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Religious Governmentality: The Case of Hizb ut-Tahrir

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Abstract

In this article on the role of religion in the formation of modern subjectivities we use a contemporary transnational Islamist organization, Hizb ut-Tahrir, as our example. We examine how technologies of domination are combined with norm-setting technologies of the self in shaping new modern Muslim subjectivities among its members. First, we present our theoretical perspective and analytical framework. Then we describe the ideological roots of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the intellectual universe of nineteenth-century thinking about Islamic reform. Third, we analyse the practice of tooling or processing minds, souls, convictions, physical appearance, and behaviour among members of the organization. As our major interest lies not in Hizb ut-Tahrir as such but in the role of religion in the formation of modern social subjectivities, we conclude with some general reflections on this question.

Keywords: modernity, religion, subjectivity formation, governmentality, Hizb ut-Tahrir

The construction of individuals as subjects was a central aspect of modernity in the later works of Michel Foucault. In studying ‘the constitution of the subject across history’, Foucault saw a ‘third way’ in the light of the methodological dominance of logical positivism and structuralism (1980, 160). Foucault observed two different but connected forms of the formation of the modern subject: technologies of domination and technologies of the self – i.e. external and internalized strategies for disciplining. He took the interaction and intersection of these technologies as his point of departure for the study of the broader modern regulation of social behaviour through coercion and technologies of the self. Foucault referred to this point of departure for controlling modern individuals as governmentality: a combination of institutions, bureaucratic processes, practices, and knowledge in cooperation that transforms the individual into a subject (Bröckling et al. 2011).

Historically, the modern nation state became the central actor for the implementation of these different forms of governmentality. State and subject formation, and modernity at the macro and micro levels occurred in parallel and intertwining processes, as the German sociologist Norbert Elias argues in his landmark book *Der Prozess der Zivilisation* (*The Civilizing Process*, Elias 1936). However, unlike Elias, Foucault discerned the origin of the historical process leading to these modern 'hermeneutics of the self' in religious technologies of the self. Christianity transformed the ancient obligation of knowing oneself into confession, 'knowing the truth about oneself' (Foucault 1980, 164): 'In Christian technologies of the self, the problem is to discover what is hidden inside the self; the self is like a text or like a book that we have to decipher' (Foucault 1980, 168). This supposed genealogical origin of modern governmentality in Christian technologies of the self has almost been forgotten in the field of contemporary studies of governmentality, which are largely dominated by a focus on governmentality as a neoliberal strategy for an indirect style of social control through the modern state (cf. Busse 2018, 40–65).

In this article we take the ideology and action of the Islamist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir as an example of 'religious governmentality' in contemporary modernity. We argue that religion defines the authentic Muslim subject in Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and provides the main source for the party's disciplinary strategies and means of control. We thus rediscover religion as a reservoir for modern technologies of both domination and the self in an Islamist non-state organization, and thereby as apart from their implementation by neoliberal forms of modern statehood.¹

In public media discourses in Europe, Hizb ut-Tahrir (the Party of Liberation) is known for its explicitly hostile agitation against democratic governance and liberal rights. We can observe the party's public appearances invoking the greatness of God ('*Allahu akbar!*') under the black flag of an imagined Islamic Caliphate. In its organizational structures, Hizb ut-Tahrir builds on features such as written regulations, conditioned membership, generalized motivations, and authoritative patterns of behaviour, thus closely following Niklas Luhmann's definition of a specifically modern type of organization (Luhmann 2008, 214). Thereby, the re-establishment of an Islamic polity referred to as a Caliphate is its political goal, and the organi-

1 Previously, we published an article on Hizb ut-Tahrir as a modern actor vis-à-vis state ideals and state formation in the Danish journal *TEMP*. See Jung and Sinclair: 'Modernitet, subjektivitet og religion: Hizb ut-Tahrirs forestillinger om den moderne muslim' in *TEMP – tidsskrift for historie* 6 (12): 130–47, 2016.

zation understands this Caliphate as a reassurance that Muslims around the world can practise Islam correctly and construct corresponding forms of modern subjectivity based on 'true' Islamic values and lifestyle choices. As a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, you are expected both to be able to refer to the party's ideological framework in a specific manner and to represent the party in dress and behaviour, constituting yourself as a religiously guided, moral modern Muslim subject.

Founded by the Palestinian Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani (1909–77) in 1953 in Amman, Hizb ut-Tahrir has spread to Europe, the Caucasus, South Asia, Australia, and the US, and it has more than forty national branches today. The first European branches were established in Germany in the 1960s, and in Britain in the 1980s. In Britain Hizb ut-Tahrir grew from 400 members in 1990 to approximately 2,000 in ten years due to the efforts of the controversial leader Omar Bakri Mohammed, who had immigrated to Britain from Syria via Saudi Arabia. Membership in Britain has since dropped to about 1,000. In the 1990s Palestinian refugees brought Hizb ut-Tahrir to Denmark. The membership of approximately 150 individuals has been stable since then. At the beginning of the twenty-first century the largest national branches are in Indonesia and Uzbekistan (Ahmad and Stuart 2009, 54, Baran 2004, 78, Osman, 2010).

