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Loyalty and Identity Formation: Muslim Perceptions of Loyalty in France

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Abstract: This paper sets out to study loyalty as identity formation through the cases of three Muslim leaders in France (T. Ramadan, A. Mamoun and M. Zenati). First, I will discuss the state of research on "Muslim loyalties" in the West. Afterwards, Ramadan's concept of critical loyalties, Mamoun's loyalty as gratitude, and Zenati's human brotherhood as the basis of loyalty will be thoroughly examined. The main goal of the current study is to determine how the three Muslim leaders incorporate loyalty as an element of shaping the identity of French Muslim citizens while attempting to resolve the current tensions between the French state and Islam.

Keywords: loyalty; identity; disloyalty; alliance; disavowal; France

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1. Introduction

In the aftermath of every Islamist terrorist attack in the West, the question of Muslim loyalties is raised; Muslims, as Iner and Yücel express it: "must not only prove their loyalty and integrity, but also continually *try to detach Muslims and Islam from the ideology and actions of the vocal minority*" (Iner and Yücel 2015, pp. 6–7). Discussions are also conducted in Islamic ethics about loyalty to non-Muslim states (March 2009, pp. 181–206). Some researchers, then, would refer to the Salafi doctrine of alliance and disavowal (*al-walā' wa-l-barā'*) to explain "Muslim" attitudes of loyalty and disloyalty. Other researchers consider this doctrine to be marginal in contemporary Islam and insufficient to draw any conclusions from. Although this doctrine has indeed been emphasized by Salafists, reformist Islamic organizations and figures of religious authority distance themselves from the doctrine of alliance and disavowal. Conversely, little is known about reformist Muslim perceptions of loyalty and disloyalty.

Loyalty/disloyalty is a fundamental value to social ethics, expressed in various rituals of allegiance, social practices, political alliances, group memberships, rivalries and conflicts within societies; loyalty/disloyalty is used, among other things, to adapt to challenges, resist pressures, respond to crises, undertake individual and collective actions, and repel attacks from rival groups (Haidt 2012, pp. 154–57). Loyalty/disloyalty is, thus, essential to social structuring (family, clan, community, nation, etc.), political action (party, elections, coalitions, war, etc.) and identity formation (in-group vs out-group belonging).

The securitization context that has emerged in France since 1994 (beginning with the terrorist attacks carried out by The Algerian Armed Islamic Group in France) led many to question Muslim loyalties to France. Muslims had to constantly justify their relations to other groups, and present the evidence of their loyalty and strong commitment to French society and state. Nowhere in Western Europe are such demands of Muslim loyalties as overt as in France, where different governments and other institutions of the state incessantly request Muslims to show loyalty.

By way of illustration, in 2015, after the Charlie Hebdo shooting in Paris, the deputy mayor of Nice Christian Estrosi said that there are "fifth columns" of Islamists in France, to which Dalil Boubakeur, Rector of the Great Mosque in Paris, a significant Islamic organization, replied "the citizenship and loyalty of Muslims in France cannot be questioned and

that far from constituting any kind of "fifth column", the Muslims of France, in their vast majority, are deeply attached to the Nation and defend the values of the Republic".[1] This pattern of suspicion of disloyalty cast by French politicians and officials on Muslims and the accentuated responses by Muslims to prove their loyalties has been continuing over the last 30 years.

Meanwhile, Muslim leaders in France have engaged in the re-foundation of Muslim ethics to adapt to the French context and have rethought the hierarchy of loyalties established among Muslims in France, reconsidering conflicts of loyalty and identity formation. Thus, a huge amount of Muslim discourse, practices and concepts of loyalty have emerged in France. However, to date, no research study has been dedicated to the question of loyalty and disloyalty in reformist Islam in France. Overall, the few existing publications on Muslim loyalty in Western Europe have focused on loyalty in Salafist milieus. The main aim of this paper is to bridge this gap and investigate loyalty/disloyalty as a dimension of belonging and as a religious norm of group construction and cohesion in the discourses of three Muslim leaders in France: Tariq Ramadan, Abdelali Mamoun and Moncef Zenati. The choice of these three case studies comes from the fact that the three reformist scholars represent distinctive and diverse profiles in terms of professions and ethnic backgrounds and adopt different theoretical approaches to loyalty (i.e., Ramadan is a Swiss-born scholar–activist, while Zenati is a Franco-Tunisian imam and theologian close to the Muslim Brotherhood and Mamoun, from a French–Algerian background, is an imam close to the French authorities and media). Moreover, these three figures of religious authority enjoyed or still enjoy wide influence in their respective Muslim communities. Other figures of authority in French Islam, including female Muslim intellectuals (Kahina Bahloul for example), contribute a great deal to producing a Muslim discourse of loyalty and deserve to be studied separately.

