RADICALIZATION OF ISLAM IN CENTRAL ASIA: THEORY, TRENDS AND PROSPECTS

ORTA ASYA'DA İSLAMİ RADİKALLEŞME: TEORİ, TRENDLER VE GÖRÜNÜM

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ABSTRACT

Proliferation of radical Islamist movements across Central Asia since the collapse of the Soviet Union is substantiated by the increasing support to such groups as the Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Al Islamiyya and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in the form of political, cultural and educational activities. This paper aims at demonstrating how theoretical tools from social movement literature can contribute to the analysis of transformation of potential followers into active supporters for these radical Islamic groups. It argues that use and application of socio-structural models to explain the rising support for these groups is of limited utility since such models tend to ignore variation among these movements. Rather this paper focuses on resource mobilization, political opportunity and framing perspectives in the study of social movements in order to advance our understanding of the diverse ideological, organizational and resource management work required to facilitate the mobilization of potential followers.

Key Words: *Radical Islam, Central Asia, New Social Movements, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*

ÖZET

Sovyetler Birliği'nin yıkılışından itibaren Orta Asya'daki radikal İslami hareketlerdeki bariz artış Hizb ut-Tahrir, Al Islamiyya ve Özbekistan İslami Hareketi gibi grupların siyasi, kültürel ve eğitim aktivitelerine artan destek ile gözlemlenmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı sosyal hareketler literatürünü kullanarak bölgede faaliyet gosteren radikal İslamcı grupların potansiyellerini nasıl aktif desteğe çevirdiğinin analizidir. Sosyal-yapısal modellerin bu tip gruplara artan desteği açıklamadaki faydası, gruplar arasındaki varyasyonları iyi analiz edemediğinden tartışmalıdır. Bunun yerine, bu çalışma sosyal hareketler literatüründe bulunan kaynak seferberliği, politik fırsatlar ve ifade etme modellerini kullanarak radikal İslami grupların potansiyel takipçilerini aktif destekçilere dönüştürmeyi nasıl başardıklarının daha iyi analiz edileceğini savunur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Radikal İslam, Orta Asya, Yeni Sosyal Hareketler, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Özbekistan İslami Hareketi*

Radicalization of Muslims is regarded as a major threat to the stability and security of the international community. The Iranian Revolution, attacks on Western

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embassies, hostage takings and other violent acts by Islamist radicals have all led to expectations of an inevitable clash between a militant Islam and the West. Unrest among Muslims of the former Soviet Union in Caucasus, in former Yugoslavia, in Xinjiang in China, in Palestine and in North Africa has strengthened images of a potentially explosive Islam in global politics. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, Islam in Central Asia also constitutes a very powerful transitional force.

Radical Islam came to the center stage of policy makers in the post- 9/11 era. However, before concrete strategies can be formulated to deal with it, the nature and dynamics of radical Islamist mobilization itself must be understood. In order to do that we can benefit from the knowledge generated through years of study in other parts of the world such as the Middle East and in different disciplines such as social movement theory, in identifying what is radical Islam. What causes it? What motivates an individual to join an Islamist group and possibly use violence? Under what conditions these groups manage to transform their potential followers into active supporters?

While factors such as tension between the state and Islam, the encroachment of foreign cultures and the presence of foreign financial support are important for the mobilization of Islamists, they are not sufficient in and of themselves to explain why some movements manage to gain more followers and others do not. The varying strengths of Islamist groups and the degree to which they mobilize supporters is ultimately the result how groups strategically use political opportunities, mobilize their resources and the frames they create and use to define their grievances and goals. Radical Islam in Central Asia is undeniably in part a result of a repressive political atmosphere and authoritarian policies. However, this paper argues that a better understanding of Islamist radicalization in the form of more involvement in educational, cultural and political activities of radical groups in Central Asia can be garnered through application of models of social movement theory which considers framing and resource mobilization as equally important factors.

To achieve this, I proceed in following steps: In section one, I discuss the historical evolution of Islam and outline the insight that this historical account offers for the current spread of political Islam in Central Asia. In section two, I illustrate theoretical inadequacies found in the literature on socio-structural approaches to radical mobilization, outline the main models of social movements theory and its relationship to successful mobilization of followers by Islamist groups respectively. Section three, focuses on the context of Central Asia to illustrate the mobilization process of the Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), two well known radical Islamist groups operating in the area, in light of resource mobilization, political opportunity and framing perspectives in the study of social movements. Lastly, I conclude by exploring the implications this study presents for the broader international context and for politics in Central Asia.

Historical Overview

Arriving in Central Asia in the mid-seventh century, Islam became the dominant religion in the region by the eighth century.[1] Until the rise of the Soviet Union in the twentieth century Islam continued to be the major force shaping the culture and identity of Central Asian peoples. Two variants of Islam can be mentioned corresponding to an opposition between tribal zones and the urban city centers that were conquered by Muslim Arabs. This latter form is a product of the religious schools (madrassas) of Samarkand and Bukhara and is often fundamentalist Islam. The dominant figures are the clergy. Islam in tribal zones on the other hand was imposed and penetrated through the intermediary of *Sufi* brotherhoods such as the *Yasawiyya*, which incorporate elements deriving from the shamanistic traditions of Turkic nomads.[2] Overall the Islam in Central Asia was *quietist*[3], following the liberal *Hanafi* Sunni School which is known because of its respect for individual freedoms as in Afghanistan and throughout the Indian subcontinent[4], only to be challenged by *Wahhabism*[5] starting in the 1970s.

Under Soviet rule, Islam throughout Central Asia had been driven underground, but even Soviet totalitarianism could not destroy it entirely. Mosques were closed, destroyed, or turned into something else.[6] Young Muslims joined the Soviet youth organization rather than going to the mosque. The repression of Islam under Stalin was very severe from 1927 onwards. In 1943 the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims in Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM)[7] was created. Two offensives against Islam were to follow after Stalin's death. Khrushchev delivered the heaviest blow by forcing the closure of 25 percent of official mosques between 1958 and 1964.[8] The effect was particularly felt in Tajikistan (16 out of 34) and Uzbekistan (23 out of 90). The four official mosques stayed open in Turkmenistan and of the 26 Kazakh and 34 Kyrgyz mosques only one in each republic closed.[9] These figures are indicative of the greater weight of Islam in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan compared with the other three republics. The last offensive was under Gorbachev in 1986, which was largely overshadowed by the general liberalization atmosphere. During

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[1] For in-depth accounts of history of Islam in Central Asia, see David Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia,* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998); Richard Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road,* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1996); Mehrdad Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia,* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia,* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[2] Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations,* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), pp. 143- 144.