In examining the global spread of Hizb ut-Tahrir, it is important to note that the party and its ideology have travelled with individual members from the Middle East to the rest of the world (Taji-Farouki 1996, Sinclair 2010, Osman 2010). Thus, the expansion is not the result of a conscious leadership strategy but can be explained with reference to general trends in contemporary migration, such as individuals fleeing war and persecution, or seeking work in other parts of the world. This is emphasized in an internal strategy document sent from the international leadership in Amman to European branches in 2005. This document makes evident that it was only in 2005 that the leadership in Amman realized – or officially recognized – that members who had migrated to Europe had no intention of returning to their Middle Eastern homelands (Sinclair 2010).

Using Hizb ut-Tahrir as our example, we seek to understand how a modern transnational Islamist organization combines technologies of domination with norm-setting technologies of the self in its ambition to shape new modern Muslim subjectivities. Thus, it is not Hizb ut-Tahrir itself which is at the centre of our inquiry but the more general question about the way in which a non-state organization employs strategies of governmentality in the construction of religiously defined modern subjects. In other words,

Hizb ut-Tahrir serves as a paradigmatic example in the examination of the implementation of an Islamist vision of modernity based on the assumption that an authentic Muslim modernity must be built on Islamic traditions.² Despite the fact that Hizb ut-Tahrir is a relatively marginal organization in terms of membership numbers, it holds research interest because of its deep roots in the more general and historically important modernization and reform initiatives among Muslim thinkers in the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. The organization affords a good illustration of the combination of modernity and religion in attempts to construct specifically Islamic forms of modernity by representatives of the Islamic reform movement.

We start with a short presentation of our theoretical perspective and analytical framework, which combines the works of Norbert Elias with those of Michel Foucault and Shmuel Eisenstadt. We then show the ideological roots of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the intellectual universe of the nineteenth-century movement of Islamic reform and its modernist thinking. We next move to the establishment of Hizb ut-Tahrir as an independent modern organization in the context of Middle Eastern state formation and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood as the otherwise dominant Islamist movement of the twentieth century. Following this excursion into the party's historical evolution, we discuss some organizational and behavioural patterns in Hizb ut-Tahrir, based on examples from its Danish branch. It is not the Danish context that makes these examples interesting but the general patterns of governmentality we can illustrate with these cases. We therefore analyse the more general practice of tooling or processing minds, souls, convictions, physical appearance, and behaviour among the organization's members instead of the local specificities of its Danish branch.³ We conclude with some reflections on the role of religion in the formation of modern social imaginaries based on the example of Hizb ut-Tahrir.

2 It is important to note that not all Muslims construct modernity with reference to Islamic traditions. There are big variations in secular, nationalistic, and religious modernity imaginaries among Muslims, and only in the last couple of decades has the discourse of the Islamic modern achieved a relatively dominant position (cf. Jung et al. 2014).

3 The empirical material consists of interviews with members and former members alongside participant observations at organization events, which were largely conducted in connection with a PhD thesis entitled *The Caliphate as Homeland* (Sinclair, 2010). The most recent interview with a Danish Media Representative was conducted in June 2013 (with Chadi Freigeh), while the most recent meeting with the current Media Representative (Junes Koch) took place in November 2014. Correspondence with former members is ongoing.

Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault and Shmuel Eisenstadt: from modernity to multiple modernities

Almost fifty years before the rise of contemporary governmentality studies, Norbert Elias discovered the mutual dependence of the evolutionary development of the modern state and the modern individual (Elias 1936). In his book on the 'civilizing process' Elias described how historically specific power configurations moulded the behaviour and habits of the modern individual. He examined the formation of the modern national state with its foundational monopolies of physical force and taxation; yet he also examined the micro-sociological dimension of the modern state-building process in the particular moulding of the human drive economy, that is, in the advancement of shame and embarrassment thresholds among modern individuals. According to Elias a more differentiated and stable self-control of the individual accompanied the macro-sociological process of the increasing social complexity of modern social structures. Elias maintained that the formation of modern state institutions was closely tied to the formation of the modern subject. Combining macro and micro sociological perspectives, Elias described modernization as a 'civilizing process' of the modern individual, in which outer constraints had gradually been transformed into self-restraint (Elias 1994, 164).

This connection between the emergence of social macro structures and modern forms of subjectivity was also a central concern in the later work of Michel Foucault. With his concept of governmentality Foucault contrived to reinvent Elias's theory of modernity. He reformulated Elias's transformation from outer constraints to self-restraints as a move from technologies of domination to those of the self. From a genealogical perspective Foucault described the evolution of the authority of the national state and the autonomy of the modern subject as mutually dependent. As a panoptic institution the state managed the individual, as well as the entire population (Foucault 1995). Thus, modern governance was understood as the discrete integration of technologies of subjugation or domination with technologies of the self (Foucault 1980, 162f.). In defining modernity as the ultimate challenge and task for individuals in creating their selves, Foucault stressed the fundamental role technologies of the self played as a core social mechanism in the construction of modern identities. Turning one's self into the object of a complex development task – identity formation as a constant process of self-hermeneutics – lay at the heart of Foucault's concept of the modern subject (Foucault 1984, 41). This complex development or unfolding of the self was the basis of modern subjectivity formation and referred, in Foucault's eyes, to the paradoxical nature of the modern subject: the fact that

the modern subject was partly the result of its own creation and partly of cultural structures determining which forms of subjectivity were socially recognizable and acceptable. Foucault thus emphasized the hybrid nature of the modern subject. He perceived modern subjectivity formation as a complex result of self-development and subjugation, just as he pointed to the modern subject as the result of historically different and competing forms of social order and discursive practices.

