# Hierarchy, segregation, and impurity: political loyalty in traditionalist Salafism

**Abdessamad Belhaj**
University of Public Service, Hungary
e-mail: belhaj.abdessamad@uni-nke.hu

**Abstract**
This article revisits the Salafi doctrine of *al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ* (loyalty and disavowal) as a moral and political foundation for constructing group identity, defining allegiance, and excluding others. Rather than treating loyalty and disavowal solely as theological categories, the article shifts the analysis toward their ethical and political implications. Using a qualitative textual approach and a discursive-historical method, it critically examines three traditionalist Salafi discourses on loyalty written by Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān, Sayyid Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ghanī, and Maʾmūn Ḥammūsh, representing Saudi Arabian, Egyptian, and Syrian contexts, respectively. The analysis shows that al-Fawzān promotes an exclusivist political theology of loyalty based on religious belonging, ʿAbd al-Ghanī emphasizes the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate loyalty through obedience to religious commands, while Ḥammūsh frames loyalty as an expression of religious and political purity. Across these discourses, legitimate loyalty is associated with orthodox belief, Islamic law, and moral sincerity, whereas illegitimate loyalty is linked to non-Muslims, heterodox Muslims, secular orders, and social relations perceived to compromise religious purity. The article argues that traditionalist Salafism constructs an exclusive, hierarchical, and purist group identity with potential implications for mistrust, segregation, and hostility toward Muslims and non-Muslims in pluralistic societies.

Artikel ini meninjau kembali doktrin Salafi tentang *al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ* sebagai landasan moral dan politik dalam membentuk identitas kelompok, mendefinisikan loyalitas, dan mengecualikan pihak lain. Artikel ini tidak memandang loyalitas dan sikap berlepas diri hanya sebagai kategori teologis, tetapi juga menempatkannya sebagai persoalan yang memiliki implikasi etis dan

politik. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan tekstual kualitatif dan metode diskursif-historis, artikel ini secara kritis mengkaji tiga diskursus Salafi tradisionalis tentang loyalitas yang ditulis oleh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān, Sayyid Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ghanī, dan Ma'mūn Ḥammūsh, yang masing-masing merepresentasikan konteks Saudi Arabia, Mesir, dan Suriah. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa al-Fawzān mempromosikan teologi politik loyalitas yang eksklusif berdasarkan afiliasi keagamaan, ʿAbd al-Ghanī menekankan pembedaan antara loyalitas yang sah dan tidak sah melalui ketaatan kepada perintah agama, sedangkan Ḥammūsh memaknai loyalitas sebagai ekspresi kemurnian agama dan politik. Dalam ketiga diskursus tersebut, loyalitas yang sah dikaitkan dengan keyakinan ortodoks, hukum Islam, dan ketulusan moral, sementara loyalitas yang tidak sah dikaitkan dengan non-Muslim, Muslim heterodoks, tatanan sekuler, dan relasi sosial yang dianggap mengompromikan kemurnian agama. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa Salafisme tradisionalis membentuk identitas kelompok yang eksklusif, hierarkis, dan puris, dengan implikasi potensial terhadap munculnya ketidakpercayaan, segregasi, dan permusuhan terhadap Muslim maupun non-Muslim dalam masyarakat plural.

**Keywords:** *Segregation, Hierarchy, Mistrust, Loyalty, Disavowal, Traditionalist Salafism.*

**How to cite this article:**
Belhaj, A. (2026). Hierarchy, segregation, and impurity: political loyalty in traditionalist Salafism. *Indonesian Journal of Religion, Spirituality, and Humanity*. 5 (1), pp 1- 27.

## Introduction

The doctrine of *al-walā' wa-l-barā'* (loyalty and disavowal) regulates whom Muslims should support and be loyal to and whom they should distance themselves from and consider an enemy. The Quran uses the terms of *awliyāʾ* (loyal, friends, allies) and *barāʾa* (dissociation, disavowal, distance) to describe this issue, highlighting the value of being trustworthy with anybody you owe fidelity to and the respect of pacts of mutual assistance (Moosa, 2003). While interpreting the Quranic loyalty code, the background of tribal and religious struggle in 7th-century Arabia should be considered. Nonetheless, Salafism (in all its movements)

decontextualized it and attempted to conceal the role of history in shaping theology.

Modern Salafi writings on *al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ* began to appear in the late 1970s and became prominent during the Islamic awakening period, *al-ṣaḥwa*, in the 1980s and early 1990s. This period was shaped by major geopolitical and religious developments, including the Afghan Jihad, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the rise of Saudi Salafism after the Grand Mosque seizure in 1979, and the violence of Egyptian radical Islamist movements (Bozarslan, 2012). Although the doctrine had already been emphasized in Wahhabi theological writings since the 18th century (Gaye, 2024), it was first treated as an independent subject in modern Salafi monographs by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Khāliq in 1979 and Muḥammad b. Saʿīd Sālim al-Qaḥṭānī in 1981 (ʿAbd al-Khāliq, 1979; al-Qaḥṭānī, 1981). These works shaped later Salafi discussions before Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān published his influential *al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ fī l-Islām* in 1988, later widely circulated and translated because of his authority in the Saudi religious establishment (al-Fawzān, 1990).

The radical use of principles such as the principle of allegiance and disavowal in the 1970s and 1980s can be explained by the ideological inflation of Salafi and Islamist movements during this time, which was intended to oppose political Shiism and communism. Salafism has had a tremendous impact on Islamic thought because it appropriated concepts and doctrines from the Muslim tradition (such as *al-walā' wa-l-barā'*) and transformed them into political instruments of struggle in order to further a radical agenda.

Since the 2000s, especially after al-Qaida and ISIS used *al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ* to justify violence against Muslims and non-Muslims, critical and moderating discourses on the doctrine have emerged within and beyond Salafism (al-Ẓawāhirī, 2002; Kepel & Milelli, 2005). Some scholars have warned against extremism, questioned the doctrine's implications for religious freedom, or examined its connection to terrorism, while others continue to defend it as a

means of preserving Islamic identity and resisting Westernization (al-ʿAwnī, 2004; Isṭānbūlī, 2008; al-ʿUmayrīnī, 2009; Badr, 2018; al-Nāṣirī, 2019; Thābit & Nāyil, 2020; al-Ḥirbish, 2023). Despite these debates, the doctrine remains influential in contemporary Islamic thought and continues to require critical evaluation because of its implications for intra-Muslim relations and Muslim relations with non-Muslims.