[3] David Lewis, *Temptations of Tyranny in Central Asia*, (London: Hurst Publishers, 2008), p. 185.

[4] For detailed discussion of this school of thought see, Abdulaziz Sachedina "Sunni Schools of Law" in John L. Esposito (Ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 456-464.

[5] Wahhabism in the strict sense practice puritan religious doctrine preached in Saudi Arabia.

[6] See Yaacov Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union: From the Second World War to Gorbachev,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), and see also Mehrdad Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia,* pp. 1-70.

[7] SADUM was a system of muftiyyas with territorial coverage, which did not have a national anchor point. See Ghoncheh Tazmini, "The Islamic Revival in Central Asia: a Potent Force or a Misconception?", *Central Asian Survey,* Vol. 20, No. 1, 2001, p. 65.

[8] John Anderson, "Islam in the Soviet Archives: a Research Note", *Central Asian Survey,* Vol. 13, No. 3, 1994, p. 46.

[9] Ibid.

Soviet rule Central Asia was on the edge of the Islamic world, with no contact with the major centers of Islamic civilization. The Israeli-Arab conflicts, the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Palestinian issue and much more had passed them by. When independence came to the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia most Muslims possessed a rudimentary knowledge of Islamic teachings.[10]

In 1991 as borders reopened, the Central Asian states found themselves back in the main current of a turbulent global religion. Similar to peoples of Central Asia, the region's political leaders were often poorly informed about Islam and their secularism was hardly dented by the cultural practices and Islamic traditions of the past. However many ordinary people began seeking religious answers in the ideological vacuum that followed the collapse of Communism. Islam was well equipped to provide simple answers to the complex questions of identity and purpose that accompanied the political turmoil of independence.

Overall this short historical overview allows us to make three points with regard to Islam in Central Asia after the collapse of Soviet Union. First, although the Islamic teachings and learning were damaged under Soviet rule, the majority of the population's self-perception as Muslim was still in tact. Olcott argues that consciousness of Islamic heritage is one of the determinants of Central Asian identity "even if a particular individual knew almost nothing about religion and observed none of its tenets".[11] Therefore Islam is an integral part of the identity of the majority of people in the region. Second, the religious revivalism which emerged in the 1980s, after a period of underground development is not foreign import. According to Roy, "It is the public appearance of a culture and a religious practice that never entirely disappeared".[12] Third, political Islam or radical Islamist groups in the region is not an import either. The militant networks existed under the Soviet Empire such as *Adolat* (Justice), *Tawba* (Repentance), and *Islam Lashkalari* (Warriors of Islam) and re-emerged on the surface with the political reforms of the 1980s.[13]

Socio-Structural Models, Social Movement Theory and Radical Islam

Islamist groups can be defined as social movements that base their principles, organization and goals on their understanding of Islam. Radical Islamist groups that this study discusses are those movements that ideologically reject democracy as well as the legitimacy of political pluralism. Their goal is to bring about a radical change in social, political and economic aspects of a country. While radical movements refuse to work within the established state institutions, not all of them favor violent methods to achieve their goals. The HT is an example of a radical Islamist movement that denounces violence while The IMU can be considered one that favors violent methods to achieve change.[14]

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[10] T. Jeremy Gunn, "Shaping an Islamic Identity", *Sociology of Religion,* Vol. 64, No. 3, 2003, p. 390.

[11] Martha Brill Olcott, "Islam and Fundamentalism in Independent Central Asia" in Yaacov Ro'i (Ed.), *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies,* (Portlan: F. Cass, 1995), p. 21.

[12] Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations,* p. 144.

[13] See Vitaly N. Naumkin, *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Between Pen and Rifle,* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), p. 61.

[14] Both groups have updated websites, see (http://english.hizbuttahrir.org/) and (http://furqon.com/) (in Uzbek)

Radical Islam: Socio-Structural Factors

Beginning with Ted Gurr's seminal book *Why Men Rebel* (1970), scholars studying the causes of radical mobilization have introduced several types of socio-structural strains which produce collective action and debated their relative importance.[15] The major models of this thought rely on socio-economic, identity-based, and political factors.

The first model focuses on *socio-economic factors* in explaining the psychological alienation that leads to radicalization of Islamists.[16] Such arguments reflect mostly on the relative depravation models of Ted Gurr to argue that Islamist movements represent modern reactions to rapid urbanization, overpopulation, unemployment, poverty, marginalization of lower- middle classes, uneven income distribution and corrupt elites. In this socio-economic atmosphere disenfranchised youth seek radical changes through protests and, in some cases, violent struggle. The literature in this category has shown indicators that membership in Islamist movements is partially correlated with socio-economic dislocations, including poverty, income inequality and lack of basic social services.[17] Poverty, lack of hope for the future, or corrupt system make Islamist groups that promise creation of an Islamic state, isolation from the global community or return to a past state of glory very attractive.[18] Political Islam from this perspective is the result of an explosion of grievances.

However such assumptions do not fit the reality. According to Mohammed Hafez, among many others, varying economic circumstances across regions and time periods do not correspond with the occurrence of rebellions and protest movements.[19] In fact there have been multiple cases of economic grievances, but violent movements based on such grievances are rare.[20] Also such explanations fail to answer the question "Why radicalization?" These individuals and groups could have chosen ideologies that directly address their grievances. Instead of leftist tendencies, they chose to follow Islamist symbols and figures.[21]

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[15] For a comprehensive overview, see Quintan Wicktorowicz (Ed.), *Islamic Activism: Social Movement Theory Approach*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

[16] For instance see Lisa Anderson, "Policy-Making and Theory-Building: American Political Science and the Islamic Middle East" in Hisham Sharabi (Ed.), *Theory, Politics and the Arab World*, (New York: Routledge, 1990) and *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, (New York: Routledge, 1991).

