right” concepts, mostly through reading An-Nabhani’s writings, the person develops a different perspective, and the group’s terminal value becomes his/her priority. Once the priority is established, the individual will spontaneously adopt the group’s desired behaviours, namely its instrumental values.

6.3.2 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Instrumental Values: What Implications for the 21st Century?

As highlighted throughout this thesis, HT’s main goal is to propagate a narrative aimed at the intellectual demolition of all systems (social, political, and economic) other than the caliphate. Through a continuous learning process, HT convinces its members of the importance of re-establishing the caliphate, re-Islamising the ummah with the right Islamic concepts, convincing them to live a pious life inspired by the example of the Prophet. As a result, HT argues that Muslims in the West should live separately from the kuffar and their system.

This conviction fosters a set of behaviours (instrumental values), marking a wide gap—both intellectual and emotional—between the members of HT and the Western environment in which they live. As shown in Figure 3, HT encourages four main instrumental values that serve the main goal of the organisation, the re-establishment of the caliphate. These instrumental values (passive citizenship, participation in HT activities, and living with other fellow in-group members)
maintain the purity of Islamic teachings and have specific implications for the West in the 21st society.

To urge its members to hold on to the purity of Islamic teachings, the Hizb uses very strong rhetoric built on the negative connotation of the concept of al-Wasatiyyah, literally “middle ground or centrism”. While many Muslim intellectuals speak about al-Wasatiyyah as a positive concept, describing Islam as a religion of tolerance, HT sees al-Wasatiyyah as a compromise with capitalism.\textsuperscript{129} The group sees any form of moderation as a Western attempt to secularise Islam, and therefore calls on its members to be faithful to the organisation's teachings, defining “apostates” as those who move away from traditional positions in favour of milder ones (Ahmed & Stuart, 2009, p. 74).

These conceptions fuel an “us vs them” rhetoric that becomes part of the Hizbis' attitude, which is entirely based on a positive view of the in-group and a negative—if not hostile—opinion towards individuals in the out-group. By rejecting any form al-Wasatiyyah, HT has attracted not only the aversion of Western governments, but also the suspicion of parts of Western civil societies and other Muslim groups who show a much more open attitude towards the Western system. HT labels these Muslims “moderate Muslims”, a term that, according to the group, does not exist in Islam.

For the Hizbis, being a Muslim means going back to the roots of Islam, which entails investigating and studying the system of Islam (mostly through An-Nabhani’s writings) and shaping one’s life based on the Prophet’s model. Therefore, HT members are happy to be “radical” in the sense of being strongly

\textsuperscript{129} An example is Dr. Jamal Rifi, an Australian general practitioner and prominent member of the Australian Muslim community. Another example of a Muslim intellectual who sees al-Wasatiyyah in a positive light is Salman Farsi, Media and Communication Officer at the East London Mosque and a prominent member of the London Muslim community, interviewed by the author in London, November 26, 2015.
linked to the roots of their religion and rejecting compromise. On this subject, Ahmed’s words reveal HT’s bold stance in retrieving the very controversial term “radical” and using it as a distinguishing feature of the organisation.

There is no offense in being radical...radical is the person who wants to follow the original teachings of a faith, an ideology, a trend...it does not have to be necessarily Islam-related...there are also radical Christians...the term radical does not involve violence per se but again, Western machinations have promoted a well-defined idea of a radical Muslim: nothing less than a terrorist (Ahmed, HT Australia, personal communication, May 4, 2016).

Ahmed’s position is specifically promoted by HT as a structure to make its members speak out against alleged Western attempts to instil in Western Muslim communities the need to distance themselves from radical visions of Islam and adopt a Western-sponsored version, which fits well with the hidden Western agenda to destroy Muslims, starting with their main strength: the ‘Aqeedah. The acceptance of radical as a “good term”, rather than a negative word goes hand-in-hand with the Hizbis’ strong rejection of al-Wasatiyyah.

Notwithstanding the organisational enthusiasm for their uncompromising stance, the Hizbis’ lack of al-Wasatiyyah has often resulted in extremely restrictive measures, such as national bans and arrests of its members (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2016a; ‘Russia Jails Member of Banned Islamic Group’, 2016). Nonetheless, the proscriptions adopted by Western national authorities have not deflected HT from promoting a harsh ideological war against the Westphalian system, based mostly on passive citizenship as the second core instrumental value.

As highlighted by the data collected in this study, HT’s rejection of the Westphalian state system is mainly grounded on three central convictions: a) it was imposed by former Western colonial powers on Muslim lands causing harm, wars, and the end of the caliphate; b) it is based on man-made laws, giving
authority to the people and their allegedly “wicked desires”; and c) it neglects shari’a, pushing Muslims away from their din and encouraging a “state-sponsored version of Islam” (Doureihi, 2017; Hizb ut-Tahrir, 1996; Orofino, 2015; Uthman Badar, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).

With regard to the first point, HT members believe that the Westphalian state system is contrary to shari’a as it was imposed by Europeans on Muslims and marked the global decline of Islam (An-Nabhani, 1998; Awad, 2016; Badar, 2015). The Hizbis believe that many behaviours encouraged in the Western states are haram, and this causes significant friction in the individual who is called to obey two systems of law that are often inconsistent.130 The second and third arguments are deeply intertwined. HT members argue that European colonisers have attacked the system of Islam and contaminated it with kuffar thoughts, using a number of tools (Awad, 2016; Badar, 2015).

One of these tools was the creation of cultural centres throughout the Middle East by Christian missionaries, promoting values that contradict Islam. Another was pressuring the Ottoman caliphate to implement constitutional reforms to bring it in line with capitalistic states. According to HT members, as soon as the constitution was approved in 1908, the khilafah began its decline towards its end, which finally arrived in 1924.131 After the abolition of the caliphate, nation-states were created in Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, and the rest of the Muslim world was colonised.132 Following this reasoning, HT members argue that Muslims were therefore exposed to a system of laws, values, and lifestyles very different from their own.

130 While already discussed in Chapter Four, it is important here to again emphasise the arguments on which HT grounds its political challenge to the West to provide detailed insight into the terminal and instrumental values that determine this challenge.
131 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
132 Author’s observation at the HT-sponsored event “92 Years since the Caliphate: The History of the Collapse and the global Muslim Response”, Lakemba, Sydney, March 13, 2016.
At the same time, HT members contrast the imposed Westphalian state system with the glory of the caliphate by highlighting the stability of the Middle East at the time and its flourishing economy, good standard of living, scientific advancement, and respect for people of other faiths (Mohammad and Aysha 2016, HT Australia, personal communication, March 15). The very fact that many Muslims today are forced to live in the “Land of Unbelief” is considered by HT members a valid reason for encouraging its followers to reject the Western system and actively campaign for the caliphate.

In such a divinely ordained system, no separation occurs between *din* (the faith) and *dawla* (the state), which would be successfully united in the figure of the caliph who would hold political, economic, and religious power. At the same time, the Hizbis imagine the caliph as a just ruler who will be elected by an assembly (*Majlis al-Ummah*) designated by the people, ensuring a certain degree of accountability (An-Nabhani 1998). This attentive focus on the “caliphate as homeland” (Sinclair, 2010, p. 100) combined with a strong rejection of the West as a system has induced HT members to adopt particular attitudes (instrumental values) related to passive citizenship: rejection of voting or running for elections (either autonomously or within a party), along with a strong universal dissent for all politicians and political aggregations taking part in the system.

The Hizb’s strategy is based on taking news as a tool to highlight how the West as a political, social, and economic system is unable to face the needs of the people and to emphasize its progressive decline and the common dissatisfaction of the people towards national authorities. This negative portrait of the status

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133 It emerged in the interviews with current members that HT does not share ISIS’s vision of the caliphate, nor does it recognise ISIS’ caliphate as legitimate, given their violent methods and the fact that their caliph is not elected.
quo encourages HT members to immediately think of the contrasting greatness of the caliphate and its achievements over the centuries.134

The third instrumental value characterising HT members is their activism in support of their organisation and main goals. It emerged in the interviews that all the activities carried out in the West by the Hizbis have one single target: the da’wah (call to Islam). While this term is often associated with an invitation to the religion, HT merges religion with politics, assuming that once an individual is ready to accept the call to Islam, (s)he should also be ready to engage in the intellectual fight to bring the caliphate back.