In the midst of the surge in jihadist violence in the Middle East (particularly in Iraq), most research on the *al-walā' wa-l-barā'* doctrine was published between 2008 and 2015. However, systematic knowledge of how traditionalist Salafism views the moral basis of loyalty and how it justifies violence against non-Muslims remains lacking. Up until now, research has primarily concentrated on using the concept of *walā'* and *barā'* as a response to geopolitical and religious challenges they perceive as a threat to Islam (Wagemakers, 2008). Comparing the Salafi stance on disavowal of non-Muslims to reformist stances, which are far more moderate and open than the Salafi perspective, is another area of emphasis (Shavit, 2013; Shavit, 2014; Hassan, 2015). And finally, the traditionalist Salafi take on *walā'* and *barā'* as theological categories of constructing the ideal Muslim was briefly studied by Adis Duderija (mainly based on the literature of the Saudi Salafi scholar Muḥammad b. Saʿīd Sālim al-Qaḥṭānī) (Duderija, 2011).

The existing discussion remains incomplete because traditionalist Salafism is often not clearly distinguished from jihadist Salafism. Although traditionalist Salafism generally rejects political rebellion and does not openly endorse Islamist violence, it still promotes a political theology of loyalty based on exclusivism, rigid legalism, and purism. As these discourses circulate through mosques, websites, and religious institutions, their authority and accessibility make them relevant to debates on political loyalty, exclusion, and violence in the Muslim world.

In the body of the current scholarly literature, it is unclear what beliefs traditionalist Salafism holds about the foundation of political loyalty, what implications it envisions for loyalty, and what kinds of loyalty it supports. Typically, the scholarly accounts of traditionalist Salafism's perspective on *walā'* and *barā'* fail to differentiate traditionalist Salafis from jihadist Salafis. Furthermore, research done thus far has mostly focused on Saudi Arabian Salafi discourses, typically linking them to the Wahhabi movement. This article, therefore, addresses the following questions: What are the theological, ethical, and political foundations of loyalty and disavowal in traditionalist Salafi discourse? How do traditionalist Salafi scholars define the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate loyalty? What implications does this doctrine have for political belonging, social hierarchy, and relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in pluralistic societies? To answer these questions, the article examines how three key figures of traditionalist Salafism, Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān, Sayyid Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ghanī, and Ma'mūn Ḥammūsh, appropriate this doctrine in Saudi Arabian, Egyptian, and Syrian contexts.

This study reframes the debate on loyalty and disavowal in traditionalist Salafism from a theological to an ethical and political standpoint Two of these figures (ʿAbd al-Ghanī and Ḥammūsh) have received little to no sustained scholarly attention, which allows the study to broaden the discussion beyond the dominant Saudi-centered account of traditionalist Salafism. The article contributes to the existing literature by distinguishing between the foundations and implications of loyalty. This distinction clarifies how Salafi political ideology is constructed and how the doctrine of *al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ* informs contemporary debates on exclusion, authority, and political belonging in the Muslim world.

This study employs a qualitative textual approach using a discursive-historical method. It examines three major traditionalist Salafi texts on political loyalty written by Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān, Sayyid Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ghanī, and Ma'mūn

Ḥammūsh, representing Saudi Arabian, Egyptian, and Syrian Salafi contexts, respectively. These authors were selected because their works articulate influential yet contextually distinct formulations of *al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ* within traditionalist Salafism. The analysis proceeds through close and critical reading by first situating each scholar within his religious, intellectual, and political context, and then examining the conceptual foundations, normative implications, and socio-political boundaries of loyalty and disavowal in each discourse. Through this method, the article identifies how traditionalist Salafi writings transform a theological doctrine into a framework of political ethics that shapes identity, hierarchy, exclusion, and relations with Muslims and non-Muslims.

## Traditionalist Salafism: three authoritative discourses from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria

The belief in loyalty and disavowal is a central tenet of Salafi political ethics and theology, according to which it is part of true belief in God to associate with believers and separate from disbelievers, with various implications for social behavior, politics, and relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims. As a school of thought, traditionalist Salafism may be traced back to Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's (1703–1792) movement in Najd. The following section illustrates the traditionalist Salafi position on loyalty and disavowal in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria through the discourses of al-Fawzān, ʿAbd al-Ghanī, and Ḥammūsh. The discussion begins with al-Fawzān, one of the most authoritative Salafi figures in contemporary Saudi Arabia at the moment (Lacroix, 2011; Mouline, 2014), and his work *al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ fil-Islām (Loyalty and Dissociation in Islam)* is a crucial resource for Salafis inside and outside of Saudi Arabia.

### *Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān and the exclusivist political theology of loyalty*

Ṣāliḥ b. Fawzān b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Fawzān, born in 1933, is one of the most authoritative Salafi scholars in Saudi Arabia. His authority derives from his membership in major Saudi religious institutions, including the Permanent Committee for Islamic Research and the Council of Senior Scholars, as well as from his long teaching career at Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University. His writings and fatwas, grounded in Salafi theology and Ḥanbali jurisprudence, have circulated widely in Saudi Arabia and beyond. His booklet *al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ fī l-Islām*, first released in 1988, remains an influential source for Salafi discussions of loyalty and disavowal (al-Fawzān, 2026). With regard to loyalty and disavowal, he states that:

> One of the tenets of the Islamic faith is that the Muslim who upholds it must join forces with those who share its beliefs and see those who do not as adversaries. Because of this, he supports those who practice monotheism, the solemn and sincere worship of God. He despises and considers the polytheists to be his foes. Both the religion of Muḥammad and that of Abraham and their companions include this type of behavior. God admonished against allying with the People of the Book. Regarding the overall proscription against siding with non-believers, even though they are his nearest kin, God forbids the believer from forming an alliance with unbelievers. Unfortunately, a lot of people do not understand this fundamental principle. In fact, I overheard some religious science and preaching affiliates say that Christians were our brothers on an Arab radio station… Such dangerous words! (al-Fawzān, 1990).