[17] For example see Eric Davis "Ideology, Social Class and Islamic Radicalism in modern Egypt", in Said A. Arjoman (Ed.), *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, (Albany: State University of New York, 1984) and R. Hrair Dekmejian "Islamic Revival: Catalyst, Category and Consequences" in Shireen T. Hunter (Ed.) *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

[18] See Mark Tessler "The Origins of Support for Islamist Movements", in John Entelis (Ed.), *Islam, Democracy, and the State in North Africa*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997).

[19] Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslim Rebel? Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003), p. 2. Similar studies also include Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758- 1834*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978).

[20] For example the Islamic revolution in Iran occurred in times of economic plenty.

[21] Examples of alternative routes are discussed in detailed in Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 20.

Furthermore, background analysis of individual members of Islamist groups suggests that they are neither economically deprived nor marginalized individuals searching for a purpose in their lives. Rather, study of motivations to join Islamist organizations in the West suggests that, they usually come from technically advanced sectors of society with good educations.[22] Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri are members of the Saudi and Egyptian upper class respectively and in general the 9/11 terrorists and suicide bombers do not fit into this profile. Also Harik argues that Hezbollah followers consider the party as a representative of middle and upper middle class rather than the lower class.[23] In short, grievances, be it economic or political, do not create a movement. Explanations based on such factors, as appealing as they are, can be considered incomplete and thus misleading. The data on radical Islam and oppositional movements in general indicate that the equation of economic or cultural distress with radicalization is misplaced.

The second model focuses on the relative importance of *identity politics* in explaining Islamic radicalization.[24] These arguments attempt to explain radicalization as a reaction to the growing influence of Western and other non-Islamic cultures in pre-dominantly Muslim societies. According to this Muslims will embrace radical religious beliefs in response to what they see as cultural imperialism. This is bolstered by the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia or long colonial confrontations like in Algeria. According to this model, radicalization occurs as a process of cultural defense.

However this approach fails to account for several empirical cases. For instance, if identity determines behavior, why would the AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) in Turkey, which has its roots in political Islam, pursue a European Union membership for Turkey, or why would Iraqi and Afghan Islamist movements cooperate with the US and/ or NATO to overthrow nationalists or Islamist regimes in their countries? More problematic with the political culture approach is its emphasis on primordialism. Case studies and comparative studies have shown that many radical religious and political movements change their identity and behavior over time.[25] Therefore, identities are not primordial rather these groups change their behavior and ideologies, they radicalize, de-radicalize and moderate.[26]

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[22] Donatella Della Porta (Ed.), *Social Movements and Violence: Participation in Underground Organizations*, (Greenwich, Conn: JAI Press, 1992), p. 5.

[23] Judith Palmer Harik, "Between Islam and the System: Sources and Implications of Popular Support for Lebanon's Hizballah", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 40, No.1, March 1996, p. 55.

[24] For example see Martin Kramer, *The Islamism Debate*, (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center, 1997) and John Esposito, *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism or Reform?*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997)

[25] For studies on cases of radicalization see Saad Edine Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4, December 1980, pp. 423-453; Oliver Roy, *Failure of Political Islam*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994); Graham Fuller, "The Future of Political Islam", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 2, March-April 2002, pp. 48-64; John Esposito, *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism or Reform?*, 1997; and Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslim Rebel? Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, 2003. For the studies on the causes of moderation of the radical Islamist movements see Carrie Wickham, "The Path to Moderation: Strategy, Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party", *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 2, January 2004, pp. 205-228. Mona El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38. No. 3,

A third model within the socio-structural strain argues for the relative importance of *politics* as a source of discomfort and alienation. Radicalization is perceived as a reaction to predominant authoritarianism, state repression and forced exclusion.[27] There is strong empirical evidence to support this approach, most notably the cases of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt between 1954- 1969, the MB in Syria (1980s), and the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) in Tajikistan during 1992- 1997 among others.[28] In these cases, the tendency to work within a democratic framework and/or established state institutions initially existed, and radicalization occurred in response to exclusion and political repression. Also radical movements which are prone to violence are mostly born in authoritarian states during highly repressive periods.[29] For instance, Jihadism was born in Egyptian prisons where torture was a widespread practice and Salafism was developed in Saudi Arabia whose ruling regime has an infamous human rights record.[30]

However, there are cases in which similar types of political pressures have led the way to the opposite of radicalization; namely moderation. As opposed to the Algerian scenario of a decade long and bloody civil war, political pressures on Turkish Islamists in 1997 led to the moderation of their rhetoric and behavior.[31] Political strains have led to similar effects in the cases of Moroccan Justice and Development Party and Egyptian *Wasat* Party.[32] Therefore, while these political strains might be instrumental in radicalizing a movement, they are by no means sufficient to do that on their own.

Social Movement Theory and the Process of Politics

Alternative to structural explanations, different perspectives in the study of social movements have been advanced to explain the causes of radicalization of Muslims.[33] This approach addresses several weaknesses of the structural-

August 2005, pp. 373-395; Janine Clark, "The Conditions of Islamist Moderation: Unpacking Cross-Ideological Cooperation in Jordan", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 4, November 2006, pp. 539-560; Jillian Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation: Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[26] For example, Egypt's Muslim Brothers' radicalization/ militarization under Gamel Abdel Nasser (1954- 1970) and gradual de-radicalization under Anwar el- Sadat (1970-1981) and his successor Hosni Mubarak (1981- 2011).

[27] For example see Lisa Anderson, "Fulfilling Prophecies: State Policy and Radicalism", pp. 17- 31, and Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslim Rebel? Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, 2003.

[28] For detailed analysis on these cases see Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements*, 2009, Chapters 3 and 4.

[29] See Anouar Boukhars, "Political Violence in North Africa: The Perils of Incomplete Liberalization", Brooking Doha Center Analysis Paper, No. 3, January 2011, (www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/.../01_north_africa_boukhars.pdf)

[30] Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements*, 2009, p. 22

[31] See Hakan Yavuz, *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006).

[32] See Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements*, 2009, pp. 33- 61.

[33] Hakan Yavuz, *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, 2006, Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslim Rebel? Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, 2003, Carrie

psychological approaches, especially its lack of dynamism and its emphasis on its causal linearity and instead it emphasizes the dynamism of the political environment and asserts the primacy of process over structure. According to Hafez, "it is neither necessary for Islamists to be contented to become moderate nor sufficient for Islamists to be deprived to become rebellious."[34] This approach emphasizes the dynamism of the political environment and asserts the primacy of process over structure. It is an attempt to explain Islamic radicalism by investigating the political environment in which Islamists operate, the mobilization structures through which they garner their resources and the ideological frames through which they legitimize their actions.