2. The State of Research on "Muslim Loyalties" in the West

Very little research has been conducted on loyalties among European Muslim communities, especially in France. The work performed so far has focused exclusively on the *securitization of loyalty*, i.e., on the ability of Muslims to be loyal to Western societies as Islamist terrorism has destabilised these societies in recent years; accusations of Muslim disloyalty emerged at a more limited level in Britain in the aftermath of the Rushdie affair and the Gulf War (1989–1991) (Werbner 2000, pp. 307–24). Thus, it is only in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, that the first research started to appear on Muslim loyalties in the West. In 2003, M. S. Seddon et al. edited the book *British Muslims: Loyalty and Belonging*, which includes two contributions on loyalty by Muslim thinkers Imtiaz Ahmed Hussain and Tim Winter, who both believe Muslim loyalty should be shown to the British state and society provided that the latter recognizes Muslims; both thinkers consider a "*minimal loyalty*" to be necessary as a starting point for Islamic reform in Western society (Seddon et al. 2003). In 2007, Frederic Volpi showed how jihadists in Europe through individualized approaches to religiosity undermine the construction of pacts of loyalty between Muslims and European states (Volpi 2007, pp. 451–70). A year later, Joas Wagemakers explored how Salafism views Islam as religiously and politically threatened, which would require Salafists to be loyal to God and Islam and to disavow everything else (Wagemakers 2009, pp. 1–22). In 2014, Uriya Shavit distinguished between Salafist perceptions of loyalty that require Muslims to refrain from befriending or loving non-Muslims, or imitating the beliefs and customs of reformists who hold that the dogma of covenant and disavowal applies only to non-Muslims who fight Muslims (Shavit 2014, pp. 67–88). In 2015, Said Hassan identified three distinct legal positions within the fatwas of Muslim jurists on the issue of a Muslim subject's loyalty to a non-Muslim state: the alienation position, the conciliation position, and the commitment position (Hassan 2015, pp. 516–39). In 2017, Fabien Truong described how debt recognition and loyalty conflicts among young Muslims in France construct a "tacit" moral code that forms neighbourhood solidarities (Truong 2017). Truong shows how Muslim youth in France learn "to become men by experiencing competing loyalties to their neighbourhood,

to their friends and to the unspoken aspects of their family history. But also towards the Nation and its meritocratic ideal, and towards a capitalism that promotes individualism, virility and economic competition" (Truong 2017, p. 5). He also discusses how "the factory of loyalty conflicts works between the behaviour expected from fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, teachers, 'big brothers', youth workers, educators, the police, classmates, neighbourhood mates, gang mates, business partners or girls" (Truong 2017, p. 36). He adds that loyalty is constructed in connection to the acknowledgement of social debts which "bring into existence, from relative to relative, the values that end up circumscribing the perimeter of the sacred" (Truong 2017, p. 40). Thus, for Truong, young Muslims define their loyalties by their social debts to friends and family and attempt to solve the conflict of loyalties which emerges from their multiple social identities. In 2018, Imène Ajala explored, in *European Muslims and their Foreign Policy Interests: Identities and Loyalties*, the loyalties of French and British Muslims in terms of foreign policy and particularly towards Palestine (Ajala 2018). Ajala highlights, in particular, how "the Securitization of Islam affects the perception of Muslim loyalties in France and how the context relating to Global Islam hijacks Muslim expression over foreign policy in the French setting. The 9/11 attacks have reinforced the problematization of Muslims in Europe under the security paradigm and Muslims are increasingly perceived as a threat from within and constructed as the "other", raising questions about their loyalty" (Ajala 2018, p. 79). She also draws attention to the French political system which "rejects ethnic group politics. In a framework which is unfavourable to the expression of specific interests and characterized by a strong centralization, it is even more difficult for ethnic groups to mobilize and exert influence" (Ajala 2018, p. 43). Ajala's work helps us understand loyalty to French foreign policy as matter of loyalty to the French state, which makes any disagreement with this policy as a form of disloyalty (although French foreign policy has changed few times in recent years). In 2019, Damir-Geilsdorf et al. investigated a group of Salafists in Germany whose ideas of individual loyalty and disavowal intersect with issues of identity, belonging, inclusion, and exclusion, which are strongly intertwined with the realities of everyday life (Damir-Geilsdorf et al. 2019, p. 124).

Two shortcomings of these previous studies of Muslim loyalties can be pointed out. First, most studies have focused on Salafism, ultimately a minority interpretation in contemporary Islam. Second, most research in the West to date has focused on the Anglo-Saxon world; the Francophone space in Europe, and especially in France, has benefited little from the research interest in loyalty/disloyalty among Muslim leaders. In general, there is still very little scientific understanding of Muslim attitudes toward loyalty/disloyalty as an element of identity formation in European contexts.

3. T. Ramadan: Multiple Identities, Critical Loyalties

Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss Muslim intellectual of Egyptian origin, was born in Geneva in 1962. His father Said Ramadan (d. 1995) was the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe and his grandfather Ḥasan al-Bannā (d. 1949) is the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, in 1928. Ramadan benefited from a double education. On the one hand, he received an Islamic education at the Islamic Centre of Geneva, which is a religious and political centre of the Muslim Brotherhood run by his family, and became exposed to Islamism and the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. Ramadan also briefly pursued a traditional curriculum of Islamic knowledge at al-Azhar University in Egypt between 1992 and 1994. On the other hand, Ramadan studied philosophy and French literature in Switzerland, obtaining a PhD in Arabic and Islamic studies at the University of Geneva.[2] Between the mid-1990s and 2017, T. Ramadan was a key figure in French Islam, delivering hundreds of lectures and sermons, founding a number of associations and institutes, and connecting influential networks of Islamic action and ideas; several allegations of rape and sexual violation in 2017 put a halt to his tremendous influence.