Therefore, HT’s da’wah is very specific and always puts the caliphate at the forefront as a religious obligation for all Muslims. To spread this message, members are committed to influencing public opinion through leaflet campaigns, conferences, rallies, talks, lectures, and sometimes even sermons at mosques (Uthman Badar, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016). All these events and publications are characterised by strong anti-Western propaganda that focuses on the disruptive effects of global capitalism—mostly depicted as exploitative and subjugating of Muslims—and encourages a common struggle for the khilafah.

These events take place even in countries where the group is banned (such as Turkey and Germany) where activists carry out their da’wah through front

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134 Over the decades, HT started using local grievances to turn individuals against the local government, painting an extremely negative portrait of it as lacking accountability, legitimacy, and the rule of law. This strategy is very clear, especially when observing HT’s online activity. For instance, Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain’s website is up-to-date with comments on news concerning British politics, foreign policy, and social problems (www.hizb.org.uk). It is very common for HT Britain to take a fact as a stimulus for building an argument supporting the group’s main goal of re-establishing the khilafah (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017b; 2017c). Also see Chapter Four for HT’s “LoGlo” strategy.
organisations.\textsuperscript{135} Among them, women’s organisations stand out for the remarkable number of activities they promote. An example of a front organisation in a country where the HT is not yet banned but regarded with great suspicion by national authorities is the Australian HT-related *Ansar-Sister for the Revival* (https://www.facebook.com/ansarforrevival/), focusing on young women and how to build their Muslim identity.

The organisation is unofficially run by the most prominent female members of HT Australia who are often invited to give talks and lectures on topics like women and *shari‘a*, femininity, sexual purity, and the Islamic vision of women. Their events are mostly attended by young girls (between 15 and 22 years old) who collaborate with HT but who are not yet full members. All *Ansar* members are invited to bring their friends and family along during the events to make them familiar with the ideology. During *Ansar* events, female activists (both full HT-members and young *daris*) expose the “evils of the Western system”, portrayed as a system that has always persecuted those Muslims who wanted to hold onto their values.\textsuperscript{136}

Furthermore, the concept of an eternal clash of civilisations between Muslims and Westerners is presented as unavoidable through the promotion of the idea of Muslims as “strangers in the West, no matter how long they have been living there for”.\textsuperscript{137} This rhetoric again fosters a progressive alienation of HT members from the Western political and social world, even when the two mutually constitute the original *de facto* birthplace of the individual.

\textsuperscript{135} An example is the 2016 *Khilafah* Conference held in Ankara, which was attended by over 5,000 people despite the ban on HT in Turkey.
\textsuperscript{136} Hizb ut-Tahrir female activists’ speeches, Ansar High Tea event, Lakemba, Sydney, May 22, 2016.
\textsuperscript{137} Author’s observation at “Ansar High Tea”.
Lastly, the other HT instrumental value conveyed to its members is the invitation to live with “fellow Muslims”. By this term, HT members refer to Muslims from the in-group. Given that the Hizbis consider their organisation as “the blessed group”, leading the *ummah* to change through a revival of Islam, they see all other Muslim groups with a different methodology and vision of the caliphate as holding an incorrect perspective. As stressed in Chapter Four, people from the out-group (both Muslims and non-Muslims) are considered by the Hizb as *jahili*, living in a state of ignorance typical of the pre-revelation period in the Arab world.

As observed by the author while attending HT-sponsored events between 2015 and 2016, HT members usually describe *jahili* as “people far from the truth” and do not want to engage with them in any activity other than the *da’wah*.\(^\text{138}\) As a result, the conviction of being the only enlightened group, with the correct understanding of Islamic teachings, leads HT members to a progressive separation not only from the *kuffar* but also from the rest of the Muslim community in the outgroup. In fact, the term “fellow Muslims” mostly indicates members of the in-group, which share the same principles and goals.

### 6.4 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Cleavage with “Moderate Muslims” as a Tool to Attract more Members

As highlighted by the points analysed so far, HT’s organisational culture (made up of terminal and instrumental values) does not only isolate the individual from the West as a system but also from other Muslims who do not share HT core tenets. In so doing, HT emerges in the life of its members as the only ideal place where they can be zealous Muslims, feel gratified from observing

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\(^{138}\) See Chapter One for details on the events attended by the author during her fieldwork.
the “correct” (HT-sponsored) religious obligations, and where to fight against the West as a system without using violence.

The arguments in favour of the Hizbis’ isolation from the West are usually connected to the alleged structural incompatibility between Islam and the West in terms of religion, culture, regulations, and life priorities. For these reasons, HT demands of its members a strict separation from unbelievers, stressing the urgent need to re-establish the caliphate to restore the optimal equilibrium that preceded Western colonialism in the Middle East (Awad, 2016; Badar, 2012).

While living in Western countries where they often have prominent careers, HT members live in perpetual exile, longing for the caliphate.139 HT members feel the need to remember that “we are not in the West to become rich and live in luxury, but we always need to consider that we are here because the West has caused harm and a terrible war in our country” (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016). Khalida, like other HT members, pointed out in her interview how her father always reminded her that living in the West was neither their choice nor their desire.

As Muslims escaping war and massacres, they were forced to live in the Land of Unbelief, ruled by the same governments harming and exploiting their Muslim homeland. With these perceptions of the West, HT members are often unhappy living in the West and are unable to forget the evils affecting the ummah globally. Instead, HT members appear to be engaged in a perpetual emotional pilgrimage towards the caliphate, and is characterised by a hyper-critical stance towards everyone who is not part of their group.

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139 For more information on HT members’ job roles see Table 1. As observed during fieldwork in London and Sydney, most of HT’s prominent members, such as Nazreen Nawaz, Abdul Wahid, and Ibthial Bsis, are doctors, barristers, teachers, and academics.
HT has often distanced itself from so called “moderate Muslims” who do not share the ideas of the organisation and who consider al-Wasatiyyah (middle ground or moderation) the right path for assuring Muslim communities in the West a peaceful coexistence with people from different religious backgrounds. A relevant representative of the al-Wasatiyyah perspective is Salman Farsi, interviewed by the author during her fieldwork in London. At the time of the interview (November 26, 2015), Salman was the Media & Communications Officer of the East London Mosque, which is one of the most important mosques in the UK, gathering about 7,000 Muslims for Friday prayers and located in the heart of London’s Muslim community (Tower Hamlets) where HT is very active.

In his interview, Salman spoke on behalf of his religious organisation, clearly stating that the East London Mosque opposes HT’s ideology, defining it “extreme” since it encourages members to progressively disconnect from their local environment and reality in favour of a strongly idealised space grounded on the caliphate.

There are some verses in the Qur’an that tell Muslims not to merge with Jews and Christians, but they relate to the specific time they were revealed to the Prophet... still the Qur’an encourages you to do good and forbid evil... if doing good means gathering together with Jews and Christians to do something beneficial for our community then we have to do it. We can take passages from the Qur’an, the Bible or the Torah to build walls around us but ultimately, we share the same faith in Abraham and the Prophets and we have to realize that in the contemporary world we do not need to build walls but we need to build bridges... Hizb ut-Tahrir is an extremist organisation and tries to take part of the Qur’an and apply it to modern world... this does not work (Salman Farsi, East London Mosque, personal communication, November 26, 2015).

In contrast with HT’s desire to maintain the “purity of Islam” by not mixing with people from the out-group, Salman stressed the need for Muslims, both individually and collectively, to partner with other actors of the community to create a friendly and liveable environment for all. For this reason, he stressed the commitment of the East London Mosque to inter-faith work with both Christians
and Jews. The leadership of the mosque was strongly criticised by HT for the relationship of the mosque with the *kuffar*, calling this behaviour anti-Islamic. Salman Farsi described the behaviour encouraged by HT (its instrumental values) as “very dangerous” because it progressively alienates individuals from the West and from Muslims of the out-group and because it rejects modernity, progress, and the formation of relationships with people of other faiths (Salman Farsi, personal communication, November 26, 2015).

