

The Appeal of Vocal Islamism in the West: The Case of Hizb ut-Tahrir vis-à-vis Its Competitors

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Abstract : Islamism is a very debated topic in the West but almost exclusively explored in its violent forms. Nevertheless, a number of “vocal radical Islamist” groups exist in the West and legally operate because of their non-violent nature. Vocal radicals continually inspire individuals and lead them towards specific goals and priorities, sometimes even towards violence. This paper uses the long-living group Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) to explore the elements that make the organization appealing to segments of Muslim community in the West. This paper uses three agency variables - reflexive monitoring, the rationalization of action and the motivations for actions – to analyze HT’s appeal vis-à-vis two other Islamist groups, Ikhwan al-Muslimun and Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), having similar goals and the same high international profile. This paper concludes that HT’s uniqueness is given by its method, detailed vision of the caliphate, consistency over time and the emphasis placed on the caliphate as the leading force of HT’s unchanged motivation for action.

Keywords : agency, caliphate, Islamist groups, radicalization, vocal radicals

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