Social movement theory and the approaches that focus on the process of politics rather than the structure are well placed to address the issues of contentious politics[35] and Islamic mobilization in Central Asia and elsewhere. Social movement theory focuses on three perspectives: political opportunity, resource mobilization and framing.[36] The first perspective, political opportunity, analyzes history and the current political context in which the movement takes place to understand the opportunities and constraints placed on a movement or group.[37] For instance, exclusion or inclusion from the political system plays a powerful role in radicalizing movements. Accordingly, when given the opportunity to participate in politics at the price of moderation, radical movements respond positively to this stimulus. Hezbollah's trajectory in Lebanon demonstrates this dynamic. In their case the group not only moderated its position to enter electoral politics but also formed alliances with Christians and supported Christian candidates in elections.[38] However, explanations of radicalization that are based primarily on political opportunity structure suffer from the same problems as the socio-political approach mentioned earlier; while Hezbollah moderated the IMU radicalized.

The second key perspective, resource mobilization focuses on the capacity and ability of the group to mobilize given internal and external dynamics.[39] Grievances are crucial but not sufficient for radicalization of a social movement. Rather a social movement must be able to use those grievances to mobilize resources to take necessary action. Such ability depends on the extent to which group can control

Wickham, "The Path to Moderation: Strategy, Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasat Party", 2004; Quintan Wicktorowicz (Ed.) *Islamic Activism: Social Movement Theory Approach*, 2004.

[34] Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslim Rebel? Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, 2003, pp. 19-20.

[35] Following Tarrow, contentious politics can be defined as collective activity on the part of claimants, which uses extra-institutional channels to communicate their demands. Demands and activities to achieve them exist in relation to the prevailing political system, members of the elite, or the opposition. Social movements are oppositional challenges, which are sustained continuously beyond the distinct moment of protest. See Sidney Tarrow, "Political Protest and Social Change: Analyzing Politics", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 4, 1996, pp. 874-883.

[36] See Doug Adam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[37] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, 1978.

[38] Marwan Khawaja, "Repression and Popular Collective Action: Evidence from the West Bank", *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1993, p. 48.

[39] Mayer Zald & John McCarthy, *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*, (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Books, 1987).

and manage its resources.[40] For instance, an authoritarian regime as compared to a liberalizing regime, or a democratic regime with emphasis on institutions and the rule of law, presents different resource mobilization opportunities. While we expect groups to form associations and hold meetings freely in a democratic system, groups in authoritarian regimes mobilize activists through informal networks such as friendship and neighborhood groups.

The framing perspective is about modifying group's goals due to multiple factors such as changing dynamics of political opportunity or fluctuating membership status. The ability of a movement to transform the potential for mobilization into actual action depends on the movement's ability to frame their issues and goals in a way that evokes solidarity with potential participants.[41] This emotion in turn enables support, recruitment, or mobilization and a movement's frames can be a reflection of the collective identity. At the same time, frames can help create identity and shape societal perceptions. For instance a slogan "Islam is the solution" creates a meaning through framing:[42] first, it creates a target to blame; secular authoritarian regimes or corrupt leaders, second, it offer a vision of a desirable world; re-establishment of Caliphate, third, it provides a rationale for collective action. A successful frame is one that is shared widely by followers and sympathizers and thus capable of garnering more support and increasing the chances of collective action.

Although social movements theory and the perspectives discussed above do not necessarily explain the radicalization of Central Asian Muslims alone, they do provide a useful tool in understanding how radical groups such as the HT and the IMU managed to transform a their mobilization potential into actual mobilization of supporters.

Central Asian Context

In Central Asia, Islam cannot be characterized by a single tradition and the original texts of faith have always been challenged by pre-Islamic and non-Islamic beliefs. Given this decentralized nature of Islam and the prolonged isolation from the sources of knowledge about the religion, one can contend that it is highly unlikely that radical Islamic groups such as the IMU and the Hizb ut-Tahrir and their arguments in favor of jihad and the recreation of seventh century caliphate could gain support among Central Asian Muslims. However the facts we observe today is that the radical groups are well equipped to garner support and are capable of mobilizing their potential followers in educational, cultural and political activities.

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[40] Resources include material and organizational resources, moral authority to command commitments from its members and access to state institutions. For more on resources see include Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 1998, p. 76.

[41] Enrique Larana, Hank Johnson, Joseph R. Gusfield (Ed.), *New Social Movements From Ideology to Identity*, (Philedelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), p. 191.

[42] Jean-Francois Legrain, "HAMAS: Legitimate Heir of Palestinian Nationalism?" in John Esposito (Ed.), *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism or Reform*, (Boulder, CO: Kynne Reiner Publishers, 1999), p. 94.

The focus of Islamic revivalism and radical Islam in Central Asia has been the Fergana Valley, a fertile and densely populated region with deeply religious residents divided between three different republics Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In the Soviet period borders between the republics were meaningless and people crossed back and forth without border or customs control. In the post-Soviet era, as relations between republics worsened borders became bolder with barbed wires and land-mines.

Reference: (http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps)

The valley has traditionally been the center of political activity such as the secular nationalist *Birlik* party, which was crushed by the Uzbek government[43] and served as the main entry point to the region. Major radical groups which can be considered as precursors to the IMU and the HT such as *Adolat, Tawba,* and *Islam Lashkarlari* were active in the valley. The methods and strategies of these groups differ, but they are radical in the sense that they share the common goal of overthrowing the secular government and establishing an Islamic state. Radical Islam is the most active in Fergana Valley in Central Asia, but as a result of governmental repression many members have moved to neighboring countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and to Afghanistan and Pakistan, two primary bases for terrorists and radical sympathizers. In turn those members have become excellent missionaries for Islamic radicalization of people at large.

Lewis argues that the government propaganda in Central Asia tends to put all pious believers into a broad melting pot of Islamic radicalism.[44] However different groups had very different ideologies and tactics. Some were committed to violence,

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[43] Alisher Ilkhamov, "Uzbek Islamism: Imported Ideology or Grassroots Movement", *Middle East Report*, No. 221, 2001, pp. 40-46.