While Elias's theory builds on a long historical process regarding the connection between the formation of states and individualization, Foucault's theory includes analytical approaches to forms of governmentality not directly linked to states. Foucault defined governmental practices and technologies of the self as a complex consisting of relatively independent but interrelated or interdependent social practices, in which both the state and non-state organizations, social movements, and religious and non-religious ethics contributed to modern subjectivity formation (Dean 1994). Moreover, as already mentioned in this article's introduction, Foucault located the origin of modern governmentality in Christianity's historically specific transformation of the self-hermeneutics of antiquity. Foucault thus added a 'religious element' to Elias's theory, in which religious norms and values played no role in the 'civilizing process'. However, this religious element in Foucault's work refers only to the origin of modern self-hermeneutics. His connection with religion is only of a genealogical nature: Christianity is later absent from his description of the modern practices of the technologies of the self. Consequently, both Elias and Foucault maintain a kind of 'secularist bias' in marginalizing religion in their theories of modernity.

In his theory of multiple modernities, the late Israeli sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt suggested making religion an essential element of the sociology of modernity (Eisenstadt 2000 and 2001). Modernity has been an essentially contested concept in the humanities and social sciences, and the certainties implicit in the conceptual framework of the modernization theories of the 1950s and 1960s had vanished. The theory of multiple modernities marked a clear break with the classical notion of modernization as a linear process of the gradual convergence of societies towards a general model. Even more importantly, Eisenstadt's approach refuted the perception of classical modernization theories of a zero-sum relationship between modernity and religion.⁴ Instead of understanding modernization as the inevitable subsequent retreat of religious traditions, Eisenstadt explained the emergence of a multiplicity

4 For another revision of this assumption with respect to Christianity and Islam, see Casanova 1994 and 2001.

of different forms of modern culture as a combination of a 'programme of modernity' with distinct historical and religious traditions. He suggested making religion a key variable in the explanation of the factual varieties of social orders and individual identity constructions that could be observed in modern life. In short, the theory of multiple modernities reintroduced religion as a key factor in constructing historically observable forms of modernity.

In this article, our theoretical perspective is inspired by some of the key assumptions of Elias, Foucault, and Eisenstadt. Combining their perspectives leads us to an analytical frame of reference that combines modern forms of management with religious traditions and practices in historically specific applications of technologies of domination and the self. Foucault's concept of governmentality thus serves as a heuristic lens for our analysis of the historical emergence of the relationship between these technologies of domination and the self. We find that this heuristic concept is applicable not only to the analysis of state institutions but to the observation of the disciplining strategies implemented by non-state actors such as Hizb ut-Tahrir. Although Hizb ut-Tahrir's establishment and activities were never completely detached from the modern state as a political macro structure, Hizb ut-Tahrir is a non-state organization founded on religious grounds amidst a broader stream of modern Islamic reform movements. In striving for its long-term goal – the (re-)establishment of an Islamic Caliphate – Hizb ut-Tahrir seeks above all to create an ideal modern Muslim subject. In our reading, this modern Muslim should be generated through a regime of self-management and control, combining particular forms of technologies of domination with technologies of the self. Consequently, we understand Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities as an attempt to inscribe and justify specific forms of modern Muslim self-understandings among their members. Turning Elias's theory on its head, in Hizb ut-Tahrir's endeavour we can observe a kind of state building in reverse: a vanguard group with the aim of transforming individuals on the micro level to prepare Muslims for the state-like macro structures of a future Islamic Caliphate. However, this endeavour occurs in a context of secularization, understood as an increasingly pluralistic scenario in which Islamic ethics compete with alternative religious ethics and non-religious bodies of knowledge and morals (Taylor 2007). Religious traditions can, but do not necessarily, play a role in the construction of modern subjectivities. The later sections of this article will demonstrate how members of Hizb ut-Tahrir must juggle with these different ethical demands.

To summarize, our approach to the analysis of the example of Hizb ut-Tahrir is informed by contemporary perspectives from the sociology of

religion and elements of the work of Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault. We complete this framework with insights from the theory of multiple modernities by Shmuel Eisenstadt. The theory of multiple modernities has challenged the simplistic juxtaposition of modernity and secularization fundamentally. Rooted in civilizational analysis, the concept of multiple modernities expresses the spread of modernity to different cultural contexts. Eisenstadt's work describes global modernity in all its local varieties through a combination of modern patterns with religious traditions. He sees religion as a civilizational phenomenon par excellence that can play an important role in the formation of cultural variations of modernity (Arnason 2003, 232).⁵

The Islamic reform movement which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century affords an excellent example of the role religious traditions can play in the formation of modern social imaginaries. The movement's emphasis on Islam as a modern identity marker underpins Eisenstadt's theoretical perspective. Forming an opposition to secular modernists and religious traditionalists, intellectuals such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897), Mohammad Abduh (1849–1905), and Rashid Rida (1865–1935) argued for political, social, and religious reforms in which the reference to the Islamic traditions worked as a cultural anchor for the establishment of authentic forms of Muslim modernity. Thus, the idea of 'an Islamic modern' has developed during the twentieth century into a core reference in the competing Muslim discourses on modernity. In this discourse a broad variety of combinations of modern norms and institutions with reinterpreted Islamic traditions compete in their claim to represent an authentic form of modernity. Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology is an offspring of this stream of thought, which has been shaped and informed by this Islamic discourse of modernity.