Al-Fawzān classifies non-Muslims as persons who a sincere Muslim should hate and for whom one should have true enmity, without being tainted by any love or alliance, regardless of their faith or ideology. These are the unrepentant unbelievers, without difference, among the godless, the polytheists, the hypocrites, the dissidents, and the atheists (al-Fawzān, 1990). It is impossible to love, support, trust, or get along with non-Muslims according to this principle. He adds that this belief forbids collaboration with non-Muslims in the workplace (unless Muslims hold superior positions) or in wars; this principle should forbid

a Muslim from adopting a non-Muslim name, praising non-Muslims, exalting their civilization and culture, marveling at their morals and abilities, rejecting their beliefs and religion, taking part in their festivals, wishing them well or attending their celebrations, adhering to their calendars, particularly those that record their rites and celebrations like the Gregorian calendar, awarding them positions in government, hiring them, using them as confidants and advisors, supporting them, protecting them from Muslims, entertaining them, remaining in non-Muslim lands rather than emigrating to a Muslim country, and attempting to behave in a manner that is similar to them in terms of appearance, language, and behavior (al-Fawzān, 1990).

Conversely, a Muslim should show signs of loyalty to Muslims by abandoning the lands of non-Muslims and immigrating to the lands of Muslims, providing Muslims with the necessities for their religion and their livelihood in this world by way of one's own life, one's property, and one's word, sharing their pleasures and pains, not deceiving or swindling them, but counseling them and wishing them well, not belittling or criticizing them; instead, one should display respect and honor other Muslims, be by their side whether the circumstance is challenging, lenient, difficult, or prosperous, visit them, enjoy meeting them, and participate in their events, be mindful of their rights, be kind to the weakest member of the group, make an invocation to God on their behalf and beg His pardon (al-Fawzān, 1990).

Some Saudi Salafis have expressed even more extreme positions than this one by al-Fawzān. For example, ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz Āl ʻAbd al-Laṭīf states that: "You must be loyal to the believer even if he wrongs you and transgresses against you, and you must be hostile to the disbeliever even if he is generous to you and is good to you. God Almighty sent the messengers and revealed the books so that the religion would be entirely for God, so love would be for His friends and hatred would be for His enemies" (Āl ʻAbd al-Laṭīf, 2001). This unyielding stance was published in December 2001 in Great Britain by the Islamic Salafi periodical

*al-Bayān*. The author, a prominent member of the Saudi religious establishment, teaches Islamic theology at Muḥammad b. Saʿūd University in Riyadh. In Saudi Arabia, hundreds of religious figures of authority engage in this kind of discourse, some of whom hold significant influence over the religious community. By maintaining this strict hierarchical structure of loyalty, they guarantee for themselves as religious leaders (presumably guardians of Islamic texts and defenders of doctrinal purity) some influence over Saudi society. In addition, this concept supports the Saudi state's full political control of society, denying citizenship rights and obligations to Saudis and human rights to millions of non-Muslim migrant workers in the country (Truluck, 2023).

Thus, religious identification serves as the basis for loyalty. This criterion provides the foundation for complete dedication to the other community members, from acts of charity to acts of war, using all available resources to help one another under any conditions. In a similar vein, barriers are being created in a drastic fashion against outsiders (non-Muslims) by severing ties between families, lands, cultural exchanges, trust-building, and economic, political, and military collaboration. This suggests a political theology of rigorous loyalty and exclusivism. Citizenship, civilizational alliances, and humanism are all rejected in favor of the tenet that friendship and enmity are religiously predetermined and permanent. Such a paradigm forbids any discussion or consideration of evolving conditions.

This suggests an attempt to revive the fervent devotion to faithfulness and loyalty in early Islam, which replaced the nomads' energy and respect for loyalty to the boundaries of the tribe and blood, a transformed virtue that was given high regard in the Islamic moral code (Izutsu, 2002). As Izutsu puts it, Islam has made the virtue of tribal loyalty into "something supertribal, truly human, a moral force capable of operating in an individualistic society" (Izutsu, 2002). Salafism not only turns tribal loyalty into "closed religious clans" but also into "hierarchical casts" where Muslims are believed to be superior to non-Muslims, and sincere

believers are prioritized over Muslim sinners. Such a perspective promotes social, religious, and political resentment and denies the equality of all people. In such a society, founded on segregation and adversity, it is uncommon for groups to coexist without collapse and bloodshed.

### *Sayyid Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ghanī: legitimate and illegitimate loyalty*

Sayyid Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ghanī is an Egyptian Salafi scholar who studied in Mecca and received authorization to preach and publish from senior Saudi religious authorities (ʿAbd al-Ghanī, 1998). His book *Ḥaqīqat al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ*, published in 1998 during the conflict between radical Salafism and the Egyptian state, is the main text analyzed here. In his *Ḥaqīqat al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ,* Sayyid Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ghanī makes a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate loyalty, *walāʾ mashrūʿ* and *walāʾ ghayr mashrūʿ*. Legitimate loyalty begins for him with faithfulness to the Quran which can be recited, transmitted, thought about, and applied as rightful loyalty. The Quran can also be regarded as a constitution or a book of law that must be upheld at all costs (ʿAbd al-Ghanī, 1998). Legitimate allegiance to Islam also includes embracing the whole religion, becoming knowledgeable about Islamic law, and defending Islam globally, including by declaring jihad, proclamation of *daʿwa*, and making an attempt to refute criticism of Islam (ʿAbd al-Ghanī, 1998). In addition, a sincere follower of the Prophet needs to love him and carry out his instructions (ʿAbd al-Ghanī, 1998). Next, one shows allegiance to Muslims by upholding morality, banning immorality, showing compassion for believers, loving and respecting their dignity, providing for them materially and emotionally, tending to their families, and praying on their behalf (ʿAbd al-Ghanī, 1998).

ʿAbd al-Ghanī therefore defines legitimate loyalty as that which is dictated by Islamic ethics in the Quran and sunna, in so doing emphasizing the Islamic hierarchy of authority that starts with God (whose will is expressed in the Quran),

followed by His law, the Prophet, and finally his community. This type of loyalty adheres to a theological chain of command, and community allegiance is expected to follow divine and prophetic directives.

ʿAbd al-Ghanī envisions total war with hypocrites (in the Muslim world) and non-Muslims. He advocates for three fronts of complete war: 1. The intellectual front, where differences ought to be promoted in order to uphold authentic Islam and disprove false Islamic beliefs. 2. Creating a self-sufficient economy on the economic front, entirely Islamic that is free from usury and unlawful transactions, and waging an economic war against non-Muslims in order to destroy them. 3. The technological front as Muslim youth should acquire the necessary technological and military capabilities to be ready to dominate the globe (ʿAbd al-Ghanī, 1998). As a result, ʿAbd al-Ghanī demonstrates a severe intolerance for other people, their ideologies, their economic systems, and roles in international affairs. It is a rejection of diversity in general rather than of imperialism or unequal commercial exchanges only.