[44] David Lewis, *The Temptations of Tyranny in Central Asia,* (London: Hurst and Co., 2008), p. 184.

such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a group that eventually became closely linked to Taliban and then to Al-Qaida.[45] Others, like the Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islamiyya (The Islamic Party of Liberation), sought radical change but proclaimed their commitment to peaceful means. Islamic groups are divided by ideology, personality and resources; at other times they have recognized a common cause such as opposition to the secular regimes in their countries. But they rarely cooperate openly and most suffered from the tendency of all radical movements to fracture and split over strategy and money.[46] Therefore it is difficult to research them but some general groups are clear.

The rest of this section will turn to social movement theories to provide an analysis of two radical Islamic groups active in the region the HT and the IMU. In doing so I will utilize political opportunities, resource mobilization and framing models to understand the circumstances under which an Islamist groups operating in the region manage to gain more recognition and followers.

Hizb ut- Tahrir

The Hizb ut-Tahrir, set up by a Palestinian Islamic scholar and political activist, Taqiuddin an-Nabhani, in 1952, was a marginal group in most Muslim countries. The HT combined many aspects of socialist party organization with a commitment to the creation of an Islamic state and the restoration of the original Islamic caliphate.[47] The HT sought to overthrow of all Muslim regimes, since they had failed to implement Islamic norms, and the unification of all Islamic countries in a recreation of the Caliphate, which was abolished in 1924. Tactically, the HT differentiated itself from other radical organizations, it did not join coalitions with other groups and refused to work within constitutional systems and has been openly against *Tadarruj* (Gradualism).[48]

The group officially rejects violence as a method and disregards military struggle for re-establishing the Caliphate.[49] Moreover, the HT distanced itself from terrorist attacks toward civilians and even condemned the September 11, 2001 attacks on World Trade Towers and Pentagon.[50] Nevertheless the ideology of the

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[45] For a discussion of links between IMU and other terrorist organizations see Richard Weitz, "Storm Clouds over Central Asia: Revival of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 27, No. 6, 2004, pp. 505- 530.

[46] See Didier Chaudet, "Hizb ut-Tahrir: An Islamist Threat to Central Asia?", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 1, April 2006, p. 114; and David A. Snow & Scott C. Byrd, "Ideology, Framing Processes, and Islamic Terrorist Movements", *Mobilization: An International Quarterly Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1, June 2007, p. 123.

[47] Suah Taji-Farouki, *Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for an Islamic Caliphate*, (London: Grey Seal Books, 1996), pp. 1-15. Also see detailed analysis of Zeyno Baran, *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Islam's Political Insurgency*, (Washington DC: The Nixon Center, 2004), (http://www.nixoncenter.org/Monographs/ HizbutahrirIslamsPoliticalInsurgency.pdf).

[48] Emmanuel Karagiannis & Clark McCauley, "Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami: Evaluating the Threat Posed by a Radical Islamic Group that Remains Non-violent", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Spring/Summer 2005, p. 318.

[49] For more on HT's program see Members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain, *The Method to Re-establish Khilafah and Resume Islamic Way of Life*, (London: Al-Khilafa Publications, 2000).

[50] According to the leader of HT in Great Britain "such attacks are not condoned by the shariah…this is not proper or even effective method of fighting Western imperialism" in Mahan Abedin, "Inside

HT is anti-Semitic, anti-Western and disseminates radical Islamist ideology and calls for existing regimes in the Muslim world to be overthrown.[51] Therefore, while the group speaks for its commitment to peaceful methods of struggle, it is possible to argue that at some point they can turn to violence and as Naumkin asserts "…one has to accept that the atmosphere of intolerance created by such organizations facilitates, however inadvertently, the spread of jihadism."[52]

In terms of strategy the HT divides political struggle into three stages.[53] The first stage involves propaganda and recruitment, and what the HT calls a "stage of culturing", building up a membership base. The second stage involves propaganda within the wider Muslim community, seeking to persuade them of the legitimacy of their ideas. In this sense, the HT operates very much like the ideal Marxist-Leninist political party seeking to be the "vanguard" of the working class. In the final stage the HT seeks to overthrow governments and implement its version of an Islamic political order. According to Karagiannis all indications with regard to the current stage of struggle leads to the first stage, that of recruiting members[54]. Their plan involves no gradualism and has very little clarity about how the transition from second to third stage will work.

How can we utilize the aspects of social movement theory to better understand the transformation led by the HT in which potential followers turned into actual supporters in Central Asia? As mentioned before the political opportunity approach suggests that when given the opportunity to contest in the political arena, radical movements tend to moderate their position while a repressive political atmosphere is likely to lead to more radicalization. Moreover political exclusion is likely to lead to violence since alternatives are drastically limited in closed political environment.[55] In Central Asia where few checks and balances exist to restrain the political elite, opposition groups such as the HT have no real alternative. The HT was initially a small organization operating in Fergana Valley during early 1990s and grew quickly despite the government's attempts to repress it. As the government crackdown began in 1998 first in Uzbekistan and later in neighboring countries towards not only group's members but also their families, relatives and friends the HT had the opportunity to organize and recruit more followers to their cause. The group's organizational skills were instrumental in recruiting ordinary criminals to their cause and some of the already members were hardened by the prison experience and when released they were more radical than when they

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Hizb ut-Tahrir: An Interview with Jalaluddin Patel, Leader of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the UK," *Jamestown Foundation's Spotlight on Terror* 2, No. 8, August 2004.

[51] See; (http://english.hizbuttahrir.org/index.php/about-us).

[52] Vitaly Naumkin's response in "Author- Critic Forum: 'Radical Islam in Central Asia: Between Pen and Rifle'", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 26, No. 1, March 2007, p. 153.

[53] Members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, *The Methodology of Hizb ut-Tahrir for Change*, (London: Al-Khilafah Publications, 1999), p. 32. Also see International Crisis Group, "Radical Islam in Central Asia: Responding to Hizh ut-Tahrir", *Asia Report*, No. 58, 2003.

[54] Emmanuel Karagiannis "The Rise of Political Islam in Kazakhstan: Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 2, April 2007, p. 304.