The Islamic discourse of modernity: Hizb ut-Tahrir as an example

The foundation of Hizb ut-Tahrir took place in the context of the decolonization of the Middle East. In this historical process, the formation of modern national states in the Middle East and the spread of Islamic reform thinking were intertwined. The founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Palestinian Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani, came from the area near Haifa in northern Palestine. After the 1948 Arab–Israeli War he settled in Jerusalem but later moved to Lebanon, where he lived until his death in June 1977. His successor, 'Abd al-Qadim

⁵ Arnason, *Civilizations in Dispute*, 2003, 232. It should be noted that Eisenstadt and Arnason merely discussed religion as a cultural macro structure, without relating it to the internal diversity of religion's social practices.

Zallum lived in Amman in Jordan, where the leadership is believed still to be located (Taji-Farouki 1996, 1–36)⁶. He received his traditional Islamic education in both religion and law from the leading classical educational institution in Sunni Islam, al-Azhar in Cairo, among other places. Al-Nabhani was affiliated to a group of Palestinian intellectuals in Jerusalem close to the Muslim Brotherhood. This group consisted of a new generation of modern intellectuals who had graduated from Western-oriented universities and were familiar with modern forms of political organization and activism (Taji-Farouki 1994, 369). The Islamist discourse on modernity by the Muslim Brotherhood and this kind of modern political activism strongly inspired Nabhani's worldview and his concept of an Islamic state. Historically, we can perceive the foundation of Hizb ut-Tahrir as belonging to the more general expansion of the modernist but religious worldview of the Muslim Brotherhood movement throughout the region.

The Muslim Brotherhood was established by the Egyptian schoolteacher Hasan al-Banna in 1928. Hasan al-Banna was influenced by the classical Salafi reformers al-Afghani, Abduh, and Rida, from whom he adopted the idea that the answer to the political, social, and moral crises of the Muslim world lay in a conscious return to early Islam's exemplary order. To al-Banna only the Prophet Muhammad and the first four rightly guided Caliphs correctly represented Islam as faith, normative guidance, and social order (Mitchell 1969, 210). The struggle for independence and the formation of both a just Islamic social order and morally integrated modern Muslim subjects had to happen with reference to this 'Golden Age of Islam'. In his concept of the Islamic state, Hasan al-Banna emphasized the holistic perception of Islam by Islamic reform thinkers and further developed it into an all-encompassing socioreligious system, implicitly following globally relevant modern models of human development and social progress (Shephard 1987, 315). Besides, al-Banna contributed to the popularization of the intellectual idea of Islamic reform, and with the creation of a modern mass movement he took 'the defence of Islam' directly to the people (Mitchell 1969, 211). Through the Muslim Brotherhood he advocated a conscious reconstruction of society based on Islamic law (*sharia*), gradually developing the idea of Islamic governance by enhancing it from education to disciplining state control of the arts and the surveillance of correct religious practice (Commins 2005,

⁶ The information about the location of the international leadership has been confirmed regularly since 2003 in conversations with members of the Danish and British branches of Hizb ut-Tahrir, most recently in conversations with journalists and former members in Copenhagen in January 2019.

140). As a sociopolitical movement, the Muslim Brotherhood transformed the ideas of Islamic reform into an ideology in which a vanguard leadership constructed an authentic Islamic modernity by controlling people through a combination of technologies of domination and the self.

The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood occurred in constant tension between its normative ideal of a transnational Islamic community of believers (*umma*) and the factual establishment of territorial national states. Regarding this tension, the Muslim Brotherhood was eventually to play a double role in Middle Eastern politics. The movement was founded with reference to the Islamic reform movement's pan-Islamic tradition and advocated the unity of the Islamic *umma* in the shape of an Islamic Caliphate; yet the Muslim Brothers began to organize themselves in different national branches that contributed in their daily practice to the confirmation of the modern political landscape of territorial national states in the Middle East. This explains why the concrete politics of the Muslim Brotherhood organization in different national states such as Syria, Jordan, Egypt, or Tunisia was and is different, despite their shared ideological premise.

In Jordan the monarchy applied its own version of Islamic modernity as state ideology, in which the King represented the country's religious and national unity.⁷ In May 1946, Jordan achieved formal independence from Great Britain. In the same year King Abdullah I accorded the Muslim Brotherhood legal status as a charity organization (Jung et al. 2014, 47–64). In 1950, Abdullah succeeded in incorporating the West Bank in the Jordanian state. The Brotherhood's official recognition as a movement in Jordan and on the West Bank was due to two things especially: first, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan presented itself as an Islamic charity organization rather than a political party. Second, the individuals behind the Brotherhood paid special attention to the need to present its activities in accordance with existing law, recognizing the new Jordanian national state and the Hashemite monarchy as the political framework. Although Nabhani was ideologically close to the reform thinkers, he opposed the Brotherhood's increasingly nationalist and – after the introduction of martial law in 1957 – almost loyalist attitude to the Jordanian monarchy.⁸ Therefore, Nabhani clung to his resistance to the formation of national states and pursued his own political project of an Islamic Caliphate.