Loyalty to infidels, polytheists, Jews, Christians, innovators, and hypocrites in business, education, and the media is considered illegitimate. The kind of cooperation Muslims have with non-Muslims, particularly Jews and Christians in some areas, is deemed an illegitimate loyalty and seems to vex Sayyid Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ghanī a great deal. Specifically, he opposes the propagation of secularism, modernization, and nationalism as a means of deceiving Muslims in politics by Jews and Christians. These so-called "sins" are but plots by Jews and Christians. Muslims, on the other hand, ought to live differently from Christians and Jews in every way and inevitably engage in military conflict especially with Jews because, in his view, enmity between Jews and Muslims is a matter of religion. In the end, the conflict between Christians and Jews on the one hand and Muslims on the other is one of disbelief versus belief, with both sides attempting to exterminate the other (ʿAbd al-Ghanī, 1998).

ʿAbd al-Ghanī, a citizen of Egypt, a country where Christians make up a sizeable minority (10%), is steadfast in his support of intolerance towards Christians and does not think that a shared national identity should serve as a bridge between Muslims and Christians in a multicultural society. He makes this intolerance quite evident:

> Also, one of the means of Jewish and Christian misguidance and machinations against Muslims is to spread the saying that religion is for God and the homeland is for everyone, working to spread it among Muslims so that every Muslim believes it. The bottom line of this saying and this slogan is the elimination of loyalty and disavowal in societies, and diluting the issue of love and enmity and not distinguishing between the bad and the good, so the Muslim lives with the infidel, the polytheists, the Jews, and the Christians, without distinguishing between religious identities, nor pursuing religious knowledge, or stating publicly a belief, and everyone lives under one banner, separated from religion; love and loyalty, enmity and disavowal are then linked to personal interests, worldly benefits, and material relationships, separate from religion and belief. In such society, there is nothing wrong with hating and rejecting a Muslim if there is personal interest and material gain in that, and the Jew and Christian must be loved, brought close to, favored, and praised if there is benefit, interest, pride, and fame behind that, but their plan is far-fetched, for a Muslim is a Muslim, an infidel is an infidel, and the Jews and Christians are our enemies and the enemies of our religion. There is no loyalty, love, or trust except for the Muslim, and all hatred is for the enemies of the religion and for every corruptor on earth among the unbelievers and among the descendants of apes and pigs (ʿAbd al-Ghanī, 1998).

According to ʿAbd al-Ghanī, devotion to one's country and religion are therefore irreconcilable. Additionally, he views state-nation loyalty and patriotism as part of a Jewish-Christian plot against Muslims. It is incomprehensible that he opposes coexistence with people of other religions and beliefs, given that Egypt and other Muslim nations are pluralistic societies and that, as modern states, they are obligated to uphold human rights, including the right to freedom of religion. Still, ʿAbd al-Ghanī insists that having hatred for non-Muslims be a core concept that should also be shown in behavior, beginning with greetings. As he puts it:

> Not greeting non-Muslims is one way to show your distaste for polytheism and polytheists since they are under no peace—rather, God, His angels, and all of humanity are cursing them. As the Prophet said: "Do not initiate the greeting of the Jews and Christians. Push them to the closest spot if you come across them on the road". It is not permitted to greet them. Instead, we make them choose the shortest routes in order to degrade and humiliate them. When they associate in cult other divinities with God Almighty, how can it not be otherwise? (ʿAbd al-Ghanī, 1998).

Additionally, ʿAbd al-Ghanī calls Muslims to diverge from non-Muslims, i.e., Muslims should not embrace non-Muslim ideas and behaviors. Also, Muslims should not interact or sit with non-Muslims. His primary goal, here, is forbidding mixed accommodation, which suggests that he supports full social segregation. A true Muslim should also avoid living among non-Muslims, that is, in their countries, as there should be complete segregation between the camps of belief and non-belief and if a Muslim lives in a non-Muslim country, their beliefs should be shielded from non-Muslim influence. Finally, since certain rulers would copy non-Muslim systems, Muslims should not emulate non-Muslims in any area of culture (gastronomy, the arts, philosophy, etc.) or law and politics. As a result, by following non-Muslims, Muslims aid their enemies in their plot to eradicate Islam (ʿAbd al-Ghanī, 1998).

According to ʿAbd al-Ghanī, the enemies of early Islam, the Arabian polytheists, who worshiped a plethora of idols, are not the only people to whom the category of *shirk* applies. The latter refers in Salafi discourse generally to adherents of other faiths or beliefs who worship other deities than Allah. This includes all non-Muslims as they are accused of committing idolatry by rejecting Allah and having faith in another divinity. Even if they are monotheists and do not worship several gods, Jews and Christians are likewise regarded as polytheists, *mushrikūn*.

***Ma'mūn Ḥammūsh: loyalty and disavowal as religious and political purity***

Ma'mūn Ḥammūsh, born in Damascus in 1962, combined a career in science and engineering with traditional Islamic studies. After his graduate studies in the United States, he returned to Syria as an engineering professor at Damascus University and wrote several works on Qurʾānic interpretation and Islamic governance, including *al-Siyāsa al-sharʿiyya ʿalā manhaj al-waḥyayn al-Qurʾān wa-l-sunna al-ṣaḥīḥa* (Ḥammūsh, 2005). Published in 2005, before the Syrian revolution, this work includes a chapter on *al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ* as a principle of separation between believers and non-believers. In this chapter, Ḥammūsh argues that Islamic society should be loyal to those who command right and forbid wrong, while rejecting those who spread corruption (Ḥammūsh, 2005). As he puts it:

> The concept of loyalty and disavowal is one of the characteristics of the *umma* of enjoining good and forbidding evil. It distinguishes this community from the rest of the nations. Some people gather around some desire or a financial or social advantage, and they indulge in it, struggle over it, and some of them may even be planning to betray the others to obtain or monopolize the benefits. As for the hearts of the community of enjoining good and forbidding evil, its moral disposition is such that they love the ones who love God and His Messenger and venerate his religion and law and hate the ones who wreak havoc on the earth and repulse from the path of God (Ḥammūsh, 2005).