[55] Donatella Della Porta (Ed.), *Social Movements and Violence: Participation in Underground Organizations*, 1992.

entered. The government's repression has also forced the HT to operate even deeper underground than before.[56]

The rise of the HT in Uzbekistan, which signaled regime vulnerability in the region, has led to repressive state responses, which in return produced new political opportunities for mobilizing and organizing followers.[57] Today the HT is the largest and best organized Islamist group in Central Asia, which makes it the central target for security authorities in the region. Overall the HT enjoyed political opportunities created in a repressive political environment to challenge the social and political order especially in Uzbekistan. Although political opportunity perspective alone cannot fully explain the popularity of the HT, it allows us to better understand how the group interacts with local political environment.

Resource mobilization is the process by which the group assembles resources for the purpose of pursuing the group's interest through collective action.[58] In terms of normative resources, the HT has established strict membership criteria, in which only individuals who accept the HT's beliefs, aims and strategies are recruited.[59] Although the HT's sources of income are subject to speculation, the group has solid material resources. In addition to private donations from local businesses, the group acquired domestic financing in Central Asia as well as from abroad, including Saudi Arabia.[60] Organizationally, the HT has a sophisticated political structure, which gathers administration "even from their adversaries in the police and security organs".[61] Therefore, conditions for the HT in terms of resource mobilization exist.

In addition geography, demographics and local social structure constitute an environment where the HT can easily acquire more human and organizational resources. For instance Fergana Valley divided between three different republics has the highest population density and a large population with young people forming majority.[62] This in return provides the HT with valuable human resources. Also membership in cell-structured organization, with strict adherence to the HT's principles and believes, which provide mutual support like family or clan members fits well with traditional regional social patterns. Such organization not only

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[56] International Crisis Group, "The IMU and Hizb-ut-Tahrir: Implications for the Afghanistan Campaign", *Asia Briefing,* No. 11, 2002.

[57] Sidney Tarrow, "States and Opportunities: The Political Structuring of Social Movements," in Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy and Mayer Zald (Ed.), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 58- 61.

[58] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, pp. 172- 188.

[59] "Hizb ut-Tahrir is a political party that admits to its membership men and women, and calls all people to Islam and to adopt its concepts and systems." … "The bond that binds the members of this bloc must be the ideological bond. One is affiliated to the bloc once he embraces the Aqeedah and once he matures in the party culture." Quoted in (http://english.hizbuttahrir.org/index.php/about-us).

[60] BHHRG Report on Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan: Victimiser or Victim?, *British Helsinki Human Rights Group*, 2006.

[61] International Crisis Group, "Central Asia: Islamists in Prison", *Asia Briefing*, No. 97, 15 December 2009, p. 3.

[62] United Nations, *Uzbekistan: Common Country Assessment*, (Tashkent: United Nations Office in Uzbekistan, 2003), p. 9.

creates a solidarity among group members but also enhances an image of 'one of us' against the corrupt local and national politicians.

Frames, which can be described as intentional ways to communicate a message so as to mobilize supporters are often used by social movements. In addition to identifying targets and offering visions of a desirable world, framing help social movements to establish a reasoning to motivate collective action.[63] For example the HT in Uzbekistan has framed President Islam Karimov as a Western puppet and an evil personality[64] in addition to the claim that he has some Jewish roots on the maternal side.[65] Such framing suggest that ruling class is different not only because of their superior economic conditions but also "because of what they symbolize- Westernization and its consumerism and moral laxity".[66] Law enforcement and courts are also framed as enemies of Islam since they part in persecutions against group's members. Even human rights groups are framed as biased and racist: "Were these organizations really established for the protection of human rights irrespective of religion, race and nationality? Or only to protect all people but the Muslims?"[67] Master frame of the HT is based on 'clash of civilizations' which claims a political, economic and military struggle between the West and the Muslim world and suggests a link between global concerns and national issues.[68] In this sense, the HT's framing is successful in mobilizing devout Muslims as part of a wider struggle between Islam and the West.

The HT's membership was at first confined to ethnic Uzbeks, based in Fergana and in southern Kyrgyzstan. According to ICG the group has captured some followers in the north of the country as well.[69] Since 2001 its recruitment has been boosted by international events, notably the war in Iraq, and also by the US support for the Karimov regime, which feeds into their view of the world, in which the US and Israel are leading an anti-Islamic crusade with the assistance of the Muslim regimes around the world. The HT has been able to frame these international events in ways that resonate with the local population.[70] Overall, the HT has managed to successfully mobilize its resources, recognize and utilize international political opportunities, and frame issues in both local and international terms to gain further adherents.

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[63] David Snow & Robert Benford, "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and participant Mobilization" in Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi, and Sidney Tarrow (Ed.), *From Structure to Action: Comparing Movement Participation across Cultures*, International Movements Research, (Greenwich, CN: JAI Pres, 1988), pp. 197- 218.

[64] Hizb ut-Tahrir Uzbekistan 'Shto poistenne kroestya za attakoi Karimovim na torgovchev?', pamphlet distributed by Hizb ut-Tahrir, in Emmanuel Karagiannis (2006), p. 273.

[65] Igor Rotar, "An Interview with Sadykzhan Kamuliddin", *Jamestown Foundation*, 14 March 2004.

[66] David A. Snow & Scott C. Byrd, "Ideology, Framing Processes, and Islamic Terrorist Movements", 2007, p. 124.

[67] Hizb ut-Tahrir Uzbekistan, "Inson huquqlarini himoya qilish tashkilotlariga", pamphlet distributed by Hizb ut-Tahrir, in Emmanuel Karagiannis (2006) p. 273.

[68] Hizb ut-Tahrir, "The Inevitability of the Clash of Civilizations", (London: Al-Khilifah Publications, 2002).

[69] International Crisis Group, "Women and Radicalization in Kyrgyzstan", *Asia Report*, No.176, 2009.

[70] BHHRG Report on Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan: Victimiser or Victim?, *British Helsinki Human Rights Group*, 2006.