Ramadan discussed loyalty in a systematic and extensive way in his book *Mon intime conviction* (*My Deep Conviction*) published in 2010. For this reason, I took this book as the basis of my discussion of his discourse on loyalty. Ramadan wrote this book as a response

to his critics, who accused him of double talk (liberal to the faces of non-Muslim audiences and conservative when addressing Muslims). With this book, he wanted to unveil what he "really believes". Ramadan perceives loyalty through two premises: 1. multiple identities equal multiple loyalties, and 2. loyalties are always critical and never blind. With regard to the first premise, Ramadan maintains that "one cannot only have one identity, one cannot only have one loyalty" (Ramadan 2010, p. 69). Ramadan illustrates the idea of the multiple identities of Muslims in Europe with his own case: "I am Swiss by nationality, Egyptian by memory, Muslim by religion, European by culture, universalist by principle, Moroccan and Mauritian by adoption. There is no problem with that: I live with these identities and one or the other can become a priority depending on the context and the situation" (Ramadan 2010, p. 71). If that is the case, how can one navigate between multiple loyalties? Ramadan answers this question by affirming that Muslim citizens should sustain "the coherence of the conscience that marries identities around a body of principles whose use, to be just, cannot be selective and must remain critical as well as self-critical" (Ramadan 2010, p. 71). Ramadan means, by the body of principles, the Islamic ethics of justice, dignity and equality; the latter cements the multiple loyalties by establishing priorities and hierarchies according to the hierarchy of Islamic values.

Ramadan considers loyalty together with language and law as the three L requirements for Muslim citizens in Europe: mastery of the national language, respect for the law, and critical loyalty to their society (Ramadan 2010, p. 153). In his view:

> Loyalties are critical: with one's government, with one's co-religionists or with the *umma*, it is never a question of supporting 'one's own', blindly, against all 'others'. It is about being faithful to principles of justice, dignity and equality, and being able to criticize and demonstrate against one's government when it engages in unjust warfare, when it legitimizes apartheid or deals with the worst dictators. It is similarly about having critical loyalty to one's own Muslim (or other) co-religionists and opposing their ideas or actions when they betray these same principles, stigmatize the other, breed racism, justify dictatorships, terrorist attacks or the murder of innocents. (Ramadan 2010, pp. 72–73)

Since loyalty is mutual between the members of the group, and not only an expressed emotion of one particular side to another, Ramadan asserts that loyalty should operate through social experience and dialogue so that "one can trust oneself and one's partner, and thus measure the loyalty of the other" (Ramadan 2010, p. 72). Although trust is a different emotion from loyalty, they are usually associated in social relations. This trust-in-interaction is carried out through two dynamics: 1. national movements of local initiatives as expressions of responsible commitment of all citizens in Western societies. 2. Diversity of cultural expressions in the West (Ramadan 2010, p. 72). We can infer from this perception of multiple identities-cum-loyalty that as long as every culture is respected as part of the collective identity, more trust could be achieved, and, therefore, more loyalty to Western societies and states.

Ramadan does not address the problem of trust after the terrorist attacks in France. Between 2015 and 2022, France faced 37 Islamist terror attacks of various scales. Between 1979 and 2021, 82 Islamist terrorist attacks targeted France, killing 330 people. Furthermore, the French security services put under surveillance 10,500 individuals registered in France for jihadist radicalization.[3] In general, Western societies take Islamist terrorist attacks as signs of the lack of reliability of "Muslims" as a trustworthy component of society. This, in turn, is mobilized as an argument to doubt Muslim loyalties. Although reformist Islam denounces Islamist violence and commits itself to "saving" trust within Western societies, the latter find it hard to resume trust building after each terrorist attack. In this context, trust is permanently targeted and undermined by terrorist organizations, bringing doubt to trust building and diversity accepting. For the time being, in France, only the state takes measures to fight Islamist terrorism (sometimes suspecting ordinary Muslims as well). Reformist Muslim organizations denounce unanimously Islamist terrorism, but take few practical measures in this regard.

For Ramadan, critical loyalty agrees with the values of Western societies themselves (democracy, critical thinking, justice, freedom, etc.). That is why he sees no contradiction between being loyal to these societies and "combating the spread of a discourse that *normalizes ordinary racism, discriminatory treatment and the stigmatization of a part of the population*" (Ramadan 2010, p. 203). For, as he puts it "*true civic loyalty is a critical loyalty*: it means refusing to have to systematically prove one's membership of society and, knowing one's responsibilities, *claiming one's rights and establishing a fundamental critique of government policies when these betray the ideals of democratic societies*" (Ramadan 2010, p. 203).

Accordingly, critical loyalty is a form of dissidence (or disloyalty to certain practices) which aims to reform the system or resist injustice. There is room, here, to debate what constitutes acceptable resistance or dissidence. There is the kind of critical loyalty of Edward Snowden (the American computer intelligence consultant who fled to Russia) which made him a renegade (and disloyal from the American point of view) and there is the kind of critical loyalty of Cornel West (an American social critic and philosopher) who is critical of the current US internal and foreign policies. Critical loyalty is a dilemma and a lot depends on the confines of loyalty/disloyalty, for specific people, in specific situations.