According to Ḥammūsh, the Muslim community is morally superior since its bonds of loyalty are religious and moral rather than pragmatic or based on any kind of gain. Political allegiance is built on the common beliefs that distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims and, consequently, these beliefs cause Muslims to love Muslims and detest non-Muslims. This political allegiance is also predicated on a common moral obligation to uphold right and prohibit evil, which includes battling injustice, restraining oneself from temptation, and protecting the *umma* from materialism. Therefore, merely being a member of the *umma* is insufficient

to qualify political loyalty as a virtue; rather, active advocacy of political loyalty is a necessary component of this membership. The ideal believers would put up a battle against tyranny and moral decline in addition to keeping their distance from unbelievers.

According to Ḥammūsh, the three rules that comprise the theory of loyalty and disavowal are as follows: 1. Sincere adoration of God. 2. Total rejection of polytheism in all its manifestations. 3. Expressing animosity and contempt toward anyone who insists on practicing polytheism and glorifying deities other than God (Ḥammūsh, 2005). In the following, I will examine these three rules in greater detail.

Sincere adoration of God, the first norm, is defined by Ḥammūsh as "excellent deeds that comply with Sharia law and are in line with the Qur'an and the genuine Sunna as leaving polytheism in acts is a question of pure intention, devoid of any craving for fame or leadership, and without any involvement with any behaviour that contains hypocrisy" (Ḥammūsh, 2005). Ḥammūsh chastises people for their selfish motives, which stem from greed and desires; a good deed must be just and true (according to Islamic law) (Ḥammūsh, 2005). For Hammush, the primary issue is not non-Muslims' lack of belief but rather the corruption of the human soul, which is driven by carnal cravings that cause one to commit sins and be disloyal to God (Ḥammūsh, 2005). He adopts a moral psychology viewpoint in this instance, and considers impure thoughts, deeds, and feelings as the material that fuels the human ego since they distance the individual from orthopraxy and true devotion to God. People cannot be sincere in their deeds or devoted to God if they lack pure intentions. Unlike al-Fawzān and ʿAbd al-Ghanī, who oppose *ab initio* believers and nonbelievers, Ḥammūsh views purity or impurity as the primary reason of one's loyalty to or lack thereof to God. The practice of Islamic law, which excludes non-Muslims and only considers acts to be authentic and faithful to God if they comply with sharia, comes in second to

this moral psychology of pure intentions. Compliance with sharia also contributes to the reduction in the number of "true Muslims".

The second rule of loyalty states that polytheism in all of its forms is completely unacceptable. For Ḥammūsh, non-Muslims do not stop until they have corrupted and destroyed Muslims, and they spare no effort or energy to do so. Befriending them is prohibited because of this corrupting behaviour (Ḥammūsh, 2005). In addition to non-Muslims, Ḥammūsh rejects "hypocritical Muslims who attempt to smuggle themselves into true Muslims' fold in an effort to show them how much they care while hiding their animosity toward them, wish them in fact misfortune and ill in their faith" (Ḥammūsh, 2005). He specifically attacks government employees calling to the necessity to prevent political power from using religion for its own ends (Ḥammūsh, 2005). He is worried about mixing with insincere Muslims and the government because true Muslims would be mishandled and used for corruption, while he distrusts non-Muslims out of fear that they will infiltrate Muslims and corrupt them. Thus, political devotion to authentic Muslims and rejection of others is justified by worries about the community's purity and the influence of political power on religion.

The third and last guideline in the doctrine of loyalty and disavowal according to Ḥammūsh is to treat with hatred and disdain anyone who continues to practice polytheism and exalt deities other than God. For Ḥammūsh, "all prophets and believers have followed the same teaching: disavowing non-believers as they exalt deities other than God. Because non-believers reject God and worship objects other than Him, believers have always harbored animosity and hatred toward them. There will be no peace or reconciliation between believers and nonbelievers" (Ḥammūsh, 2005). In order to protect their religion and integrity, avoid hypocrisy, and maintain the status of religious knowledge,

Ḥammūsh specifically calls on religious authorities to decline gifts or donations from individuals in positions of governmental power (Ḥammūsh, 2005).

In summary, Ḥammūsh is concerned about political power misusing "genuine Islam" and as well as about the purity of Islam, which could be contaminated by non-Muslims and hypocritical Muslims. He has expressed concern over immoral intentions, moral decay, lust, greed, and desires that taint religious practice, as well as dishonest actions by those in positions of political power and plots by non-Muslims to pervert and split Muslims. The independence of religious authority from political authority and the purity of religious knowledge from politics are other issues that worry him. Therefore, in this perspective, loyalty might be defined as political and religious purity, or as abstaining from any actions, viewpoints, and individuals deemed to be disloyal to God and His law or from those that serve the interests of political power.

Before jihadi Salafis emerged as a major force behind the uprising against the Assad government that ultimately resulted in his overthrow, Salafis in Syria remained negligible (Pierret, 2026). Even while Syrian jihadis have mastered the art of politics (Drevon, 2024), the country's ethnic, religious, and political diversity may conflict with harmful ideologies like the one propagated by Ḥammūsh. Whereas Syria can only remain a state if it is inclusive, secular, and founded on citizenship rather than religious convictions (Salamey &Rahbani, 2023), this Salafi stance promotes sectarian politics. Salafism's rejection of pluralism, openness, and heterogeneity, all of which are realities of most modern societies, as the globe grows more interconnected, driven by science and the economy, and more conscious of human rights, is one of the reasons this ideology is ineffective in contemporary communities.

That said, moderate Syrian Salafis produced counter-discourses to reframe the idea of loyalty and disavowal. Thus, Mūsā Ibrāhīm al-Ibrāhīm, a prominent Syrian Salafist contends that being a Muslim does not entail being called to

withdraw oneself from forming bonds and interactions with non-Muslims. Instead, Muslims should engage in discourse, conversation, and interaction with non-Muslims in an effort to convert them to Islam. They should also be fair to them, uphold their rights, and treat them with tolerance and moderation. The doctrine of loyalty and disavowal should not preclude business or knowledge exchanges (al-Ibrāhīm, 2003).

Having outlined the three traditionalist Salafi discourses on loyalty and disavowal, the following section compares al-Fawzān, ʿAbd al-Ghanī, and Ḥammūsh in terms of the foundations of loyalty, its normative and political implications, and the extent to which each discourse allows for flexibility or imposes rigid boundaries.