In addition to Salman, others, such as Aysha Al-Fekaiki, have clearly stated their rejection of HT’s instrumental values. At the time of the interview (December 8, 2012), Aysha was one of the leaders of the Muslim Student Union at the London School of Economics, an alleged HT recruitment pool for young intellectuals (Counter Extremism Project, 2017; Yilmaz, 2010). Aysha was born in Iraq and fled with her parents to the UK when she was a baby. She stressed her deep emotional attachment to the UK as “her home”, a place full of opportunities where her family started a new life and where she has met several close friends who in time have become like family:

> The behaviours encouraged by HT in the West are detrimental for young Muslims, pushing them towards a complete isolation from their home and, in some cases, even from the people they love if they do not conform to the group’s ideology (Aysha Al-Fekaiki, London School of Economics, personal communication, December 8, 2015).

When speaking about the “detrimental effects” of HT-sponsored behaviours Aysha often stressed in her interview the pivotal role played by HT in persuading its members to be “those inviting to all that is good and forbidding what is wrong”.⁴⁰ For this reason HT members are prohibited from entertaining close

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⁴⁰ Again referring to *Qur'an* 3:104, “And let there be [arising] from you a group inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful”. This verse is officially used by Hizb ut-Tahrir to strengthen its position as the only
relationships with those people who do not accept this invitation to the good, even if they are part of the member’s family. This provokes an emotional estrangement from the people who are close to the individual and fosters an exclusive sense of belonging to HT.

Furthermore, when commenting on the absurdity of behaviours encouraged by HT, both Aysha and Salman mentioned HT members’ refusal to vote, run for elections, and insure their cars because it would be against the faith in Allah (as a lack of trust in divine providence for all kinds of events). They also mentioned the labelling of interfaith works as haram and the Hizbis’ view of Western laws as laws of a Land of Unbelief, which oppose shari’a. Both of these “moderate Muslims”—Salman and Aysha—have highlighted how dangerous HT’s instrumental values are for members who, imbued with the idea that al-Wasatiyyah is haram, are ideologically compelled to live a life separate from their local environment, relentlessly contrasting the idea of a glorious caliphate with the idea of a rotten Western system that they are forced to live in.141

As illustrated by these two members of the greater London Muslim community, members of HT’s out-group remarked that HT isolates its members not only from the West (as a political and social system) but also from that part of the ummah not sharing the same views. Nevertheless, this isolation does not seem to be a problem for HT members, since the organisation transformed its rigidity into a positive element, which is promoted during recruiting campaigns. Interviews with current members have highlighted how the rigor of HT’s positions together with the organisation’s boldness have served as part of the group’s appeal, distinguishing it from other Islamic revivalist actors.

legitimised leader towards a blessed change. See Hizb ut-Tahrir official website, Home Page (http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/EN/).
HT members interviewed by the author have in fact often stressed how they saw the group’s bold stances and distance from the outgroup as an advantage to membership rather than a disadvantage. On this subject, the words of Mohammad (senior member of HT Australia) are widely shared among HT members:

We don’t want to acquaint with this world nor with other allegedly Muslim groups that have moved away from our din... true Islam is uncompromising, the Prophet was uncompromising and we will always be uncompromising (Mohammad, HT Australia, personal communication, May 5, 2016).

Mohammad considers isolation and unwillingness to compromise as a sign of HT’s integrity and piousness. The general impression that emerged from the interviews, observations, and participation of the author in HT-sponsored events is that HT members are not apparently distressed by their segregation from Muslims and non-Muslims of the out-group. Prior to their membership, current affiliates said that they were attracted by HT’s reliability, expressed in the group’s uncompromising stance, which has remained unchanged over the decades.

Today, it is the same uncompromising stance, conveyed by the group’s leadership through online publications, talks, and seminars, that continues to attract new members in the West who want to make a difference in this world by participating in a non-conventional Islamist actor.

6.5 The “Fideliisation” of the Hizbis

6.5.1 From Moral Shocks to Embracing ‘Aqeedah

The previous sections of this chapter demonstrate HT’s ability as a structure to create a strong encompassing group identity for its members through continuous acculturation to HT-sponsored terminal and instrumental values, which shift their loyalties exclusively towards the in-group. This section examines how HT uses these values as the basis for members’ long-term loyalty
to the organisation. Interviews with the prominent HT members revealed that once a person becomes a Hizbi, (s)he tends to remain a member of the organisation for a long time, often for life.

The present chapter identifies three main mechanisms that foster Hizbis’ long-term membership: moral shocks and the embrace of ‘Aqeedah, self-efficacy, and positive intergroup differentiation. This section focuses on the first mechanism. By observing HT’s operating methods and comparing them with HT members’ experiences during the recruitment process, the author argues that, over the decades, HT has elaborated a specific three-fold strategy to foster long-term memberships and differentiate HT from other groups. This strategy can be characterised as “Shock, Demolish, and Rebuild” (Orofino, 2015, p. 404).

**Figure 4. Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Three-fold Strategy**

**Shock, Demolish, and Rebuild Strategy**

As described in **Figure 4**, once the individual encounters the group, (s)he is exposed to several “moral shocks”, which result from the trauma or discovering distressing truths (Wiktorowicz, 2005, p. 95). HT branches around the world continuously share alarming images or stories on their social media profiles and the official websites, which work as catalysts for bringing individuals closer to the organisation, allowing them to learn more about a specific problem and the solutions the group proposes (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2016a; 2016b). After shaking the individual’s original convictions, HT begins implementing the second
phase of the strategy: “demolishing” all those concepts that contrast with those of the group.

HT activists use strong intellectual and religious arguments to convince the daris (student) of the validity of their beliefs, using regular halaqaat (study groups), lectures, and rallies as tools for dismantling positive views of concepts like democracy, feminism, and personal freedom. In parallel, HT presents individuals its narrative on terrorism, connecting it to colonial history and identifying terrorism as a product of Western misconduct in the Middle East (Badar, 2015; Doureihi, 2017; Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2016a).

Finally, in the third phase, HT leaders work to “rebuild” the group-sponsored concepts in the minds of the individuals who are then ready to embrace HT’s “organisational culture” (i.e. its terminal and instrumental values). Data from interviews with current HT Australia members have confirmed the phases of this strategy. All the 16 interviewees stressed that the idea of re-establishing the caliphate sounded very strange to them in the beginning. Moreover, 12 out of the 16 current HT Australia members interviewed knew very little about the caliphate before discovering HT. Like Mohammad and Farah, if they had not encountered HT, it is likely that they would have never otherwise considered the caliphate a viable political system:

Before the Hizb, I had never heard about the caliphate...I thought it was a “historical relic”, as it is usually thought even in Muslim circles... I think it is because colonialism changed the school curriculum, reducing the caliphate to a mere relic (Mohammad, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016).

Although I grew up in Turkey, I had never heard about the caliphate as a viable system. (Farah, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).

As highlighted by these statements, in the period between their first contact with HT and full membership, members-to-be go through a process of learning
that changes their opinions, aligning them with those of the group. Mohammad transformed his initial conception of the caliphate as a “historical relic” into a panacea for all problems of humanity. This process might take up to two years, depending on the attitude of the person in learning and embracing the group’s organisational culture (Mohammad, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016).

Farah had a similar experience. She was born and raised in Turkey, the heart of the Ottoman caliphate, and knew nothing about the glory of the Islamic state until her first contact with the Hizb. The organisation shocked Farah with very controversial claims (such as the caliphate will be re-established through a revolution of thought) but also sparked her interest through a process of demolishing and rebuilding meanings and values in her mind. As a result, both Farah’s and Mohammad’s initial conceptions and interpretative frames progressively changed as their presence in the organisation was consolidated through the halaqaat and the continuous culturing process. The latter led to a gradual alignment of their opinions with those of HT.

What has been discussed so far gives evidence for HT’s ability to attract new members and to deeply influence their thoughts and behaviour. However, HT would have already dissolved if it were not able to fidelise its members for long-term membership. The concept of “fidelisation” is borrowed from the corporate world, and it means to develop loyalty to a brand or company (Oliver, 1999). While many groups come into existence and perform their activities for a certain period of time before disappearing, only a few remain on the global scene for decades, and HT undoubtedly belongs to this second category. Not only has HT emerged as a global actor within the Islamic revivalist universe, but it has also
retained its members over time, ensuring stability and the presence of iconic figures to each branch.