7 The Hashemite Jordanian monarchy traces itself to the Banu Hashim, the tribe from which Prophet Muhammad was descended.

8 From the late 1950s to the 1980s the Jordanian regime was tolerant of the Muslim Brotherhood because of the integration of religious legitimacy in the modern Jordanian state (Jung et al. 2014, 51–60).

In 1952 and again in 1953, Nabhani applied to the Jordanian Minister of the Interior for permission to establish a new political party based on an Islamist ideology and with the aim of re-establishing an Islamic way of life in a transnational Islamic polity. The party's aim was thus directed at both the formation of Muslim subjects and an Islamic social order. Although the creation of parties was allowed by the Jordanian constitution, the Ministry of Interior rejected both applications. Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, Nabhani was not prepared to tone down the political content of Hizb ut-Tahrir and compromise its ideology and revolutionary goal to ensure the party's approval (Taji-Farouki 1996, Sinclair 2010). The political content of Nabhani's party is evident in the name: Hizb ut-Tahrir. *Hizb* means 'party', an indication of the organization's clearly political purpose. Meanwhile, the concept of *hizbiyya* (party) had negative connotations for Hasan al-Banna, who therefore chose not to name the Muslim Brotherhood a party.

The Jordanian regime assessed that the underlying ideology of Hizb ut-Tahrir failed to conform to the country's new legal foundation because of Nabhani's project's aim of replacing the newly founded Middle Eastern national states with a transnational Caliphate. The Jordanian government considered this political aim of Nabhani a threat to the territorial integrity of the Jordanian state and the political legitimacy of the monarchist regime. Furthermore, the Hashemite rulers feared Hizb ut-Tahrir's political agenda might result in religious strife in the population. As a consequence of his political activities and after his futile applications for permission to establish Hizb ut-Tahrir, Nabhani was eventually imprisoned. However, his prison sentence did not lead to the abolition of political activities in the name of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Between 1950 and 1954 the party began to spread Nabhani's ideology from its newly established offices in Damascus, Amman, and Beirut, as well as its main office in Jerusalem.

This ideology was documented in eight books Nabhani had written before 1953. These writings formed – and still form – Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological backbone (Taji-Farouki 1996, 9). They have since been supplemented by five titles: today's members talk of thirteen books forming the textual corpus that is read in study circles and constructs the premise of the party oath taken by all its members.⁹ This material is referred to as 'adopted', because it represents the party's official views and political goals. The texts provide the background for

9 In his book *Afhopperen* (2008) (*The Defector*) Mohammed Hee explains that before 2008 individuals were only to read three books before swearing the oath. Another former member explained that the study circle had to complete five. In the British branch more books are read before members take the oath.

what Nabhani launched as the correct insight into Islam, and they present the recipe for how the world's balance of power can be challenged and changed. The fact that Nabhani wrote himself into the modern political discourse was evident in 1953, when he authored a draft constitution for a future Caliphate. The draft constitution contains six chapters and 181 articles, covering general reflections on Islam as the doctrine and foundation of the political system (Caliph, leadership committees supporting the Caliph, leaders of jihad, provinces, administration, the *umma* council, the army, and courts of law), the social system, the financial system, education, and foreign policy. The draft constitution, which was revised and republished in 1979, demonstrates that the party ideal of an Islamic caliphate was built on elements characteristic of a modern state – despite not referring to its territorial dimension.

At the very basis of Nabhani's argumentation was the understanding that his interpretation of the life of the Prophet Muhammad was the most correct and precise. Yet compared with common definitions and understandings of central words and concepts in the Qur'an and descriptions of the Prophet's customary practice (*sunna*), it is clear that Nabhani added new and modern meanings to these religious concepts. Good examples of this practice are the concepts of party, *umma*, and awakening. According to Taji-Farouki, al-Nabhani read and understood the Islamic *umma*, the description of the Prophet's closest followers in Medina, as a group of individuals bound by persuasion and belief to such an extent that they could be addressed and mobilized as a unit. His perception of the original *umma* is thus very similar to what is otherwise normally understood by a modern political avantgarde party (Taji-Farouki 1994, 375). Nabhani maintained the Caliphate would be established through the creation of a political vanguard. He imagined Hizb ut-Tahrir as a modern political party forming a kind of revolutionary vanguard capable of transforming common perceptions and patterns of thought in society from their roots (Taji-Farouki 1994, 370). He therefore introduced detailed descriptions of how such a political elite would spread the message to the masses through the correct understanding of Islamic tradition and religious practice. The parallels with Lenin's party concept are easily recognized (Taji-Farouki 1996, Sinclair 2010, 136–144).