**The foundation of loyalty and disavowal**

The preceding analysis shows that traditionalist Salafism grounds its understanding of loyalty in the acceptance or rejection of Islamic belief. It may be claimed that Salafism grounds political allegiance in theology, making the degree of traditionalist adherence to Sunni orthodox belief and behavior a key factor in determining the political allegiances that should be accepted in accordance. It is a political theology that identifies allies and foes in terms of their pietistic beliefs. However, the three discourses analyzed in this study reveal important differences in how loyalty and disavowal are conceptually grounded and politically articulated. Al-Fawzān appears to favor religious identity as the foundation for allegiance, vehemently defending close and static religious identities. ʿAbd al-Ghanī emphasizes the Islamic order of religious authority by upholding legitimate loyalty as that which is prescribed by Islamic principles in the Quran and sunna. For Ḥammūsh, loyalty is based on moral virtue and sincerity rather than just religious affiliation or respect for authority. Therefore, true observance of Islamic law and ethics is necessary to validate traditional

beliefs. It can thus be claimed that Ḥammūsh prioritizes moral purity, whereas al-Fawzān supports a political theology of loyalty as belonging and ʿAbd al-Ghanī that of loyalty as abiding by the religious commands.

One way to describe the rhetorical power of Salafism as a whole is that it promotes ideas as though they were religious convictions with no historical context. However, the three thinkers differ in their epistemologies in comprehending (or interpreting) the meaning of loyalty and disavowal because they interact with the political and institutional contexts of their respective countries. Regarding the basis of allegiance and disavowal, the three Salafis hold diverse opinions probably because they addressed different contexts. Al-Fawzān, in particular, is less specific about applying the doctrine of loyalty and disavowal in the Saudi political sphere. Even if the Saudi state has recently distanced itself from Salafism and some extremist Salafi factions have challenged the Saudi state, Salafism was the state's ideology for a long time and Saudi scholars avoid confrontation. The Saudi foreign policy of instrumentalizing Islam, particularly in the context of conflict with Arab nationalism and later with Iranian Shiism and Soviet communism, was the reason this doctrine was first promoted in Saudi Arabia in a widespread manner and by the most powerful members of the religious establishment. The Saudi regime was able to maintain control over Saudi Arabia's religious and intellectual spheres by drawing sharp boundaries between belief and disbelief. However, because Saudi Arabia's economy depended on foreign labor and Saudi security on foreign protection, al-Fawzān's religious discourse was prudent enough to refrain from urging the state to implement the loyalty and disavowal doctrine. For him, formulating the idea as a traditional dogma with roots in classical Islamic theology was the safest course of action.

ʿAbd al-Ghanī illustrates the case of a country (Egypt) where Salafism was at odds with the state and still, and thus he offers guidelines on upholding the obligation of allegiance and disavowal in clear political terms. Salafism and the Egyptian government have a strained political relationship because militant

Salafism has challenged the Egyptian state for decades. ʿAbd al-Ghanī thus takes a strong attitude regarding the necessity of applying the doctrine of loyalty and disavowal and engaging non-Muslims in a total war, criticizing the role of some state policies (particularly with relation to religious minorities). Thus, his self-assurance and specific examples from the current Egyptian society are a result of Salafism's deep roots in Egypt and its conflict with the government.

As for Ḥammūsh, he presents the case of Salafism as a newcomer, under surveillance and extremely tight security conditions. Under the al-Assad regime, Salafism was a relatively new, marginalized, and suspicious movement with little likelihood of success in Syria. Thus, Ḥammūsh's strategy was to mold the theory of allegiance and disavowal as a moral and personal decision to live in accordance with Islamic law. He might thereby evade political persecution. However, the Syrian regime would fight a civil war with several Sunni factions, the most violent of which were Salafi-leaning groups. This shows how deeply divided Syria was between Al-Assad's regime and its allies (including Sufi organizations) and radical Sunni groups and movements. Therefore, for Salafi beliefs to be successful, there must be a great deal of discontent with the state, as was the case in Syria but not in Saudi Arabia (and considerably less in Egypt).

**Implications of loyalty and disavowal**

While all schools of Muslim thought concur that links should be held together by allegiance to the Muslim community, they disagree on the ramifications of disavowal. Traditionalist Salafism insists on hatred, hostility, and mistrust. That is, the enemy is a rival in a struggle (of beliefs), a personal foe that one despises. On a larger scale, this enemy could be a fighting population that opposes the Muslim population, in a struggle of a *hostis* (public enemy) against another and a fighting collectivity of people against another collectivity (Schmitt, 1996). This attitude is similar to Manichean societies of "us vs. them." where the rhetoric of religious leaders, political tyrants, nationalist ideologies, or imperialist states

mobilize their public against the other and occasionally commits mass murder or genocide. In particular, the theological justification exhorts a community from guilt, and it is easier to deceive that population into thinking it has the right to eradicate its rivals or opponents (Lounnas & Ramaioli, 2024; Ramaioli, 2023).

Using a wide range of Salafi texts, most of them written by jihadist Salafis, Joas Wagemakers asserts that *al-Walā' wa-l-barā'* in contemporary Salafi thought may be used to both accuse non-Muslims of being infidels and to demand personal piety from Muslims, thereby providing justification for fighting them. In addition, he makes the case that *al-Walā' wa-l-barā'* is not a religious construct that exists in a vacuum; rather, it is influenced by regional and international political contexts. Salafi scholars employ this idea to structure social and political connections in ways that go beyond theology alone, exposing their pragmatic objective (Wagemakers, 2008).

Traditionalist Salafism manifests stringent kinds of loyalty that forbid various or flexible allegiances. Who belongs to the group and who does not depend on the rigidity and clarity of the beliefs, the practice of law or the purity of moral intentions. Thus, traditionalist Salafism forbids loyalty to non-Muslims. Since they are sinners or disbelievers (according to Salafism), a sizable portion of Muslims find themselves outside of these restrained forms of loyalty. Since they do not adhere to Salafism, non-Muslims are also outside the alliance.