The HT provides a good case study to understand the models developed by social movement theory. It is through skillful framing the HT managed to politicize grievances, with careful consideration of opportunities a collective identity rooted in religion was developed and successful use of potential movement resources led people to reinterpret their social and political environment.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

Tahir Yuldashev, a local mullah from Fergana region in Uzbekistan founded the IMU in 1990s when he broke with the Uzbek branch of Islamic Renaissance Party, which he deemed too moderate.[71] Yuldashev's views were influenced by Wahhabism and his radical message spread throughout the network of mosques and madrassas in the Fergana valley. Throughout the 1990s Yuldashev managed to unite multiple small radical groups under the IMU's framework and they were able to disseminate their propaganda in the Fergana Valley and recruit many more followers.[72] At the same time, Juma Namangani, an ally of Yuldashev assumed the leadership role for the military wing of the organization. By 1998, there were reports of hundreds of mujahidin training in and operating between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan taking advantage of the Tajik civil war.[73] Two years later, the IMU had become the most prominent radical group in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan – if not all of Central Asia.[74]

According to an the IMU issued document titled "Lessons for Jihad" (*Zhihod Darsliklari*)[75] the IMU is committed to Jihad in four stages: a political stage, a military stage, an economic stage and a stage of struggle against the believer's profane desires. The members practice Islamic Puritanism by ensuring strict observance to the rituals and norms of Islamic morality as well as devotion and piety. The IMU also assumes responsibility to maintain public order and eliminate theft, corruption and so forth, as well as calling for social justice and equality. Finally the group advocates Islamic governance in Uzbekistan and the creation of a state ruled by Sharia law. Above all, the IMU unequivocally rejects an "infidel" political system and culture, and adopts the attitude that Christians and Jews are "things" to be owned by Muslims.[76]

The first instance of the IMU violence occurred in February 1999 when a series of car bombs exploded in Tashkent. The government announced that the bombings

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[71] Richard Weitz, "Storm Clouds over Central Asia: Revival of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan", p. 506.

[72] For more information see, Vitaly Naumkin, "Militant Islam in Central Asia: The Case of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan", *Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post- Soviet Studies Working Paper Series*, Spring 2003, p. 52.

[73] Ibid., p. 52.

[74] Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 137- 155.

[75] Bakhtiyar Babajanov, "Theological Justification and Stages of Jihad in the Documents of the IMU", *Kazakhstan-Spectrum*, Almaty, No. 3, 2003, p. 15. Naumkin asserts that use of illegal materials as sources for academic research such as *Zhihod Darsliklari* has risks and Babajanov's report should be read with this in mind. See Vitaly Naumkin, "Militant Islam in Central Asia: The Case of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan", p. 54.

[76] Ibid., p. 18.

had been the work of Islamic extremists from Namangani's group with support from the secular opposition. A massive crackdown followed and during 1999-2000 up to 5000 people may have been arrested related with this incident.[77] The next incident that established the group as a potent force in the region occurred in August 1999 when the IMU fighters crossed the border from Tajikistan into Kyrgyzstan and kidnapped four Japanese geologists and some Kyrgyz officials.[78] The hostages were released weeks later after the Japanese government paid a multi-million dollar ransom. The IMU staged other smaller incursions in 2000 and 2001 but finally moved to Afghanistan, where the IMU became an increasingly close ally of the Taliban, eventually merging with other foreign fighters.[79]

In Central Asia the impact of the US-led Afghanistan intervention in 2001 was immediate.[80] The IMU camps near Kunduz were among the first targets of the bombing campaign. When Americans arrived at the base they found many documents, videos and training manuals which suggested that the IMU had become a significant ally not only of the Taliban but also of Al-Qaida, although its literature still reflected a focus on Central Asian political goals.[81] As a result of the US-led intervention, the threat from the IMU was reduced and countries in the region felt relatively secure from intervention by insurgents. Today widely assumed that Namangani was killed during Afghanistan raids and the group is severely disrupted. However, even if the IMU is eliminated today, the group stands as a model of radical Islamist mobilization in Central Asia which capable of using violence to advance its goals.

The political opportunity approach explains the popularity of the IMU in Central Asia in much the same way that it explains the growing popularity of the HT. In the case of Central Asia's authoritarian regimes, opportunities to recruit adherents have emerged because the repression of the opposition contributes to an environment that provides a potential success for groups like the IMU. According to Lewis "many of those arrested had nothing to do with the IMU or any kind of Islam but were arrested for being too pious or too political".[82] The US State Department data states that "There were about 300 arrests in the first seven months of 2002 on religious or political grounds, compared with 1500 in any seven month period in 1999-2000".[83] The Independent Human Rights Organization of Uzbekistan estimated that in December 2002, of those 6400 arrested people on religious activism, about 1200 to 1700 are considered Wahhabis, 4200 to 4300

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[77] International Crisis Group (ICG), "Central Asia: Islamist Mobilization and Regional Security", *Asia Report*, No. 14, 2001.

[78] Ibid.

[79] T. Jeremy Gunn, "Shaping an Islamic Identity", p. 400.

[80] International Crisis Group (ICG), "The IMU and Hizb ut-Tahrir: Implications of the Afghanistan Campaign", *Asia Briefing Paper*, 2002.

[81] Marcus Bensman, "The IMU in Retreat", Reporting Central Asia, *IWPR*, 19 July 2002, quoted in David Lewis, *The Temptations of Tyranny in Central Asia*, p. 190.

[82] David Lewis, *The Temptations of Tyranny in Central Asia*, p. 191.

[83] US State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *International Religious Freedom Report: Uzbekistan*, (Washington DC, 2002), p. 4.

members of the IMU or the HT, and 600 to 700 are pious Muslims not belonging to any religious organization.[84]

Regime in Uzbekistan allows no opposition party to exist and groups like the IMU or the HT has been successful in presenting themselves as a political opposition to increasingly repressive regime. Especially in the case of the IMU, the widening of the group's support base among Muslims in Uzbekistan coincides with Uzbek regime's de-liberalization period in the 1990s. Such repressive atmosphere provided the IMU a convenient political opportunity to challenge the social and political order, which in return served to increase the IMU's popularity and membership and transform potential mobilization into actual support for the group.

In addition to the authoritarian policies of the Karimov regime, the IMU has benefitted from ample resources in its quest to mobilize adherents. For instance jihadist ideology provides the IMU its major normative resource. In this sense the IMU members are rational and calculating collection of individuals with a clear goal and methodology rather than angry individuals who join together in response to structural strains. Also human resources were available in Uzbekistan with its 25 million or population in which more than half of it younger than 25 years of age.[85] The IMU has access to coercive resources such as weapons as well since the retreat of the Soviet army from Afghanistan in 1989, disintegration of the Soviet Union 1990s and Tajik civil war from 1992 to 1997 left the area with easily accessible black market for conventional weapons.[86] Also political mobilization of Islamic radicals was supported by foreign missionaries and financial resources provided to Yuldashev to support terrorist acts.[87] Finally the IMU has the necessary institutional resources both internally, such as a coherent organizational structure and externally, such as support, training and financing from the Taliban regime.[88] In terms of organization, the IMU has three tiered hierarchy. At the top are the leaders, below them are the active militants and at the bottom is the general public, who need to be mobilized to support the program for Islamic change.[89] Therefore given its ability to mobilize the necessary resources such as jihadist ideology, weapons, and organizational and financial infrastructure and support, the IMU's success in becoming more popular compared to 1990s could partly be explained by resource mobilization approach.