4. A. Mamoun: Loyalty, Gratitude and Patriotism

Abdelali Mamoun was born in France to Algerian parents in the late 1960s. He studied the Koran in the mosque of Mantes-la-Jolie and participated in a Koranic chanting competition in Libya in 1982. In 1983, he went to Syria to study Islam for six years in an Islamic institute. He then studied in Saudi Arabia before returning to France in the early 1990s, where he completed a postgraduate degree in the history of philosophy at the Sorbonne and taught in the mosques of Mureaux and Mantes-la-Jolie. In 2001, a leadership conflict pitted him against the Islamic World League, which propagates a rather fundamentalist vision of Islam, and which he reproached for its interference (which was ultimately that of the Saudis) in French Islam. In 2012, he created and began directing the *Maison de la Culture Musulmane* (House of Muslim Culture) in Paris, an association which offers religious training, but also mediation activities, the handling of phenomena considered paranormal, marriage preparation, and one-off activities such as trips, etc. In any case, Abdelali Mamoun has been promoting a "republican" discourse in which he advocates for the supervision of French Islam by the State, the reform of Islam, the de-radicalisation of young people, and opposition to Islamist discourse. He became highly publicised in the wake of the terrorist attacks in France (since 2012). In 2004, Marie Dolez devoted a film to him entitled *L'Imam du vendredi* (The Friday Imam), in which A. Mamoun discusses Islam and the role of Islam in society. Mamoun focuses on Islam and social problems in the suburbs of French cities.[4] Eleven years later, he participated in a documentary film entitled Djihad 2.0 to raise awareness against radicalization.[5] Mamoun shares the journey of part of the second generation of immigrants to Europe who chose the "authentic option" in terms of religion, i.e., to follow their parents' advice to study Islam in a fairly consistent manner, and then to return to Europe seeking reintegration from the use of the religious capital acquired in Muslim countries to carry out the mission of helping Muslims in Europe to claim more of their religious identity, through the dissemination of traditional knowledge. In 2017, he published *L'islam contre le radicalisme: manuel de contre-offensive* (*Islam against Radicalism: A Manual for Counter-Offensive*) at Éditions du Cerf. This book is one of a series of Islamic books written in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in France (2015–2017) which shook French society; as an imam and theologian, Mamoun also represents the reaction of Muslim leaders in France to the accusation that some imams condone violence or do not take on the responsibility of reforming Muslim thinking so that it can accept the values and laws of the Republic in France. The book is aimed at a Muslim public of young French people who are sensitive to Islamic ideologies ranging from Islamism to Salafism, from messianism to jihadism and from pan-Islamism to the Muslim Brotherhood. This audience often confuses religion with contemporary ideologies; the author then sets out to explain what distinguishes Islam as a religion from different

contemporary ideologies, which are all radical according to the author, even when some of these ideologies are not violent. I take this book as the foundation of my analysis of Mamoun's discourse on loyalty because it is the only work he dedicated to this issue.

For Mamoun, loyalty is an expression of patriotism and an important Islamic virtue to be cultivated in the French context as well. This virtue, he says, is "*wafā'* in Arabic, an Islamic virtue which imposes on Muslim citizens gratitude towards their homeland or the one they have adopted and the benefits it has given them" (Mamoun 2017, p. 85). Mamoun, thus, links loyalty to gratitude:

> We are not the commensals of France but its trustees. And this is contrary to what many young people from immigrant backgrounds think, who are struggling to appropriate this legacy, discouraged as they are by, among other things, the speeches of imams who indulge in maintaining a dichotomous and inverted relationship between the fervour of the believer and adherence to the nation. At best, they talk about the respect of the laws of the host country that the guest owes to the host. But this is not true. No, we are not guests of the French Republic, but its children. No, we are neither nostalgic for an Islam from elsewhere that we would like to transplant here, nor the precursors of an Islamic future that we would like to implant here. (Mamoun 2017, p. 85)

Mamoun criticizes, here, the Salafist view of loyalty which states that Muslims should be anti-Republican, or at best should evolve in parallel to the French Republic; they call for respect of laws insofar as foreigners should respect the laws of the land they travel to, without owing loyalty to the host country or building bridges of trust and gratitude with the rest of society. In general, this view follows the traditional Salafi doctrine of alliance and disavowal (*al-walā' wa-l-barā'*), which separates Muslim communities from the rest of society emotionally, while still calling for respect of the laws of the Republic as mutual agreements. Jihadist Salafism takes this doctrine further and rejects these laws as infidel regulations and undeserving respect. That is to say, building a reformist Islamic view of loyalty necessitates, as well, critical engagement with the Salafi view of alliance and disavowal.