Al-Nabhani's goal of social and individual transformation included two elements, both of which have been core ideas of the Islamic reform movement's constructions of modernity: the connection between new interpretations of Islamic tradition and societal reform. He wished to start at the root of the Islamic textual religious corpus and initiate what he understood to be more precise readings. An example of this is his reading and reinterpretation

tion of the concept of *umma* as discussed above. He next wished to alter the social life of the contemporary Middle East from its roots with reference to these more correct readings of the religious scriptures. With such new readings and understandings of the Islamic tradition's central concepts Nabhani turned towards the political project: the transformation of contemporary societies through the formation of a modern Muslim subject, with the aim of establishing a Caliphate. In this transformative strategy of 'the individual first' we can detect a reversal of Norbert Elias's model of the civilizing process. Nabhani's Islamic transformation was to be based on an awakening among Muslims as individual believers first; an awakening based equally on political and religious elements, as well as new inventions and references to Islamic tradition (Taji-Farouki 1994, 374 and 393). The formation of the ideal modern Muslim subject represents the first step towards the organization of the *umma* within a political, albeit non-state, framework. The establishment of an Islamic Caliphate through consciously organized subjectivity formation at the micro level was at the centre of Hizb ut-Tahrir's aim.

We now turn to examples from a European context of how Hizb ut-Tahrir can be understood through the concept of governmentality, based partly on technologies of domination and partly through guidance for self-disciplining. As mentioned in the introduction, the examples are from Britain and Denmark, and were shared in interviews with former members conducted between 2003 and 2009 as part of a wider study of Hizb ut-Tahrir in these two countries. However, the aim here is to provide illustrations of the instrumentalization of modernity in Hizb ut-Tahrir rather than to analyse the two national branches at any length.

Discipline in Hizb ut-Tahrir: a gradual transition between the external and internalized forms of discipline

Nabhani's 1950s ideal of an avantgarde party leading the masses towards the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate has been followed by detailed strategy documents. These documents describe a number of technologies of domination for how party members should work, seek influence, and manipulate – which positions in society are thought to bring the party closer to a takeover of power and the establishment of a new Islamic polity. Moreover, they demonstrate the departure point of the individual in this transformation process. The latest strategy document to which we have had access (2005) describes how the party's European branches should seek to manipulate individuals holding certain positions in society. Individuals of interest are influential in the military,

the political system, or as opinion makers or academics. Party members are also to direct different types of attention at these individuals, depending on whether they plan to remain in Europe or express a desire to 'return home' to a (Middle Eastern) Muslim-majority country (Sinclair 2010, 87–90).

In the 2005 document, we find an acknowledgement that not all Muslims in Europe may wish to return to Muslim-majority countries, and that a large percentage is expected to remain in Europe. Although the timing of the party's top membership's realization is remarkably late, given that the first waves of guest workers arrived in the 1960s and have since been reunited with wives and children, with many having had grandchildren in their new European homelands by 2005, the content of the document has had consequences for the European branches' daily work. As mentioned, members are to direct their attention to opinion makers and other individuals regarded as influential. A former member of the Danish branch, Mohammed, explained that it was part of his job description as a member of the Danish leadership committee to monitor and communicate with Danish researchers studying the organization, and if at all possible seek to influence their work. The purpose of this effort was to manipulate analyses and statements about Hizb ut-Tahrir in a Danish context, and over time influence the researcher's attitudes to the organization's ideology and activities – something we have experienced first-hand when publishing on the group in Denmark.

Another party document, the *Administrative Dossier* of 2001, reveals that the guidelines for recruiting new students of al-Nabhani's writings to study circles and conducting them are very detailed, aiming to create or enhance certain traits. It must always be clear in study circles that the goal is to cultivate an Islamic personality and mentality. It is thus prohibited to discuss anything but the content of the adopted material during study circle meetings. The leader of any study circle, the *mushrif*, must prepare well, remain calm, and maintain a low tone of voice, regardless of the questions or discussions that arise. He is also responsible for all study circle members and must be informed of each individual's private address, occupation, and general condition, because he is advised to check up on them regularly throughout the week. However, apart from this more general interest, he must pay special attention to new members of the circle and ensure he identifies those with the greatest potential (Hizb ut-Tahrir 2001, 18–22). The dossier documents thus demonstrate that party members are instructed both concerning their individual behaviour and attitude and in how integral to party activities social control is.

Party strategy and ideology become a frame within which members are guided in their religious practice and other behaviour. In study circles and

discussions members are taught to perceive Islam as an all-encompassing ideology, and that any attempt to differentiate between politics and religion is counterproductive. Members perceive Islam as the beginning, middle, and end of everything and as the answer to every conceivable question. It is important in this connection to note that among members of Hizb ut-Tahrir no differentiation is made between religious texts and their interpretation in ideological books. Furthermore, in party study circles members learn that working towards the establishment of the Caliphate is equivalent to correct Islamic practice – thus being ‘a good Muslim’ and working for Hizb ut-Tahrir’s political goals become one and the same cause. The complete conflation of the party’s political goal, the establishment of the Caliphate, and the perception of correct religious practice was obvious in a conversation with a former member in the UK. This person shared with us that his first doubts about the validity of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s message and aim preceded his final break with the organization by more than a year. The reason was his fundamental fear of hell. Working for the party and aspiring to salvation as a practising Muslim had become inseparable for him. Although he had no fear of repercussions from other members if he left, he had a real fear of divine punishment. We can interpret this as an expression of a technology of domination in Hizb ut-Tahrir supported by the monopolizing of religion and the promise of salvation. The party and its rules are perceived as gatekeeping the transcendent world and affecting the member’s access to salvation.