Thus, al-Fawzān is worried about cooperation with non-Muslims, which may help to explain why he supports Muslim dominance or segregation. ʿAbd al-Ghanī advocates for complete rivalry, strife, or even war against non-Muslims without any kind of mutual aid. Ḥammūsh advises treating Muslims and non-Muslims who are employed by the government with the utmost distrust and suspicion. Perhaps because millions of non-Muslims dwell in Saudi Arabia as guest workers and thousands of American troops are stationed there, al-Fawzān, a Saudi official religious authority, is more wary of conflict with non-Muslims. Since S. Quṭb, Islamist ideology in Egypt has aimed for global dominion (Al

Haidary & Zamzami, 2022), and ʿAbd al-Ghanī endorses the same ideology. Ultimately, Ḥammūsh is more concerned about infiltration in reaction to the extreme control exerted by Syrian security services.

**Salafism: boundaries, identities, and society**

Social and political theories have paid attention to the question of loyalty and provide analytical concepts that can help contextualize Salafi loyalties. Georg Simmel, who regarded loyalty and gratitude as the two emotions that cement social relationships and transform them into permanent institutions, described loyalty as the "activation of society" and the "inertia of the soul" (Simmel, 1964). Carl Schmitt has reduced political actions and motives to the specific political distinction between friend and enemy (Schmitt, 1996). As for Jürgen Habermas, he asserts that "modern political-administrative units are systems that exchange administrative achievements and political decisions for loyalty and taxes" (Habermas, 1987). Similarly, Mabel Berezin draws attention to "the exchange between democratic nation-states and their citizens, in which states provide security and receive trust and loyalty in return" (Berezin, 2002). Helena Flam has demonstrated how loyalty permeates all aspects of contemporary culture and is a common and significant social emotion. In fact, the majority of well-known social scientists believe that this role's binding effects are quite important (Flam, 2005). Jonathan Haidt's research on loyalty and disloyalty shows that it is a moral principle that underpins how people and communities create alliances, designate territories, negotiate kinship, tribal, national, and religious allegiances, build cohesiveness within groups, and participate in rivalries (Haidt, 2012).

The Salafi perspectives analysed here exhibit a Schmittian viewpoint since they regard loyalty and disavowal as an expression of irreconcilable differences between friends and enemies. This viewpoint contradicts the commitment to institutions, appreciation for society, and civic duties found in the ideas of Simmel, Habermas, and Berezin. Salafism has strict boundaries that are

established by tradition, especially religious tradition, which Muslims are expected to uphold, transmit, and live by. Identities and the Muslim self are expected to be shaped by faithfulness to God and Islamic law. These Salafi discourses also reject the contemporary understanding of society as a link between secularized individuals and citizens united in the pursuit of shared rights, obligations, and interests. Thus, these discourses reject *affectio-societatis,* as living with one another, with elective affinities and desire to have chosen dependencies (Fleury, 2021). Through discursive productions that establish uncompromising norms and authority, these discourses wish to foster communities rather than build societies. To borrow the terminology of Ferdinand Tönnies, Salafi discourses hesitate to transit from community (*Gemeinschaft*) to society (*Gesellschaft*) (Tönnies, 2010). Ultimately, Salafi communitarianism possesses the capacity to favour di-society, in which individuals only live together with people like themselves tempted to secede from "large" society and prefer a mini-society of their own choosing, formed by their own affinities (Généreux, 2006).

## Conclusion

In this paper, I critically analyzed three Muslim authoritative discourses on loyalty by Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān, Sayyid Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Ghanī, and Ma'mūn Ḥammūsh, from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria respectively were. The analysis demonstrated how traditionalist Salafism encourages a political theology of loyalty in which orthodox belief, practice and ethics serve as determining variables of political loyalty, producing religious hostility toward Muslim sinners and non-Muslims in both private and public matters. While Ḥammūsh places a higher value on moral purity, al-Fawzān advocates for a political theology of loyalty as belonging while ʿAbd al-Ghanī promotes loyalty as following religious commands. Across these three discourses, legitimate loyalty is defined through adherence to orthodox belief, Islamic law, and moral sincerity, while illegitimate loyalty is associated with attachment to non-Muslims, heterodox Muslims, secular political orders, or

forms of social cooperation perceived to compromise religious purity. However, al-Fawzān is more cautious when it comes to confrontation with non-Muslims. ʿAbd al-Ghanī promotes total conflict with non-Muslims, following the ambition of Egyptian Islamism to gain dominance over the world. Ḥammūsh's primary worry is infiltration as a reaction to the strict control Syrian security authorities impose. For this reason, he recommends the highest degree of mistrust and suspicion toward non-Muslims, as well as toward Muslims who work for the government.

These findings clarify the distinction between the foundations and implications of loyalty in traditionalist Salafi discourse. Under specific circumstances, these Salafi discourses have the potential to generate exclusionary outcomes. Still, such outcomes cannot be assumed to be inevitable, since violence and exclusion are influenced by a variety of social and political factors. For instance, following waves of terrorism in the 1990s, Salafism in Egypt has turned pro-state in recent years. Therefore, although there is a correlation between jihadist Salafism and Salafi discourses on loyalty and disavowal, there is no clear causal relationship between Salafi doctrines and violence.

## Bibliography

ʿAbd al-Ghanī, S. S. (1998). *Ḥaqīqat al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ*. Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm.

ʿAbd al-Khāliq, ʿA. (1979). *Al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ: Dirāsāt fī wujūb muwālāt al-muʾminīn wa-l-barāʾa min al-kāfirīn*. Kuwait: al-Dār al-Salafiyya.

Āl ʿAbd al-Laṭīf, ʿA. (2001). Maʿālim ghāʾiba fī l-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ. *Al-Bayān, 169*, 33–37.