Mamoun admits that it is not that easy to reconcile loyalty to Islam and loyalty to France. He embraces the concept of the double loyalty; as he puts it, "as Muslims our love is shared because it shows our gratitude towards two entities that cherish us. On the one hand, France, which is our homeland and which we love because it satisfies our physical and vital needs, a love that impels us to contribute to its growth and glory. On the other hand, Islam, which is our "motherland" and which we love in the same way because it fulfils our emotional and spiritual needs" (Mamoun 2017, p. 86). Reconciliation between two parents, France and Islam, is necessary all the more when the parental relationship "unfortunately now seems to be in the process of divorce" (Mamoun 2017, p. 86). Mamoun asserts that if this relationship breaks then "you either love France or you leave it. I am not ashamed to be a chauvinist, because I consider that this is the least recognition that Allah himself imposes on us. The Prophet said in the Bukhari collection of Ethics: He who is not grateful to people, will not be grateful to God" (Mamoun 2017, p. 86).

At first glance, the dilemma between loyalty to France and Islam seems difficult to resolve, but Mamoun brings it back to its first principles. Contrary to the beliefs of the Salafis and the Republicanists, this double loyalty is a false contradiction. There should not be a contradiction between the two since the love of each entails a different kind of moral obligation. The Republic is a regime for the common good and Islam is a faith. While he emphasises the values of patriotism, loyalty and gratitude to France as the homeland adopted by Muslims because it fulfils the physical and vital needs of Muslims, Islam is still relevant because it fulfils their emotional and spiritual needs. The two loyalties are not competing and are not mutually exclusive. If there is a contradiction, Mamoun points out, it is in the Salafi discourse which "disavows the Western system while enjoying its privileges, praising their original home country, but have long since left it because they know that their needs will never be met there" (Mamoun 2017, p. 86).

Similarly to T. Ramadan, Mamoun does not embrace blind loyalty to France. As he utters, "being loyal to one's country does not mean that one should be passive, sheepish or blind" (Mamoun 2017, p. 86). He adds that approving and appreciating state institutions "does not prevent one from contributing to their improvement since the expression of thought and opinions are by definition, as one learns in school, free as soon as they are put to the test of criticism: these are even expressions of the very French passion for politics, understood as the public life of the City, but should be always in respect of democratic rules, never by illegal and immoral manoeuvres, and in no case by barbaric acts of terror" (Mamoun 2017, p. 86).

Thus, critical loyalty should be voiced through free speech, politics, citizen initiatives and democracy; it cannot be violent dissidence. Nonetheless, Mamoun seems less enthusiastic than Ramadan about expressing critical loyalty. For Ramadan, critical loyalty is a normal implication of citizenship, encouraged to show resistance to government policies, by any peaceful means, while Mamoun seems to approve of the right to criticism rather than encouraging resistance to government policies. Mamoun is particularly critical and sensitive to the Salafist discourse than Ramadan. He seems to take the mistrust towards Muslims in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in France (2015–2017) that shook French society, as a Muslim responsibility in some sense; as an imam and theologian, Mamoun represents the reaction of the majority of Muslim leaders in France to terrorism as a sign of disloyalty to France.

5. Moncef Zenati: Human Brotherhood and Loyalty

Moncef Zenati is a Franco–Tunisian Muslim theologian and imam (born in 1970), and a member of the organization *Musulmans de France* (MF, French Muslims), formerly *Union des organisations islamiques de France* (UOIF, Union of Islamic Organisations of France), the biggest Muslim umbrella organization in France (which is close to the Muslim Brotherhood). Born in France, he grew up in Tunisia. He then obtained a degree in mathematics and another in Islamic theology at the *Institut Européen des Sciences Humaines* (European Institute of Human Sciences), the most important Muslim private higher education institute in France where he still teaches, in addition to being an imam in Le Havre. He has published several short theological works and translations of Islamic books from Arabic. In 2008, he published *La fraternité humaine en islam* (*Human brotherhood in Islam*).

Zenati discusses loyalty in his text *La fraternité humaine en islam* (*Human brotherhood in Islam*), which explains the choice I made to investigate his discourse in this particular book. Its context, thus, predates the wave of terrorist attacks of 2012–2017 (although the low-scale terrorist attacks of the 1990s in France had a huge impact on French society). In a similar fashion to Mamoun, Zenati sets out to convince extreme voices, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, about Muslim loyalties. He takes issue with the Salafis who believe that no loyalty, alliance, affection or friendship should be shown to non-Muslims, while he also takes issue with the anti-Muslim French view which sustains biases against Muslims.

For Zenati, human brotherhood is based on the exchange of knowledge, mutual assistance, dialogue, common good, justice, equity, struggle against racism, respect and tolerance (Zenati 2008, p. 86). Zenati asserts that some Muslims misunderstood the doctrine of alliance and disavowal. He maintains that the form of 'alliance' or 'loyalty' (*al-walāʾ*) which is forbidden in Islamic ethics is that "shown by Muslims toward non-Muslims who committed aggression against Muslims. This type of loyalty is to the detriment of Muslims, and entails an *alliance with an enemy of nation and religion, who practices all forms of treason and espionage*" (Zenati 2008, p. 86). Thus, disloyalty to non-Muslims can only be cautioned if it is a reaction to previous disloyalty from non-Muslims, and is valid only "if non-Muslims change their loyalty from one nation to another, from one people to another, which constitutes, in contemporary jargon, an act of high treason" (Zenati 2008, p. 87). In this case, Muslims are proscribed to enter into alliances or friendly relations, pacifying or acting benevolently with the one who declares war on Muslims and offends and oppresses them, because no one should take enemies as allies while they diligently work "to triumph

over one's own nation, submitting completely to the enemy and spying on Muslims" (Zenati 2008, p. 89).