HT’s strength in retaining members while acquiring new ones resides in the powerful ideological source of its terminal value (re-establishing the caliphate) and in their effects on HT members’ collective behaviour (instrumental values). Not only did An-Nabhani have a clear vision of how to transform the group’s tenets into its members’ priorities, shaping their conduct and creating a new identity in line with the organisational culture, but he also had a clear idea of how to strengthen this bond between the group and the individual through a core element: the ‘Aqeedah (doctrine).

Since the foundation of HT, An-Nabhani wanted his group to be more than a mere hub of people gathered around an emotion (such as the desire for pan-Arabism) or around a charismatic leader because all groups presenting such a weak foundation are not sustainable and destined to fail. An-Nabhani believed that if the individual was not fully educated on the ideological tenets of the group—but only on some general notions—(s)he would not be able to fully embrace the organisational culture and would end up leaving the group for something more convenient or attractive (An-Nabhani, 2001). At the same time, if the individual’s membership was linked to a specific leader, once the leader was not there anymore for whatever reason, the individual would have no other bonds with the group and be likely to leave.

For these reasons, An-Nabhani identified the ‘Aqeedah as an essential pillar upon which both HT terminal and instrumental values are built:

The group then requires a Hizbi bond to connect the individuals who have embraced both the idea and the method. This Hizb bond is the ‘Aqeedah, from which the outlook of the Hizb and the culture that characterizes the Hizb’s concepts emanate. The Hizb group will thus proceed in the mainstream of life once it is formed. During this process, the Hizb will encounter many situations, face many obstacles, and be exposed to many different
environments. In other words, the circumstances around it will fluctuate from hot to cool. If the Hizbi group manages to withstand these conditions, then its idea will become crystallized, its method clarified, and the group will have succeeded in preparing its members, and strengthening the bond of the group. It will then be able to take the practical steps in the da’wah [call to Islam] and the activity. At this point, it moves from being a Hizbi bloc to a fully-fledged ideological Hizb working towards revival (An-Nabhani 2001, 19-20).

As highlighted by An-Nabhani’s words, once individuals are educated in the ideas and methods of the group and have decided to embrace them as their own, their membership will be long-lasting and able to survive harsh conditions. The popularity of iconic senior members (such as Nazreen Nawaz and Abdul Wahid from HT Britain) is a marker of long-term memberships of the Hizb by brilliant intellectuals, both male and female. In addition, the author’s interviews with current members of the HT Australian branch stressed the presence of long-lasting memberships: 9 out of 16 interviewees were over 30 years old and they all became members of the Hizb in their 20s.

Over the decades, their loyalty towards the group has not wavered; they have instead increased their commitment to several HT activities and continue the acculturation process through halaqaat. HT’s founder had correctly envisaged that the loyalty of the members would have remained stable if they started to see HT as something very personal to them, sharing the basic concepts and notions on which the ideological bases are built upon.

6.5.2 Hizb ut-Tahrir as the Best Choice for Collective Action: “Self-Efficacy”

As discussed earlier in the chapter, when a person becomes a member of the Hizb, (s)he has already embraced HT’s ‘Aqeedah and the connected set of organisational values (terminal and instrumental) that determine his/her behaviours over time. But what makes this behaviour constant, therefore
fostering long-term membership, is the creation of social categories promoted by the organisation, which influence the way the individual sees reality and interprets facts. Social categories “are broad large-scale sources of social identity that often provide the pretext for the formation of community level social networks and groups” (Al-Raffie, 2013, p. 76; Deaux & Martin, 2003, p. 104).

Some examples of social categories are religion, gender, and ethnicity, and they set the boundaries between the in-group and the out-group, defining the imaginary borders inside of which the individual lives his/her life. HT, as a structure, provides its members with social categories, which significantly impact the way members see themselves and evaluate their actions also vis-à-vis other actors from the outgroup. It emerged in the analysis of the interviews with current HT members that they strongly believe that what they do within the organisation is very effective.

The Hizbis are persuaded that, through their collective actions, they can achieve the desired outcome of re-establishing the caliphate. This data demonstrated that the Hizbis feel deeply gratified in raising their voices to support the re-establishment of the caliphate, even in contexts where the organisation is banned and members risk going to prison.\textsuperscript{142} In fact, through the social categories set up by HT’s organisational culture (terminal and instrumental values), members feel satisfied and perceive their actions as effective.

Members strongly believe that their membership to the organisation is the most effective way of following the divine will as well as the only way to keep the

\textsuperscript{142} As mentioned in the previous chapters, HT is currently banned in 14 out of 45 countries worldwide where the organisation is based. Harsh repression of HT members is widespread in the Middle Eastern world (such as in Egypt), and also in Russia and Pakistan where members are often arrested (Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 2016).
purity of Islamic teachings without participating in a kuffar system. Interviewees of HT Australia also shared one core belief: “Working for the caliphate has a reward”. All interviewees were persuaded of the efficacy of their ideological campaigning to bring back the caliphate because of three main convictions: HT’s methodology is based on the Prophet’s example, the re-establishment of the caliphate is a promise from God, and the caliphate is the only system able to protect the global ummah.

With regard to the first claim, the Hizbis strongly believe that their organisation is the only one that faithfully follows the example of Prophet Mohammad in spreading the da’wah to non-Muslims. The Hizbis believe that the Prophet’s method is still effective in the contemporary world: “HT is different from all other groups advocating for the khilafah because it has a clear methodology, close to Islam and the example of the Prophet” (Noura, HT Australia, personal communication, April 9, 2017). Noura is a senior member of HT Australia, a relentless activist within the organisation and a frequent speaker at women’s events.

Her conviction that HT is based on the Prophet’s methodology is shared among all members of the organisation and was initially conveyed in An-Nabhani’s analysis of the method of the Prophet in his book “The Islamic State”:

In the beginning the Messenger of Allah (saw) would visit people in their homes, telling them that he has been commanded by Allah (swt) to worship Him and to associate none with Him. He (saw) openly invited people to Islam...every time someone embraced Islam, Allah’s Messenger (saw) would join him in the house...teaching this group of Muslims, leading them in prayers... motivating their souls, strengthening their belief through prayers and recitation, helping them to improve their way of thinking and to reflect on the verses of the Qur’an and the creation of Allah (swt) (An-Nabhani, 1998, pp. 4-5).

143 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
Interviewees from HT Australia pointed to this specific extract from An-Nabhani’s book, highlighting the desire of HT’s founder to build his organisation on the same principles of Prophet Mohammad when he had to spread Islam among the *kuffar*. The Hizbis specifically emphasised An-Nabhani’s focus on ideas rather than violence, the importance of teaching Islamic principles, and the role of his organisation as an educator of the masses to lead the *ummah* to the ideas and concepts consistent with Islamic teachings.

Not only is HT’s method regarded as the only one consistent with the teachings of Prophet Mohammad, but also members believe it is the only effective method, even today:

> The Prophetic methodology is based on the formation of a critical consciousness which eviscerates all temporal entities (be it men, systems, ideas, etc.) from falsely acquired properties of Absoluteness...in short, idol-formation is an intellectual process and thus idol-deconstruction requires a counter-intellectual process...bullets cannot deconstruct an “idea”—only ideas can subvert other ideas (Hizb ut-Tahrir, 2017).

Therefore, the ideological fight against anti-Islamic concepts through an intellectual effort to go back to the correct concepts, according to HT’s vision of Islamic *‘Aqeedah*, is regarded by the Hizbis as the only rationally valid method and the only one legitimised by Prophet Mohammad himself. As a result, all actions performed by members embrace this method and enhance the Hizbis’ self-efficacy because they see themselves as the only actors having a valid method that is both rational and divinely approved.

The second element enhancing self-efficacy among HT members’ is the belief that the caliphate will be re-established because it was promised by Allah, and working to re-establish the caliphate has a divine reward. As stressed by Leyla:

> We are certain the caliphate will be re-established because that is a promise from God in the *hadith* of the Prophet...in HT we have a clear picture of what
are our priorities on earth based on our focus on afterlife: we want to please Allah (swt) and do His will...since living within the caliphate is a divine command we know that we are working for the right thing and we will be rewarded for it (Leyla, HT Australia, personal communication, March 5, 2016).