Al-ʿAwnī, Ḥ. (2004). *Al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ bayna al-ghuluww wa-l-jafāʾ*. Riyadh: Jāmiʿat al-Imām Muḥammad b. Saʿūd al-Islāmiyya.

al-Fawzān, Ṣ. (1990). *Al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ fil-Islām*. Riyadh: Dār al-Waṭan.

al-Fawzān, Ṣ. (2026). *Al-sīra al-dhātiyya*. Retrieved from https://al-fuzan.com/ar/cv

Al Haidary, A. H., & Zamzami, M. (2022). Rereading Sayyid Quṭb's Islamism and political concept of al-ḥākimiyyah: A critical analysis. *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam, 24*(1), 271–310. https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol24no1.8

al-Ḥirbish, J. Ẓ. (2023). Al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ: Al-mafhūm wa-l-aḥkām wa-l-āthār min khilāl Sūrat al-Mumtaḥina. *Majallat al-Sharīʿa wa-l-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyya, 38*(133), 211–248.al-Ibrāhīm, M. I. (2003). *Ḥiwār al-ḥaḍārāt wa-ṭabīʿat al-ṣirāʿ bayna al-ḥaqq wa-l-bāṭil: Dirāsa taḥlīliyya ʿalā ḍawʾ mafhūm al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ fī l-Islām*. Amman: Dār al-Aʿlām.

al-Nāṣirī, M. (2019). Thaqāfat al-taṭarruf ladā al-ḥarakāt al-uṣūliyya al-Islāmiyya al-muʿāṣira: Qirāʾa fī mafāhīm al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ wa-l-ḥākimiyya wa-thunāʾiyyat dār al-Islām wa-dār al-ḥarb. *Al-Iḥyāʾ, 47*(1), 58–71.

al-Qaḥṭānī, M. b. S. S. (1981). *Al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ fī l-Islām*. Riyadh: Dār Ṭība.

al-ʿUmayrīnī, ʿA. b. ʿA. ʿA. (2009). Al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ wa-atharuhumā fī mafhūm al-irhāb fī l-fiqh al-Islāmī. *Majallat al-ʿUlūm al-Sharʿiyya, 10*(1), 157–225.al-Ẓawāhirī, A. (2002). *Al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ: ʿAqīda manqūla wa-wāqiʿ mafqūd*. Falluja: Minbar al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād.

Badr, S. ʿA. S. (2018). Al-iʿtidāl wa-l-tawassuṭ fī mafhūm al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ. *Al-Waʿy al-Islāmī, 55*(635), 10–12.

Berezin, M. (2002). Secure states: Towards a political sociology of emotion. *The Sociological Review, 50*(2), 33–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2002.tb03590.x

Bozarslan, H. (2012). Revisiting the Middle East's 1979. *Economy and Society, 41*(4), 558–567. https://doi.org/10.1080/03085147.2012.718635

Drevon, J. (2024). *From jihad to politics: How Syrian jihadis embraced politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Duderija, A. (2011). *Constructing a religiously ideal believer and woman in Islam*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Flam, H. (2005). A research agenda. *Emotions and Social Movements*, *14*, 19.

Fleury, C. (2021). *Une société à reconstruire, engageons-nous!*. Paris: Semaines sociales de France.

Gaye, A. (2024). Al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ: The principle of loyalty to Muslims and disavowal of non-Muslims, theorized by Ibn Taymiyya, adopted and developed by early Wahhabism. In M. Shafiq & T. Donlin-Smith (Eds.), *Inclusion or exclusion in the sacred texts and human contexts* (pp. 167–182). Cham: Springer.

Généreux, J. (2006). *La dissociété: À la recherche du progrès humain*. Paris: Seuil.

Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Haidt, J. (2012). *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*. Vintage.

Ḥammūsh, M. (2005). *Al-siyāsa al-sharʿiyya ʿalā manhaj al-waḥyayn al-Qurʾān wa-l-sunna al-ṣaḥiḥa*. Damascus: Dār al-Maʾmūn.

Hassan, S. (2015). Law-abiding citizen: Recent fatwas on Muslim minorities' loyalty to Western nations. *The Muslim World, 105*(4), 516–539. https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12109

Isṭānbūlī, M. K. (2008). Al-ḥurriyya al-dīniyya bayna ʿālamiyyat al-daʿwa wa-mabdaʾ al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ. *Majallat al-Miʿyār, 17*, 211–248.

Izutsu, T. (2002). *Ethico-religious concepts in the Qurʾān*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Kepel, G., & Milelli, J.-P. (2005). *Al-Qaida dans le texte: Écrits d'Osama Bin Laden, ʿAbd Allāh ʿAẓẓām, et Ayman al-Ẓawāhirī*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Lacroix, S. (2011). *Awakening Islam: The politics of religious dissent in contemporary Saudi Arabia* (G. Holoch, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lounnas, D., & Ramaioli, M. (2024). Recruiting magnets of jihadi radicalization: Unity, redemption, and Manicheanism. In K. J. Patterson & E. Hidalgo-Tenorio (Eds.), *Multidisciplinary approaches to the discourses of extremism* (pp. 154–169). New York: Routledge.

Moosa, E. (2003). Loyalty. In J. D. McAuliffe (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān* (Vol. 3, pp. 237–242). Leiden: Brill.

Mouline, N. (2014). *The clerics of Islam: Religious authority and political power in Saudi Arabia* (E. S. Rundell, Trans.). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Pierret, T. (2026). Minister vs. mufti: The struggle over "moderate Islam" in wartime Syria, 2011–2021. *Mediterranean Politics, 31*(1), 26–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2024.2385780

Ramaioli, M. (2023). Salafism as Gramscian-informed vanguardism. *Contemporary Islam, 17*(2), 297–318. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-023-00514-z

Salamey, I., & Rahbani, T. K. (2023). Power-sharing models for postwar Syria: Consociational vs. centripetal options. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 29*(2), 179–203. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2023.2203994

Schmitt, C. (1996). *The concept of the political*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Shavit, U. (2013). The polemic on al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ: Crystallization and refutation of an Islamic concept. *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, 36*(3), 24–49. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004435544_026

Shavit, U. (2014). Can Muslims befriend non-Muslims? Debating al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ, loyalty and disavowal, in theory and practice. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, 25*(1), 67–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2013.851329

Simmel, G. (1964). *The sociology of Georg Simmel* (K. H. Wolff, Ed. & Trans.). New York: Free Press.

Thābit, ʿA. N., & Nāyil, I. A. (2020). Athar al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ fī ḥimāyat thawābit al-dīn min al-taghrīb: Taghyīr al-manāhij al-sharʿiyya unmūdhajan. *Majallat Jāmiʿat al-Anbār li-l-ʿUlūm al-Islāmiyya, 11*(43), 787–816.

Tönnies, F. (2010). *Communauté et société: Catégories fondamentales de la sociologie pure*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Truluck, E. (2023). Using Islam to protect the rights of migrant workers: Bringing kafala into Sharia compliance in Saudi Arabia. *The UCLA Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law, 20*(1), 155–178. https://doi.org/10.5070/N420160505

Wagemakers, J. (2008). Framing the "threat to Islam": Al-walāʾ wal-barāʾ in Salafi discourse. *Arab Studies Quarterly, 30*(4), 1–22. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41858559