Thus, Zenati provides context for Muslim disloyalty towards non-Muslims, which is that of non-Muslim aggression towards Muslims. Putting this exceptional case aside, Zenati maintains that "there is no harm in making alliances in the secular realm with non-Muslims, nor in showing them sympathy and friendship" (Zenati 2008, p. 91). Thus, he makes an *argumentum e contrario* (if the *ratio legis* of disloyalty to non-Muslims is the latter's aggression, and such a reason does not exist in the French context, the normal course of things is to be loyal to people who share nationhood with Muslims). Thus, the mobilization by Salafis of the dogma of alliance and disavowal, he says, is both " reductive and erroneous" (Zenati 2008, p. 91).

Furthermore, Zenati adds that "alliances and friendships may arise between Muslims and non-Muslims because of neighbourhood, work, study or the human qualities that one perceives in the other; all these relationships do not contradict the Islamic principle of *'al-walā'*" (Zenati 2008, p. 91). He illustrates this socially built loyalty with the permission given by Islamic law to mixed marriages between Muslim men and non-Muslim women (Jewish and Christian women, specifically), a marital relationship that is based on love, tranquillity and tenderness which shows, for him, that Muslims are allowed by Islamic law to show loyalty to non-Muslims (Zenati 2008, p. 92). Islamic law indeed trusts Jewish and Christian women as long as the orientation of the family is defined by the Muslim husband (not when a Muslim woman wants to marry a Jewish and Christian man, which is a forbidden form of marriage in Islamic law because the orientation of family in this case would be defined by the non-Muslim man).

Even so, Zenati's argument, at least partially, undermines the Salafi interpretation of alliance and disavowal as a ban on loyalty to non-Muslims. In normal cases, one cannot imagine being disloyal to one's wife because she is non-Muslim or to one's children because their mother is non-Muslim, knowing that family still constitutes, for most people, not only the core of social structures, but also a space of the shaping identity of individuals and social groups.

For Zenati, the principles of universality, humanism and peace (which are essential to Islamic ethics in his view) are simply ignored by Salafism and its binary conceptions of loyalty/disloyalty. Salafism also discards basic premises of social interaction, from family to trade, which are all premised on trust and ability to build trust with others as individuals and communities.

6. Islamic Loyalties as Identity Formation

In the section that follows, it will be argued that Muslim reformist discourses in France envision loyalty as an element of the identity formation of French Muslims. Before proceeding to discuss loyalty as identity formation in the discourses of the three Muslim authorities here (Ramadan, Mamoun and Zenati), I will proceed to frame loyalty as identity formation in social theory. Let us begin with Georg Simmel, who envisaged loyalty and gratitude as the two emotions which cement social relations, converting them into permanent institutions calling loyalty the "enabler of society" and "the inertia of the soul" (Simmel 1964, pp. 379–80). As for Jürgen Habermas, he argued that "modern political-administrative units are systems which exchange administrative achievements and political decisions for loyalty and taxes" (Habermas 1987, p. 320). Similarly, Mabel Berezin draws attention to the "exchange between the democratic nation-states and their citizens in which states deliver security and receive confidence and loyalty in exchange" (Berezin 2002, p. 38). Helena Flam perceives loyalty as a routine and significant social emotion, arguing that "loyalty seems to pervade every nook and cranny of modern society. In fact, most prominent social scientists attribute great significance to its binding role" (Flam 2005, p. 21). Jonathan Haidt's work on loyalty and disloyalty shows that it is a moral foundation through which individuals and groups form alliances; mark territories; negotiate familial, tribal, national and religious loyalties; establish group cohesion or engage in rivalries (Haidt 2012, pp. 154–57). We can

clearly see that as we move through time, sociologists see political obligations as the basis of loyalty (in accordance with the liberal view), while conservative thinkers and earlier sociologists believe that the basis of loyalty to the state lies rather in friendship or virtue (Scruton 1982, p. 277).

Turning now to T. Ramadan, whose view of the basis of loyalty to the French state seems to be the mutual political obligations between the state and its citizens. In this sense, it can be said that Ramadan's perception of loyalty is liberal; the state ought to accept Muslims with their diversity of identities and critical views in exchange for their loyalty to the state. Thus, Ramadan requires the state to recognize Muslims qua Muslims as part of the nation; the state here is not merely a political–administrative system or a provider of security. His view, thus, is far from Berezin's and Habermas' views of loyalty. Neither is it a Simmelian view of loyalty based on gratitude. Instead, Ramadan's has a Weberian element of loyalty as a debt to effective leadership. If the state can assume effective leadership by embracing Muslims as different and critical, its authority is legitimate and it has the right to Muslim loyalties. Therefore, Muslim identity formation in France consists, for him, in building a community of Muslims and non-Muslims on the basis of the mutual recognition of differences, shared trust and common loyalty.