Similar to the HT, the IMU adopted an anti-Western and anti-Jewish frames in which a future Islamic state will replace current secular and corrupt regimes and the social and economic ills of the society will be banned by the application of

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[84] Ibid.

[85] United Nations, *Uzbekistan: Common Country Assessment*, p. 9.

[86] Neil Macfarlane & Stina Torjesen, *Kyrgyzstan: A Small Arms Anomaly in Central Asia?*, (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2004), p. 11; and Bodi Pirseyedi, *The Small Arms Problem in Central Asia: Features and Implications* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2002), pp. 85-86.

[87] Vitaly Naumkin, "Militant Islam in Central Asia: The Case of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan", p. 23 and 34. Also see Svante E. Cornell, "Narcotics and Armed Conflict: Interaction and İmplications", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism,* Vol. 30, No. 3, March 2007, pp. 207- 227.

[88] Richard Clarke, *Defeating the Jihadists: A Blueprint for Action* (New York: The Century Foundation, 2004), pp. 54-56.

[89] Vitaly Naumkin, "Militant Islam in Central Asia: The Case of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan", pp. 57- 58.

shariah. Both groups also tried to induce participation by framing membership as a sacred duty of Muslims and have had success in promoting anti-government frames. For instance the IMU has denounced Uzbek regime for repressing Islam, persecuting believers, closing mosques and such policies "give people right to replace this evil by force".[90] In addition, initially the IMU's goal was an armed struggle against Karimov regime in Uzbekistan and to establish an Islamic regime in the country. But in 2001, the group allegedly has changed its name to Islamic Party of Turkmenistan and expanded its goals to include the creation of an Islamic state in Central Asia which will include Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and China's Xinxiang province.[91]

Master frame adopted by the IMU is also similar to HT's "clash of civilization". Accordingly the IMU's struggle is framed as wider conflict between Islam and other civilizations and made references to conflicts that involve Muslims around the world. The consequence of such framing leads not only to mobilize those marginalized Muslim communities but also to justification for violence against secular regimes.

Overall theoretical perspectives reviewed and adopted above aimed at explaining the transformation of potential supporters into active followers in Central Asia by referring to two of the most prominent radical Islamist groups: The Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Resource mobilization approach suggests that a social movement's development and successful mobilization of potential supporters is possible when the group mobilize necessary resources to take action. The HT and less so the IMU had access to resources such as strong ideology, efficient organizational structure, external help, which added to the solidarity among group members and the legitimacy of the group. Political opportunity approach focuses on the political environment to explain the emergence and development of a movement and suggests that when there are little or no channels exist to absorb political opposition, the likelihood of groups success increase. Radical Islamist groups in Central Asia faced a repressive state in which the options have been reduced to suffering or fighting. This study finds that both the HT and the IMU have not only seized but also created opportunities by presenting themselves as threats and alternatives for secular regimes. This, in return, caused state agencies to respond in harsher manner and thus created more repressive political atmosphere. Finally, framing approach claims that mobilization of support could occur when groups promote frames that are successful in maintaining peoples' commitment to their cause. The HT and the IMU have been successful in producing frames which established a sense of solidarity and a common cause among Muslims of Central Asia of based on the local culture.

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[90] "Militant Islamic Group Serves Ultimatum on Uzbekistan from Iran", *Jamestown Foundation's Monitor*, Vol. 5, No. 60, 26 March 1999.

[91] Ibragim Alibekov, "IMU Reportedly Expands, Prepares to Strike Western Targets," *Eurasia Insight*, 29 October 2002, (http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,EURASIANET,,UZB,46f2580c28,0.html).

CONCLUSION

Developments covered in this paper with regard to Islamic mobilization in Central Asia suggest that the specific relations that tied groups such as the IMU and the HT's ideas to their structures, activities, and beliefs and practices offer the key understanding to their survival. I argued that use of socio-structural models to explain radicalization of Muslims in Central Asia is of limited use because they tend to ignore the variation and flexibility among these movements. By focusing on resource mobilization, political opportunity and framing perspectives in the study of social movements, this paper suggests that we can advance our understanding of more complex work required that facilitates the mobilization of potential followers into engaging supporters.

Countering the Islamist threat has driven the government agenda of newly independent Central Asian republics since 1999 and the central focus of the governments' response has been repression. The campaign against Islamic radicals is broadened to general curtailment of all religious activity that is not controlled by the central authority. On the other hand, enjoying their independence Central Asian leaders have demonstrated strong reluctance to becoming overly dependent on regional powers such as Russia and China, and regional security alliance such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on their struggle with radical Islam. In addition unresolved disputes over borders, trade and natural resources such as water and gas hinder cooperation among the central Asian states themselves.

What then, are the prospects for radical Islam in Central Asia? First, while some might argue that in the post 9/11 era Islamic militancy in Central Asia is in demise, the trajectory of groups like the HT and the IMU has laid the foundation for a trend that will likely persist. Especially given the fact that dissatisfaction with and opposition to authoritarian regimes and corrupt ruling elite are growing, we will likely to see revitalization of radical groups. Second, external factors such as war on terror in Afghanistan and regional instability have been and will continue to be substantial for the dynamics of Islamist mobilization in Central Asia. These regional and international security threats provide excellent opportunities for Islamists to further mobilization of their constituents. Third, political extremism and organized crime will likely continue to feed the militant mindset in the region. Income from organized crime such as drug-trafficking and hostage taking help fund extremist groups. Political extremism and militancy in turn creates better conditions for these groups since it destabilizes society and exert pressure on governments. Finally it is clear that central authorities in the region are convinced that the iron fist is the best way to protect the stability and security of their country. This repression and consequential exclusion of Islamic groups from legitimate governmental procedures will continue to cause them to seek out different ways to express their grievances.

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