The author met Leyla during a public talk sponsored by the group on the caliphate and the causes of its abolition. This interview revealed a very linear logic: the more the individual engages in divinely established tasks, the greater his/her reward will be. All HT members present at the event would agree on the fact that they are “working for the right thing” because of the very nature of the caliphate: the Islamic system of governance envisaged by God himself. To support this claim, the Hizbis often quote specific passages of the Qur’an to highlight the divine will for the caliphate:

And those who disbelieve are allies of one another, (and) if you (Muslims of the whole world collectively) do not do so [i.e. become allies, as one united block under one khalifah—a chief Muslim ruler for the whole Muslim world—to make victorious Allah’s religion of Islamic Monotheism], there will be Fitnah (wars, battles, polytheism) and oppression on the earth, and a great mischief and corruption, appearance of polytheism (Qur’an 8:73).

HT leaders often refer to passages of the Qur’an, using Mohsin Khan’s translation, which invites Muslims to unite under one single Islamic leader to face kuffar regimes and all the related consequences, such as “wars, corruption and oppression of people”. Therefore, the Hizbis see the caliphate not only as their primary terminal value (as mentioned in the previous sections) but also as a way to engage with the only effective counter-model for curbing the decline of present societies globally. Given that divinely assigned tasks are inherently effective, since they are ordered by God, the promise for a divine reward along with efforts to re-establish the caliphate fuel the increasing self-efficacy for the individual within the organisation.

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144 92 Years since the Caliphate: Part 1, Talk, Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, Sydney, March 5, 2016.
Lastly and strongly connected to the second element, the Hizbis’ self-efficacy is also fuelled by their belief that they are working to re-establish the only system that can protect the global *ummah*: the caliphate. As highlighted in Chapter Four, the need to protect Muslims within an Islamic government is stressed by HT through a precise narrative aimed at promoting a progressive disenfranchisement of the individual from national authorities. This narrative is built on the idea that Muslims living in Western countries are in danger without the caliphate. The main dangers are both moral (contamination from *kuffar* thoughts and practices leading Muslims away from their *din*) and physical (the several instances of Islamophobia in the West).\(^{145}\)

These convictions emerged in the analysis of the data—both in the interviews and in online posts by the Hizbis—where emotional expressions like “We are living in a dictatorship against Muslims, the caliphate is the only solution” or “To work for our *ummah* around the world is our duty and the only way to protect them and us is to have the caliphate back” were often repeated (Farah & Nuha, HT Australia, personal communication, March, 2016). HT’s organisational culture serves as a conveyor of precise social categories, on which is based on the role of the caliphate as the protector of Muslims. Members of HT are honoured to work for what they perceive as a noble aim, and they feel positive and gratified knowing that their efforts will lead to the re-establishment of the Islamic state. Khalida’s conviction reveals the unmeasurable value the caliphate has for her:

*The khilafah* is the only system of justice in every realm of life where social justice is achieved by assuring every person the satisfaction of basic needs, such as the right to a home, food, and a job...this will be possible through an

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\(^{145}\) An example is the recent news comment by HT Britain following the attack on the Finsbury Park mosque in London: “Muslims are experiencing testing times in Britain. But it is vital that they remain strong and proud of their Islamic identity and hold fast to their way of life and values” (Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, 2017d).
equal distribution of the revenues coming from several resources: not only from *zakat* but also from revenues regarding oil and gold (Khalida, HT Australia, personal communication, April 6, 2016).

Khalida envisages that, once re-established, not only will the Islamic state provide physical protection for Muslims, but it will also assure that the basic needs of all citizens are met, such as the need for “home, food, and a job”. Khalida’s words also point out the way the caliph will meet the requests of his people by using national resources and the *zakat*, the Muslim obligation of almsgiving, one of the five pillars of Islam. More specifically, Khalida pointed out how the *Qur’an* identifies eight categories of people who are entitled to benefit from *zakat* funds: the poor (*Al-Fuqara*), the needy (*Al-Masakin*), the *zakat* collectors (*Al-Amiliyn ‘Aliha*), recent converts to Islam, Muslims who need to be freed from slavery or servitude (*Fir-Riqab*), Muslims who have indebted themselves, while endeavouring to satisfy their basic necessities (*Al-Gharimin*), those fighting for a religious cause (*Fi Sabilillah*), and those travelling for a noble purpose but who are not able to reach their destination because of a shortage of funds (*Ibnu Al-Sabil*).146

The establishment of these eight categories also illustrates the caliphate’s focus on community and social welfare, which stands in stark contrast, as the Hizbis point out, to the exclusive focus on individualism and profit in the West. HT members like Khalida believe strongly in the value of their efforts and the rationality of their plan, and their divinely inspired method guarantees long-term membership. At the same time, these convictions provide activists with a sense of

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146 “Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom” (*Qur’an* 9:60).
fulfilment and gratification from being on the “right path”, approved by God, and in-line with Islamic teachings. Given that the individual is not on the right path as a single individual but as a member of the organisation, (s)he will have no reason to leave HT if (s)he maintains the same social categories discussed above, which are consolidated by the enhanced self-efficacy that the single member develops over time.

6.5.3 Hizb ut-Tahrir’s Positive Intergroup Differentiation

As mentioned in the previous sections, the social categories provided by the organisation through specific terminal and instrumental values also impact members’ perception of their group. As soon as a member fully embraces the organisation’s values as his/her own, (s)he begins to develop a positive image of his/her organisation, differentiating it with similar organisations. This positive intergroup differentiation works as the third element for consolidating the Hizbis’ long-term loyalty.

HT members develop the conviction that their group is the only legitimate and effective organisation within the broad context of Islamic revivalist groups. It emerged from the data collected for this study that the positive intergroup differentiation of the Hizbis is grounded on three main elements: HT’s plan, its uncompromising stance, and its longevity. HT members are proud to state that their organisation differs from all other groups that advocate for the caliphate because it is the only group with a plan. Mohammad, HT Australia, strongly appreciates HT’s plan:

We do not theoretically call for the re-establishment of the caliphate, as many other groups do...what differentiates us from the others is the consistent plan that we have to bring the caliphate back (Mohammad, HT Australia, personal communication, March 19, 2016).
The plan Mohammad speaks about is embedded in the methodology elaborated by An-Nabhani in many of his writings (An-Nabhani, 1998, 2001, 2002). The Hizbis see other long-established organisations calling for the caliphate—such as the Muslim Brotherhood or Jamaat-e-Islami—as inconsistent, conceptually confused, and lacking a viable strategy. In contrast, HT has a detailed plan to re-establish the “Second Khilafah Rashidah based upon the Method of Prophethood” (Hizb ut-Tahrir Central Media Office, 2016).

As previously outlined in Chapter Five, HT’s method relies upon three main phases: acculturation (selecting intellectuals and familiarize them with the Hizbi culture through a period of study), interaction (the first nucleus of intellectuals who have espoused HT’s tenets are called to export them to the ummah so that Muslims become aware of their state of oppression and start viewing HT as their leader towards a “blessed change”), and ruling (acquisition of authority at the top state level in the Muslim world after the ummah has accepted the Hizbi culture and shares the vision of the caliphate).

Each of these phases was accurately elaborated by An-Nabhani and is fully accepted by members as effective. Not only does HT have a plan to re-establish the caliphate, but it also has a plan to make the caliphate work effectively. This plan led HT leadership to write the “Draft Constitution for the Islamic State” in 1979 (An-Nabhani, 1998). As already discussed in Chapter Five, in the document attached as an appendix in An-Nabhani’s book The Islamic State (1998), nothing is left to chance; instead, all crucial elements on which the caliphate depends are carefully established. The second element fuelling HT members’ positive

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147 For an extensive discussion of HT’s uniqueness and how it differs from other similar revivalist groups see Chapter Five.
differentiation is HT’s uncompromising stance, which has remained unaltered over decades.