Let us turn now to Mamoun, whose perception of loyalty is based on gratitude, which is clearly a Simmelian way of viewing society. Simmel sees gratitude as predicated on reciprocity and moral bondage (Simmel 1964, p. 387). For Simmel, loyalty and gratitude are closely linked because they both build constancy in social relationships, which are needed by individuals and society (Simmel 1964, p. 394). Mamoun justifies gratitude towards France as being motivated by two considerations. First, that France gave benefits to Muslims (which even Muslim states did not provide to their populations). Mamoun expresses gratitude to "the mother-France as provider of material well-being to its citizens. Muslims are also now children of France, not its guests, and as such they feel "filial loyalty" towards France. Loyalty is, consequently, a way to "return the many favours" Muslims received from French state and society. Those who fail to show loyalty to France are ungrateful, refuse to reciprocate the favours they received and, so, should leave the country.

Second, Mamoun draws on Muslim ethics, and particularly on the notion of *wafāʾ* to posit that Muslims are morally bound to their homelands. The notion of *wafāʾ* has slightly different meanings than *walāʾ* or *muwālāt*, which are the standard religious terms for loyalty in Islamic political ethics. *Wafāʾ* denotes the meanings of the fulfilment of a promise, discharge of an obligation, faithfulness, fidelity, good faith, loyalty, allegiance and accomplishment (Wehr 1976, p. 1086). As for *walāʾ* and *muwālāt*, they indicate friendship, benevolence, fidelity, allegiance, loyalty, clienthood and constancy (Wehr 1976, pp. 1100–1). While the Salafis in France use the terms of *walāʾ* or *muwālāt*, Mamoun chose to use the term of *wafāʾ*. If we are to justify this shift in vocabulary, we might say that Mamoun avoids *walāʾ* and *muwālāt* for their implied meanings of friendship and clienthood. It could also be that Mamoun wanted to use a less controversial term (*wafāʾ*) than that of *walāʾ* or *muwālāt*. Furthermore, *wafāʾ*, even more than *walāʾ*, expresses fervent veneration of faithfulness and loyalty in Islam, inherited from nomadic vigorousness and respect of loyalty to the bounds of the tribe and kinship by blood (extended to friendship), a virtue that enjoys a high status in the Islamic moral code (Izutsu 2002, pp. 86–87). As Izutsu puts it, Islam has made the virtue of *wafāʾ* into "something supertribal, truly human, a moral force capable of operating in an individualistic society" (Izutsu 2002, p. 88). The Quran has strongly discouraged Muslims from betrayal.[6] In Islamic ethics, there is also a foundational relationship between religious loyalty to God, and *ikhlāṣ* loyalty to "faithful believers", *wafāʾ*. Moreover, the sermon of allegiance, *bayʿa*, is not exclusive to the figure of a political leader, but to that of the Prophet, the Sufi master and God as well. Paying allegiance as a sign of loyalty plays a significant role in structuring Muslim societies. Since duplicity implies a dual loyalty, the duplicity of the hypocrites, *munāfiqūn* is so denounced in Islamic ethics Muslim ethics is also sensitive to apostasy, *ridda*; Muslims usually react strongly to apostasy as disloyalty.

As for Zenati, loyalty is based on friendship and human brotherhood. This is clearly an Aristotelian–conservative view of associating loyalty and friendship as virtues (Fletcher 1993, p. 6). Zenati mobilizes here a daily fact of friendly relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in France (and elsewhere), at work or in the neighbourhood, in families, sport, and beyond. In such social settings, one cannot discard how these relationships play a considerable role in building loyalties. It is not only the vast networks of dialogue and exchange between Muslims and non-Muslims in education institutions, media and cultural forums, but also the good practices of care, common projects, and social interaction which make loyal solidarities. Friendship can create opportunities for cooperation, marriage, and trade, which all help foster these loyalties. As Fletcher puts it, "loyalties crystallize in common projects and shared life experiences" because friendship "rests on loyalty, requires an implicit understanding of continuity and reciprocal reliance, caring, relations and shared histories. And so, loyalty does not arise in the abstract but only in the context of particular relations" (Fletcher 1993, p. 7). While many Muslims chose to live in a parallel world to French society, a considerable number of Muslims do the opposite, interact in all sectors of society, and construct a French Muslim identity with customers, friends, and colleagues. This is a solid ethical–sociological foundation of social identity and loyalty embraced by many Muslims.

With regard to human brotherhood, Zenati cross-references here the Islamic notion of *ukhuwwa* (brotherhood) and the French value of *fraternité* (brotherhood). Modern Islamic thought has come to accept the notion of human brotherhood, *ukhuwwa fi 'l-insāniyya*, although Salafism and other extremist Islamic trends adhere only to the brotherhood in Islamic faith, *ukhuwwa fi 'l-īmān*. Nowadays, the majority of Muslim jurists and thinkers distinguish between brotherhood in religion and brotherhood in humanity or nationality as two different types of brotherhood that should not be opposed. A recent international forum of the Muslim World League, one of the most important transnational Islamic organizations, stated that between Muslims, Jews, Christians and others, there is brotherhood in humanity and brotherhood in citizenship.[7] The notion of human brotherhood and of citizenship between Muslims and non-Muslims became even more acknowledged in Islamic thought when the religious authorities of al-Azhar and the Vatican issued the document of human fraternity in Abu Dhabi in 2019.[8] Zenati also mobilizes the French notion of *fraternité* (brotherhood), one of the values of the national motto of France, intended to promote national unity and solidarity. *Fraternité* (brotherhood) has been mobilized in France by various Muslim leaders and intellectuals after the wave of terrorist attacks (2015–2017), among whom is Abdennour Bidar, who published his *Plaidoyer pour la fraternité* (*A Plea for Brotherhood*) in 2015 which stresses brotherliness between French citizens, despite cultural diversity, to confront terrorism (Bidar 2015).