Faruk’s story affords another example of how external domination and internalized disciplining become difficult to separate in Hizb ut-Tahrir’s creation of a moral religious subject. In an everyday situation, Faruk became aware of a discrepancy between his primary and secondary socialization, and as a moral subject found himself in a dilemma. One day, while still a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, Faruk found himself nervous and uncomfortable in a lift with two strangers, a man and a woman who were not acquainted. Faruk realized that if the man reached his destination and left before Faruk, Faruk would be left alone with the woman and would have to rush out, because being alone with a woman who was neither a spouse nor a relative in a confined space was deemed inappropriate for a Hizb ut-Tahrir member. He did not feel nervous and uncomfortable because he was uncertain as to what was expected of him in the situation, but because he realized that the behaviour into which he had been socialized as a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir would appear rude or provocative. A quick unplanned exit from the lift would be noticed, and his skin colour and Middle Eastern background meant

Faruk expected the woman to conclude that she was being discriminated against by a reactionary Muslim man – and he felt he might be guilty of this.

Faruk therefore began to question the behaviour to which he had grown accustomed as a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir. The technologies of the self Hizb ut-Tahrir had communicated to him, and which he had internalized to be recognized as a moral subject in the circle of members, no longer felt right or justifiable, and increasingly discomfited him. He became unsure that he wanted to be a person whose behaviour might be seen as rude or discriminatory. Before the situation in the lift Faruk had spent eight years studying Nabhani's texts and argumentation, and he had adopted and internalized the message, vision, behaviour, dress code, and everything else. He socialized with other members almost exclusively and propagated the party vision on family holidays in Muslim-majority countries. For eight years, he had done his utmost to live up to the party's standards for good behaviour and work for the Caliphate.

The lift experience and its associated doubt and discomfort were the beginning of Faruk's exit from Hizb ut-Tahrir. However, more than a year passed before Faruk could leave for good, and he emphasizes the lift story when he explains why he found leaving Nabhani's organization difficult. The story is a good example of how members internalize party rules, thereby distancing themselves from the rules and norms of the surrounding society. In the lift, Faruk began to understand that the adopted behaviour was in opposition to the norms of his upbringing and those shared by the Danes around him. In light of these contrasting and opposing moral imperatives he realized he could not remain a Hizb ut-Tahrir member. He could not continue working for a religiopolitical project alongside people who had stopped treating others decently. The example shows a conflictual meeting between two sets of ethics and two kinds of moral subject in the individual's hermeneutical formation of the self. Moreover, the example shows that Hizb ut-Tahrir is challenged in controlling individual members through technologies of the self, because these are often in opposition to alternative self-technologies adopted by the primary socialization in the family and by Danish educational institutions.

Modernity endeavours in Hizb ut-Tahrir

The examples above serve as illustrations of the top of the party's structures providing guidelines determining the activities of individual members in the various national branches. In all activities there is a clear goal, from which there must be no deviation. The party clearly acts as a modern organization in

highly generalizing the motivations and behaviour of its members. In the 1953 draft constitution (1979), and as the various strategy documents demonstrate, Hizb ut-Tahrir does not work from a loose sketch of their ideal state but with a clear strategy for the obtaining of its goal – the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate through individual social transformation – and members follow these guidelines strictly to the letter. Both the ideal and the external guidelines regarding the strategy and goal are internalized. It is here that religion and questions of belief, including the quest for salvation, play important roles for members. Religion becomes instrumental in making the modern transition from technologies of domination to technologies of the self. Former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir have explained that the successful execution of events results in satisfaction due to the national and international leadership's recognition, serving as a reminder of the political project's aim and how the individual member sees themselves as a Muslim. A female former member, Aisha, said that her role as hostess and being responsible for childcare at large public events made her feel she was demonstrating what the Caliphate was about, namely discipline, order, social responsibility, and striving for justice. In this role she was – in our words – already present mentally in the Caliphate.

For members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, membership results in the interlacing of work and hobbies, worldviews and morality, providing a strong sense of direction and meaning. Membership becomes a lifestyle. Wherever you go and whatever you do, you bring the party and its attitudes, persuasion, religion, and ideology with you. This is illustrated by Faruk's encounter in the lift and is made very visible by a uniform dress code. In daily activities, women wear a headscarf and a *jilbab*, an ankle-length coat, which at conferences in Denmark are usually black and white (black *jilbab*, white scarf), making them very easily recognizable. As a rule, male members wear dark trousers and shirts, trimmed beards and short hair – all in all a discreet look. The body is a very important self-technological element, because one expresses where one belongs with it. Thus, the visible identity markers of dress and behaviour are used by members to create and express the party's and their own expectations concerning what the Caliphate will bring: discipline; order; a sense of group belonging; and unity. We find this to be the result of the unification of external and internal discipline.