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, the Hizbis are proud to have maintained their positions on topics such as political participation, nationalism, and the use of violence. While Western authorities have often accused the organisation of having radical views that may serve as a “conveyor belt to terrorism” (Baran, 2005 p. 11), the Hizbis interviewed for this study seemed quite happy with their rigidity. As stressed by Farah (senior female member of HT Australia):

We are rooted in Islamic teachings and in the method of the Prophet...Islam does not change, neither do we...unlike other “pseudo-Islamist groups”, we have remained anchored in our principles over the decades showing stability and reliability (Farah, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).

The Hizbis share the vision of Islam as an unchanging din (way of life). Therefore, they think that if it is really attached to the true tenets of Islam, an Islamist organisation would have no reason to change over time or to adopt milder positions. Hence, HT members see their uncompromising stance as an advantage over its competitors, who have not maintained the same consistency within their organisation and have changed their original positions and—even worse from the Hizbi’ perspective—allowed the rise of different trends within the same organisation. As previously stressed in this thesis, a very popular example of this often mentioned by the Hizbi is the Muslim Brotherhood (MB).

The group—sharing much with HT in terms of ideology and goals—is often accused by the Hizb of having walked away from its initial uncompromising Islamic stance, making space for political engagement in a kuffar system. Moreover, the Hizbis have distanced themselves from the MB because their leadership allowed the emergence of differences of opinion within the same

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148 See Chapter Five.
organisation, making the group appear inconsistent: “it is unacceptable how the Muslim Brothers can have jihadi thoughts coexisting with Sufism and still be considered ‘one organisation’” (Aysha, HT Australia, personal communication, May 22, 2016).

As highlighted by Aysha, HT members strongly believe that, to be effective and reliable, Islamic revivalist groups should not have inner division. Significant differences weaken the group’s activities, advocacy, and credibility. Lastly, the Hizbis’ positive intergroup differentiation is also based on the longevity of HT compared to its competitors in that it not only has a plan and is uncompromising and stable, but has also been on the global scene for more than six decades. As highlighted throughout the present dissertation, HT has survived harsh persecution all over the world and has continued to expand its activities even in the most hostile contexts.

The impression one has when speaking with current members or listening to their speeches is that they have great admiration for their organisation and consider it the only group capable of preserving the true essence of an uncompromising Islamic revivalist group while expanding globally. This sense of admiration and the conviction that HT is one of a kind attract members to the group and encourage long-term support. This support is also enhanced by members’ ideas regarding the standards to assess the performance of their organisation. These criteria were established by Taquiddin An-Nabhani in his book *Structuring of a Party* (An-Nabhani, 2001).

HT founder pointed out some indicators useful for evaluating the effectiveness and health of an organisation over time:

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149 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
If the *Hizb* is based on a correct program, it will have the following characteristics: *Vitality*, hence it grows; *Progress*, allowing it to advance from one stage to another; *Dynamism*, enabling it to deal with every aspect of society, and to move to any place in the country; and *Sensitivity*, enabling it to sense and feel all that happens in society and to influence society (An-Nabhani, 2001, p. 35).

Current members of HT strongly believe that their organisation still has the characteristics envisaged by An-Nabhani (vitality, progress, dynamism and sensitivity), and they argue that these unique features were essential for HT’s global expansion and survival. Furthermore, HT members see their organisation as vibrant, given HT’s global presence and the fact that it has progressed through its phases, especially in the Muslim world where HT leaders hope to soon establish the caliphate. As stressed by Uthman Badar, one of the leaders of HT Australia, in his interview with the author:

> In Muslim countries, HT aims to bring the *da’wah* to those who are in power so that they can initiate a revolutionary process to re-establish the caliphate. For instance, in Pakistan the army runs the show...so, HT goes to the General (who is a Muslim) in order to convince him that he needs to live under the caliphate to fulfil his Islamic obligations...we are currently in this stage in Pakistan [bringing the *da’wah* to the army] each country is different and the moving from a stage to another really depends on the local context (Uthman Badar, HT Australia, personal communication, March 12, 2016).

According to Badar, HT looks forward to implementing the third phase of their plan in the Muslim world because it will be the heart of the second caliphate. For this reason, members, who are usually locals but sometimes also accompanied by foreign HT delegations, frequently work with the authorities, to familiarise them with the Hizbi vision so that they might acknowledge the urgent need for an Islamic state. Badar’s words are also connected to the third and the fourth criteria set by An-Nabhani concerning the effectiveness of an organisation, namely dynamism and sensitivity.

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150 Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
While dynamism is related to the ability of an organisation to address every aspect of society and maintain a widespread presence in a territory, sensitivity relates to the power of an organisation to grasp the important troubles in the society in which it is established so that the group can make an impact. HT has proven its ability to exercise pressure on local authorities (both authoritarian and democratic governments) and to point out the main problems affecting a country, analyse them and suggest an alternative model that can address the major issues of the contemporary world, while continuing teaching and spreading the information on the great achievements of the Muslim world within the caliphate.

All these actions, constantly and relentlessly carried out all over the world, serve as markers to “tick the boxes” of An-Nabhani’s established criteria for the effectiveness of an organisation. The Hizbis see these criteria as prerogatives of their organisation and are certain of HT’s uniqueness and effectiveness in pursuing its goal; for these reasons members have no intention of leaving the group.

Conclusion

The present chapter examined HT’s ability to serve as a structure for its members, creating specific values and an encompassing social identity, which foster long-term membership. The analysis of the data showed that HT, through an on-going learning process, familiarises its members with new concepts that impact their worldview, which changes significantly after membership. This chapter explored the role played by the HT’s terminal value (the re-establishment of the caliphate) and four behaviours encouraged of its members. These behaviours function as the organisation’s instrumental values, namely,
preserving the purity of Islamic teachings, passive citizenship, activism within HT, and living with fellow Muslims.

Each of these behaviours has implications for members living in Western societies and fosters a progressive alienation of the individual from the out-group, projecting his/her sense of belonging and solidarity exclusively towards HT. Terminal and instrumental values form HT organisational culture, which is embraced by members and strengthened by a set of norms and rules members should comply with to achieve their goals. Not only does this chapter explain how HT as a structure creates values and a new social identity for its members, but it also sheds light on three main elements that consolidate HT members’ long-term loyalty.

The first element that emerged in the analysis of the data was HT’s “Shock, Demolish, and Rebuild Strategy” (Orofino, 2015, p. 404). Through this process, HT gradually replaces the individual’s previous beliefs with those that are group-sponsored, laying the groundwork for members’ acceptance of the HT ‘Aqedaah in a very personal way. In so doing, HT’s structural impact on the individual produces a gradual identification with the group, and thus the individual no longer feels alone. Instead, individuals start seeing themselves as a sort of “extension of the collective whole” (Al-Raffie, 2013, p.78), and once this perception is consolidated, it is very hard to change.

The second element fostering HT members’ long-term loyalty is the group’s ability to provide its affiliates with a sense of “self-efficacy” deriving from their collective action within the group. The convictions of having a methodology based on the Prophet’s example, working for the re-establishment of the caliphate as a religious obligation, and considering the caliphate as the only system that can protect the global ummah fuel the idea that members are doing
something important in an effective way within the group, which works as an incentive to remain in the group.

The incentive to stay is also reinforced by HT’s positive intergroup differentiation. This chapter showed how HT not only conveys to its members that they are involved in something important and worthwhile (self-efficacy), but also that they are part of the only legitimate group advocating for an Islamic revival capable of achieving this goal in a way consistent with God’s will. HT continually works to depict all other similar organisations (such as the Muslim Brotherhood or Jamaat-e-Islami) as unreliable and incoherent, promoting HT’s pristine self-image based on three unique elements: HT’s plan, its uncompromising stance, and its longevity. Again, once the vision of HT is embraced as the only legitimate actor within the broad context of Islamic revivalist groups, members will be more inclined to stay in the group rather than leave.
Let's be very clear about what Hizb ut Tahrir represents. Hizb ut-Tahrir was an Islamic political party established in 1953 ostensibly for the purpose of reigniting Islamic sentiments within the Muslim masses and consolidating the sentiments via the establishment of Islamic the caliphate…it champions the call for representing the government in the Islamic world. It does so exclusively through utilisation of intellectual and political means…. Hizb ut Tahrir has no association with terrorism or acts of terrorism and refutes any notion of being a conveyor belt to terrorism...Our policies and our approach and our methodologies have been set in stone from day one...we operate in the harshest conditions of the Muslim world where our members have been boiled to death and are subject to extra-judicial killings.