Is the French state capable of embracing Muslims as different and critical, in a Republican model of citizenship? As explained by John R. Bowen "any social groups claiming special rights run up against the Jacobin heritage of French political culture. When private religious groups seek to act publicly, they incur double suspicion" (Bowen 2007, p. 162). He adds that any claim to multiple loyalties "competes with the state for the loyalties of their members, and thus promotes communalism. But they are also suspected of going further and promoting constraints on their members that have divine sanction and thus higher authority than that of the state. Hence the great French fascination with cults (*sectes*) and with the Masons". (Bowen 2007, p. 162). Likewise, Jocelyne Cesari observes that, in the French model, "visible Islamic identities are inversely correlated to civic and political loyalties". (Cesari 2014, p. 173). The doubts about Muslim loyalty in France expressed constantly by various French officials calling Muslims to "love France or leave it" divides Muslims into those who are good Muslims (who respect the notion of the Republic and secularism by assimilating to French values) and the rest (who are suspected of disloyalty). Finally, one cannot ignore the arguments made by French politicians underlining the impossibility of integrating Muslims in connection to dual loyalty and the primacy of the law (Roy 2012, pp. 96–109).

7. Conclusions

The aim of the present paper was to examine the discourses of three reformist Muslim leaders in France (T. Ramadan, A. Mamoun and M. Zenati) on loyalty. This study identified Muslim loyalties as based on mutual recognition, diversity, gratitude and human brotherhood. These findings suggest that, in general, reformist Islam discards the Salafi doctrine of banning loyalty to non-Muslims. The three Muslim accounts analysed here show that loyalty is an essential component of Muslim identity formation in France, reconciling multiple identities and loyalties and attempting to resolve possible tensions between Frenchness and Islam by adopting the attitude of critical loyalty (when it comes to unjust policies endorsed by the French state). These results are generalisable only to reformist Islam, which is traditionalist and moderate political Islam; they are subject to certain limitations, as Salafism and other extreme interpretations of Islam do not apply loyalty to non-Muslim states and societies.

The variables/meanings of loyalty identified in the discourses of three key Muslim leaders in France show different results from research covered in Section 2 on the State of Research on Muslim Loyalties. The two main differences to emphasize, here, are that: 1. Muslim loyalty, according to reformist leaders, does not depend on the securitization context in France since the 1990s and the doubts about Muslim loyalty. Loyalty is taken as a foundational moral value inherent to Muslimness, although this loyalty is not exclusive to one single identity (France or Islam). 2. Loyalty to non-Muslims is motivated by social, political and theological considerations and not determined solely by religion (which seems to be the focus of literature on Salafi loyalty).

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Notes

1 «Cinquièmes colonnes»: la Grande Mosquée de Paris tacle Estrosi Available online: https://www.saphirnews.com/Cinquiemes-colonnes-la-Grande-Mosquee-de-Paris-tacle-Estrosi_a20725.html (accessed on: 12 September 2022).

2 Éléments de biographie Available online: https://tariqramadan.com/elements-de-biographie/ (accessed on: 12 September 2022).

3 Fiches S, la surveillance des Renseignements qui alimente le débat politique Available online: https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/fiches-s-la-surveillance-des-renseignements-qui-alimente-le-debat-politique_1847110.html (accessed on: 12 September 2022).

4 L'Imam du vendredi Available online: http://www.lussasdoc.org/film-l_imam_du_vendredi-1,14702.html (accessed on: 12 September 2022).

5 Regardez "Djihad 2.0", un documentaire d'Olivier Toscer Available online: https://www.telerama.fr/television/regardez-djihad-2-0-un-documentaire-d-olivier-toscer,134445.php (accessed on: 12 September 2022).

6 See in particular:

Q. 4: 107 (And do not dispute on behalf of those who betray themselves; surely God loves not the guilty traitor).

The Koran, translated by A. J. Arberry, New York: Touchstone, 1996, p. 117.

Q. 8: 58 (And if thou fearest treachery any way at the hands of a people, dissolve it with them equally; surely God loves not the treacherous).

The Koran, translated by A. J. Arberry, p. 204.

Q. 12: 52 ('That, so that he may know I betrayed him not secretly, and that God guides not the guile of the treacherous).

The Koran, translated by A. J. Arberry, p. 260.

7 Bi-ḥuḍūr ʿulamāʾ al-ʿālam al-Islāmī wa-l-majāmiʿ al-Islāmiyya: Muʾtamar fiqh al-ṭawāriʾ yaḥsim al-qawl fī mawḍūʿ al-ukhuwwa al-insāniyya Available online: https://themwl.org/ar/node/37567 (accessed on: 12 September 2022).

8 The Abu Dhabi Declaration on Human Fraternity Available online: https://www.christians-muslims.com/document (accessed on: 12 September 2022).

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