Governmentality through religion

In the introduction to this article, we highlighted the centrality of the concept of governmentality for the understanding of modernity in the later works

of Michel Foucault. The concept focuses on the specific connection between technologies of domination and the self in the formation of the modern subject. From this theoretical vantage point we have interpreted Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities as an example of modern governmentality by a non-state actor. We have situated the party's construction of modern Muslim subjects within the intellectual tradition of the modern Islamic reform movement. This approach to understanding Hizb ut-Tahrir suggests two findings with implications for the more general discussion of the role of religion in historical imaginaries of modernity. First, using Hizb ut-Tahrir as our example, we find that governmentality as an analytical strategy extends beyond what is merely concerned with relations between the state and the formation of modern subjects. Non-state actors, organizations, and (religious) social movements also use technologies of domination and inculcate technologies of the self in striving to create modern individuals as subjects. Second, our analysis is critical of the understanding that modernity is a purely secular construction. The establishment, ideologically constructed worldview, and organizational make-up of Hizb ut-Tahrir is utterly modern, affording a good example of how imaginaries of a modern social order and modern subjectivity can be closely tied to religious traditions.

In this sense the modern Islamic reform movement in general and Hizb ut-Tahrir in particular provide examples that illustrate Eisenstadt's theory of the role of religion in the historical development of multiple modernities. The party is a paradigmatic example of the concept of multiple modernities Eisenstadt defines through the interlacing of modernity and religious traditions. The religious discourse is a determining tool in the party's variety of modern governmentality. Hizb ut-Tahrir's strategy documents present prescriptive texts with norms and values for the generalization of membership, and thereby the formation of the desired modern subjects. The tradition of Islamic reform has been the core bearer of the construction of such modern imaginaries, in which the reference to Islamic religious traditions plays a key role in shaping different forms of Islamic modernity. However, these very different interpretations of Islamic modernities generated by major representatives of Islamic reform also point to the limitations of Eisenstadt's theory. His theoretical framework does not allow explanations of the emergence of multiple modernities within civilizational complexes such as Islam. During the twentieth century, the Islamic reform movement has branched out into a network of political, social, and cultural positions. There is a diverse variety of Muslim modernities, among which the Muslim Brotherhood stands out simply because it has developed into a worldwide

mass organization and achieved a certain dominance in the choir of voices in the Islamic reform debate (Jung et al. 2014, 37–46, Jung and Sinclair 2015).

We suggest that Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and activities are understood as forming one voice within this diversity of competing constructions of Islamic modernities that has evolved in the context of the modern Islamic reform movement. The emergence of multiple modernities within Islam is due to a broad set of contextual variables that influence the more general idea of constructing specifically Islamic subjectivities and social orders (cf. Jung 2016). Moreover, we consider Hizb ut-Tahrir a prime example of a non-state actor aiming to implement a form of 'Islamic modernity' in its members' modern imaginaries of religion, politics, and the self through technologies of domination and the self. Hizb ut-Tahrir is thus both a religious organization and a political project aiming to create a modern form of social order and corresponding types of Muslim subjectivity.

Nabhani's resistance to the territorial form of the modern state was an important contextual variable in the development of the peculiar modern imaginary on which Hizb ut-Tahrir relies as a contemporary organization. The ideology of the party shares central elements of the Muslim Brotherhood's worldview regarding the creation of an Islamic order and the modern Muslim subject. However, it differs decisively from the Brotherhood in its rejection of the territorial order of modern national states. Although Nabhani constructed the Caliphate in line with an institutional plan – constitution, party, leadership organization, military, courts, and provincial administration – reminiscent of the structure of modern national states, he did not accept the territorial limitations of such a statehood. He maintained that the modern political order in the Muslim world should encompass an undivided Islamic *umma* and not be based on the 'artificial' unity of an international organization of a diversity of Muslim national states. Hizb ut-Tahrir thus spoke against the dominant structure of the modern political system with the consequence – and this is our hypothesis – that the party ultimately played a relatively marginal role among Islamist organizations, because the majority of them had accepted the national state as the arena for their activity. Furthermore, the global political structure proved a powerful context that also influenced Hizb ut-Tahrir. This is evident in the fact that even Hizb ut-Tahrir eventually had to organize some of its activities as a transnational party with national branches.

In terms of modern subjectivity formation at the micro level the party employs Islamic traditions as a disciplinary means of controlling the access to the transcendent world and thereby to individual aspirations for salva-

tion. In its transformative strategies, the party draws on its members' fear of hell as a technology of domination. Hizb ut-Tahrir has monopolized the interpretation of Islamic religious traditions as a means of disciplinary control with respect to its members. The organization maintains this monopoly of religious interpretation through the sectarian separation of its members from the rest of society. Social exclusion and religious monopoly are the two most prominent tools the party uses in governing its members. The party employs religious faith as a core element in the transition from the technology of domination to the technology of the self. According to Hizb ut-Tahrir, the process of forming the Muslim subject in accordance with the party's interpretation of Islam is completed when members have internalized the prescriptive norms and values of the party as pivotal to salvation.

Returning to the more general theoretical considerations of Foucault, however, the formation of modern subjectivities is a permanent process of negotiation between various and often contradictory social practices rather than a final result. The example of the lift perfectly illustrates these constant negotiations, in which the governmental practices of Hizb ut-Tahrir compete with other social practices and normative discourses at local, national, and global levels. Faruk directly experienced this competition in the lift, and it led to the manifestation of a moral conflict between different normative frameworks, eventually justifying his decision to leave the organization. Thus, the example of the lift can be read as an indication that the party's means of religious governmentality are no stronger than those other moral structures with reference to which the idiosyncratic individual identity constructions of modern subjects occur.

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