Wassim Doureihi, Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia

This concluding chapter summarises the general purposes and outcomes of this study as presented and analysed throughout the previous chapters. The whole thesis investigated HT’s appeal to some segments of Muslim communities living in Western states by exploring some specific features of the organisation that behaves both as an agent and as a structure. The quote presented above belongs to one of the most prominent members of HT Australia and emphasises two HT-specific elements discussed throughout the thesis: the non-violent character of the group and its coherence over time.

These two elements differentiate HT’s agency from other Islamic revivalist groups and still attract new members today. Following a brief overview of the
research project, this chapter provides a summary of the findings and of the implications of the present research. This chapter also offers suggestions for future research on the complex and largely unexplored universe of vocal radical Islamic activism.

7.1 Revisiting the Thesis

This thesis started with a dissatisfaction over a widespread view of radicalisation as a process leading to terrorism, as “what happens before the bomb goes off” (Neumann, 2008, p. 4). While leading scholarship to an almost exclusive focus on terror and violent groups when studying radicalisation, this assumption relegates vocal, radical Islamism to the periphery of academic enquiry. HT is emblematic of these vocal, non-violent groups and is one of the oldest and most active Islamist groups in the world, yet it is often considered less relevant compared to jihadi groups like Al-Qaida or ISIS. The presence of non-violent radicals still active today raised doubts on the validity of the first assumption about radicalisation as a process necessarily leading to terrorism.

In order to expand the knowledge on vocal radicals active in the West, this thesis used HT as a case-study. In shifting the focus to HT as a non-violent group and its appeal, the introduction asked one main research question: Why are segments of Muslim communities in the West attracted to radical expressions of Islam espoused by Hizb ut-Tahrir? and four sub-questions: a) How has HT’s evolution into an “organisation-like” actor contributed to consolidating its presence in the world over the past 60 years? b) How does HT challenge Western political and social structures? c) What are the unique features of HT compared to other Islamist groups? and d) How does HT create meanings and identities for its members, fostering long-term loyalties?
The preceding chapters dealt with the main research question and sub-questions. While not denying a link between radicalisation and terrorism (supposing that all terrorists are radicals but not all radicals are terrorists), this thesis sheds light on the role of HT as a prominent Islamist group with a global presence, whose role as an agent and as a structure deserves scholarly attention. In fact, HT represents the choice of all those segments of Muslims in the West who might agree with the arguments of jihadi groups, but who do not agree with their violent methods and the killing of innocents.

7.2 Summary of the Findings

Providing an analysis of HT both as an agent and as a structure, this study has resulted in numerous relevant findings. In particular, this study identified four main reasons why HT is appealing to some segments of Muslim communities in the West:

a) HT's organisational outlook

First, this thesis revealed how HT's appeal to members in the West is linked to its ability to stand as a durable, global and reliable actor increasingly resembling a transnational organisation. In the dominant discourses on HT, this dissertation has identified a strong inclination among experts to consider HT as a social movement. In its review of the most relevant publications, this thesis examined several articles, theses, and books using Social Movement Theory (SMT) to study HT. While SMT can be useful to explain the rise of certain groups and their capacity to mobilize resources, this theory proved limited for studying the current structure and functioning of HT.

This thesis suggested a new theoretical approach to studying highly institutionalised groups like HT, using some variables from the corporate world,
and in particular comparing HT with a specific kind of organisation, i.e. transnational corporations. Mapping the evolution of HT’s early scattered cells in the Middle East into a highly institutionalised organisation, this thesis identified three specific elements that today mean the group resemble more to an organisation rather than to a movement: HT’s transnational character, its flexible multidivisional (M-Form) structure, and the general environment where HT carries out its activities.

This thesis revealed that HT works as a transnational corporation whereby the central headquarters set out the guidelines and branches are responsible for implementing them as best as they can. This structural model, never explored before, represents a major strength for HT; while committed to implementing central guidelines, local branches are free to choose the most adequate strategy, tailoring it to the specificities of the local context. Therefore, HT local branches are free to choose how to adapt best to the local context, which works as the general environment for HT agency, setting limitations (such as bans and local restrictions) but also a number of opportunities in terms of human, technological and monetary resources.

This thesis also showed how HT’s ability to act as a transnational organisation, connecting the global dimension with the local one, is determined by HT-specific strategy, defined by this study as “LoGlo” strategy. As shown in **Figure 2**, each branch is responsible for taking local factors and linking them to the global call for the caliphate, assuring a deep connection between the local and the global level together with a unified stance among all cells in the world. Therefore, HT’s evolution into an organisation allowed it to better adapt to different local contexts, to maintain a unified stance at the global level, and to be stable.
b) HT’s ideological challenge to the West

There is another aspect of HT agency that appeals to segments of Muslim communities in the West and it is the social and political battle it carries out on the ideological level against the West as a system. By revealing the main ideological premises and claims used by HT to legitimise its harsh stance against the West, this study showed how the organisation is able to eventually turn the individual against national authorities using four main recurrent themes: alleged neo-colonialism practices (such as cultural imperialism), a continuous Western exploitation of Muslim lands, multiple military invasions under the name of “peace missions”, and widespread Islamophobia in the West.

Through the study of HT discourses, this thesis revealed how HT relentlessly works to instil in the minds of its interlocutors the idea that Muslims are in danger (both in the West and in Muslim-majority countries) and that the re-establishment of the caliphate is the only way to protect them. HT supports the idea that Muslims should not live within a kuffar man-made system of government, both because it is un-Islamic and because it constantly puts them in danger. For this reason, HT strongly supports the caliphate as an alternative model to Western liberal democracies and uses contemporary political and social grievances as a spark to stress the need for a glorious Islamic revival for the ummah and to promote itself as the sole “just and legitimate actor” to accomplish this mission.

HT’s political and social challenge to the West is very appealing to those segments of Muslims community in the West who consider (or start considering for various reasons) the dominant Western social, political and economic model as a failure, as well as for those Muslims who do not appreciate the theological vacuum often characterising Western societies. This thesis showed how HT offers
a platform whereby its members can interact with local and global authorities, expressing their dissent, allegedly campaigning for the rights of Muslims around the world, and for the re-establishment of the caliphate without engaging in violent acts.

In fact, this thesis highlighted that HT’s challenge against the West is primarily a “war of ideas” (Baran, 2004, p. 11), conducted by the organisation through the use of local and global grievances and aimed at fostering the progressive alienation of HT members inside the Western system, turning their loyalty exclusively towards HT and the global ummah.

c) HT’s uniqueness

HT’s appeal to some segments of Muslim communities in the West is also determined by some HT-specific elements that other Islamist groups do not have. This study has provided the evidences to support this argument by conducting a comparative analysis with two other groups, Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) and the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), which present similar ideological tenets and goals as HT. The analysis was developed using three agency variables, reflexive monitoring, the rationalisation of action and the motivations for actions (Giddens, 1984), and revealed three HT-specific elements that distinguish HT from all other groups advocating for the Islamic state today, namely, HT’s method, HT’s detailed vision of the caliphate, and HT’s consistency over time.

These elements determine HT’s appeal to new recruits. As identified in the interviews, current members found particular appeal in specific features of the group prior to joining, including the “rational, clear and effective” method presented by the organisation to re-establish the caliphate, the precise idea of how the caliphate should function (expressed in HT’s constitution for the Islamic state), and HT’s unchanging positions on important themes, such as political
participation, the use of violence, and nationalism. In addition, the fact that HT has never changed the motivations for its actions is also very appealing to potential HT members.

This study has identified three specific motivations for action that have characterised HT global agency since early 1953 and across more than 45 countries. In particular, the motivations for action identified by this research are: the vision of the caliphate as a religious obligation, the idea of the caliphate as the only way to stop the decline of the ummah, and the global Muslim call for the re-establishment of the Islamic state. HT uniqueness is mostly determined by the group’s consistency, demonstrated by the immutable character of its goals, method and motivations, which not only convey a high level of consistency but also provide a precise idea of the caliphate HT advocates for. These elements served as HT’s strengths, fostering the acquisition of new members thanks to the group’s capacity to attract by appearing as a reliable and stable actor within the broader context of vocal Islamic activism.

\(d\) HT’s role as a structure

HT’s role as a structure is the final element identified by this study determining HT’s appeal to segments of Muslim communities in the West. As a structure, not only is HT able to attract new recruits but also to retain current ones by fostering long-term loyalties. This view coincides with the image provided in Figure 3. Again, by innovatively comparing HT to transnational corporations, it was found that HT has developed a well-defined set of terminal and instrumental values that together constitute the organisational culture. While terminal values are the desired goals an organisation aims to achieve,

\footnote{Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.}
instrumental values are the desired behaviours the organisation urges its members to adopt.

The acquisition of the organisation-sponsored behaviours is facilitated by a set of norms and rules established to drive behaviour of affiliates in the direction envisaged by the leadership. HT’s main terminal value is re-establishing the caliphate, and to do so HT sponsors four specific behaviours among its members, namely, preserving the purity of Islamic teachings through a continuous learning process within HT halaqaat (study circles), promoting passive citizenship and discouraging participation in any political process other than the caliphate (such as running for elections or voting), activism within HT by carrying out specific roles (such as leaflet campaigns, seminars, and conferences organisation), and living with fellow Muslims (defined as members of the in-group who share the same vision).

Furthermore, by using a three-fold strategy, defined by this thesis as the “Shock, Demolish and Rebuild” Strategy, HT initially attempts to shock its interlocutor by exposing them to alarming truths, which mostly concern oppression of Muslims around the world. When some individuals show interest in HT’s work, they are then invited to learn more about the group’s ideology and goals. Hence, those individuals are initiated into a process of “demolition” of their previous ideas, which are replaced with a “re-building” of new HT-sponsored interpretative frames, leading to full adoption of the organisational culture.

As illustrated by the interviews with current members of HT Australia, this process might take up to two years, but leads to a complete transformation of the individual’s worldview, transforming the image of the caliphate from a “historical
relic” into the panacea for all the problems of Muslims around the world.\textsuperscript{152} The analysis of HT’s role as a structure also led to significant conclusions with regard to HT’s capacity to retain members. Long-term memberships are common to HT branches around the world and they are fostered by a specific process of acculturation.

HT is able to acculturate its members to the main goal of the organisation by promoting specific frames, in terms of values and rules, which shape the identity of members over time, who begin to consider their lives as “extension[s] of the collective whole” (Al-Raffie, 2013, p.78). This study also revealed how the ‘Aqeedah (doctrine) promoted by the group is a core element of HT-sponsored frames. HT pushes its members to develop a strong bond with the group’s ‘Aqeedah, rather than to a single charismatic leader, so that memberships remain stable over time. In fact, while leaders change, HT’s ‘Aqeedah has never changed and has functioned as a stable basis for long-lasting membership.

Finally, the analysis of HT’s role as a structure revealed how HT encourages its members to stay in the organisation for a long time owing to self-efficacy and positive intergroup differentiation (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Guan & So, 2016; Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Zimmerman, 2014). By providing a strong organisational identity, made up of terminal and instrumental values, and by conveying the idea of having unique elements (such as a clear vision of the caliphate, an uncompromising stance, and a rational method), HT leads its members to think that their organisation is the only effective and legitimate actor within the broad context of Islamic revivalist groups. Therefore, they feel fulfilled in working for HT, perceiving their actions as effective, in line with Islamic teachings, and giving them no incentive to leave the organisation.

\textsuperscript{152} Interviews with the author, Sydney, 2016.
7.3 Implications of This Study

Given the current limited scope of the literature on non-violent Islamic activism, this study represents a significant contribution to the understanding of this phenomenon. This case study of HT served to uncover the role played by vocal radicals as mass mobilisers, promoting a progressive disenfranchisement of the individual from the local environment, both in terms of people and local institutions, building his/her loyalty exclusively towards the global ummah and HT. This study revealed how vocal radicals are often allowed to carry out their activities legally in the West, directly challenging Westphalian states. By combining the analysis of members’ personal accounts with HT’s material disseminated online, this study illustrated HT’s ability to “shock, demolish, and rebuild” the individual’s personality, pushing its members towards a progressive estrangement from what is their de facto homeland.

This study first explored HT’s ability to estrange its members from the local context by analysing the group’s challenge to Western states in the political and social fields. This analysis emphasised that HT, even without the use of violence, is able to convinces its members of an ongoing Western agenda to destroy Muslims and the need to come together under HT’s banner to face this threat and stop this subjugation by the West. As a result, this study also reinforced the boundaries between radicalisation and terrorism, re-stating the significant differences between the two phenomena. While HT can be defined as a radical, Islamist group, terrorism is not a natural or necessary outcome of radicalisation.

As a radical group since its beginning, HT has not turned to terrorism and still maintains its profile as a vocal radical group. The present project also contributed to the specific literature on HT and represents the first contribution on HT Australia. In spite of its high level of activity and the controversies
involving some of its prominent members, as discussed earlier in this thesis, previous research has failed to address the Australian branch. HT Australia has rarely been mentioned in studies of Islamic activism in Australia, and when it has been mentioned, it has only been in passing (Akbarzadeh, 2013; Peucker et al. 2014). In contrast, this study is based on interviews with HT Australia members, which have highlighted the agency of the group in the country, as well as its objectives and operative methods.

Furthermore, this thesis is the first to analyse HT’s proposed constitution for the caliphate. None of the previous studies on HT have examined the contents of this document, which is essential for understanding HT’s vision of the Islamic state, the main authorities leading it, the principles and rules regulating its citizens, the proposed borders, and relationships with states outside the caliphate. Overall, by using HT as a case-study, this research has provided a new lens to study highly institutionalised Islamist groups using elements from the corporate world to elucidate specific elements characterising HT, such as the structure, the values, and fidelisation ability.

Using a constructivist perspective, these elements from the corporate world emerged as a new framework to better understand the complexity of Islamic activism in its non-violent and highly institutionalised form. Therefore, the author hopes to inspire new research on vocal Islamism, using unconventional theoretical tools that might promote a deeper insight into the phenomenon.

7.4 Potential Areas for Future Study

As a contribution to non-violent Islamic activism and to the study of HT, this research project has provided essential elements to better understand the attractiveness of HT as a vocal Islamist group operating in the Western world,
revealing the HT-specific characteristics that make the group appealing to some segments of Muslim communities in the West. However, there are a number of other related research topics that require further investigation. One such opportunity for future academic enquiry concerns the appeal of vocal Islamist groups for people from a non-Muslim background.

While this research has illustrated which elements of Islamism appeal to Muslims in the West, there is little much data is available on the factors that drive Westerners towards Islamism. Given the presence of several Western converts in HT, additional research is needed over the next few years to understand the appeal of vocal Islamist groups for Westerners. The findings of this project also provide new inputs for research on female Islamic activism.

Women are very active within highly institutionalised groups like HT; they have their own departments, carry out their own tasks, set up new strategies for appealing to young girls, while contributing to the achievement of the main goal of the group (in HT’s case, the re-establishment of the caliphate). Female agency in non-violent Islamist groups is often neglected by the scholarship, and thus further research on this topic would certainly enhance the understanding of vocal Islamist appeal for a significant portion of women in the West.

Finally, research would benefit from an investigation of the accounts of former HT members who have become violent activists. Given that the majority of HT members remain non-violent and remain life-long members, terrorism can be considered a schizophrenic behaviour for an HT member. Therefore, more research is needed to understand what factors trigger this unusual process in Hizbis. All of these potential areas for future academic research offer the opportunity for significant contributions and would enhance scholarly understanding of non-violent Islamism and its appeal in the West.
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APPENDIX A

Published Article by the Author of This Thesis (2015)
Author/s:
Orofino, Elisa

Title:
Longing for the caliphate while living in the state: an agent-structure analysis of the appeal of Hizb ut-Tahrir to Muslims in the West

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