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Belonging as Rebuttal: Waṭaniyyah as Muslim Counter-Discourse to the "Disloyal Muslim" Trope in Australian Public Life

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Abstract:

Australian Muslims are repeatedly asked to prove a loyalty that other citizens are presumed to possess. This article examines how the "disloyal Muslim" trope is constructed in Australian public life and asks whether Waṭaniyyah, the Islamic ethic of attachment to and responsibility for one's homeland, can serve as a counter-discourse to it. Using a qualitative, critical-interpretive design, the study combines a discourse-historical reading of an illustrative corpus of Australian political, policy and civil-society texts (2014–2026) with a normative analysis of classical Islamic sources, checked in the Shamela digital library, and contemporary Muslim political thought. The analysis identifies three mechanisms through which the trope operates: collective essentialisation, perpetual probation, and the coding of religious visibility as threat. Against these, the classical record yields an account of homeland attachment that is affective, covenantal and contributive: the Prophetic prayer that Medina, an acquired homeland, be loved as Mecca was loved; Ibn Ḥajar's judgement that love of homeland is religiously legitimate; the juristic rule, found in the Ḥanbalī, Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafī sources examined, that a Muslim living under a guarantee of security may not betray its grantors; and the Abyssinian emigrants' prayers for the victory of the just Christian king who sheltered them. The article proposes a five-dimensional model of covenantal belonging (ethical attachment, civic contribution, religious integrity, reciprocal recognition and shared belonging) and argues that Waṭaniyyah rebuts the trope not by supplying better proof of loyalty but by contesting the premise that Muslim belonging is probationary. The contribution is theoretical: it moves the study of Australian Islamophobia from describing Muslim exclusion to articulating an Islamically grounded normative vocabulary of membership.

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Keywords: *Waṭaniyyah; Islamophobia; loyalty; multicultural citizenship; Australian Muslims; critical discourse analysis; Islamic political thought.*

Australian Muslims are repeatedly asked to prove a loyalty that other citizens are presumed to possess. This article examines how the "disloyal Muslim" trope is constructed in Australian public life and asks whether Waṭaniyyah, the Islamic ethic of attachment to and responsibility for one's homeland, can serve as a counter-discourse to it. Using a qualitative, critical-interpretive design, the study combines a discourse-historical reading of an illustrative corpus of Australian political, policy and civil-society texts (2014–2026) with a normative analysis of classical Islamic sources, checked in the Shamela digital library, and contemporary Muslim political thought. The analysis identifies three mechanisms through which the trope operates: collective essentialisation, perpetual probation, and the coding of religious visibility as threat. Against these, the classical record yields an account of homeland attachment that is affective, covenantal and contributive: the Prophetic prayer that Medina, an acquired homeland, be loved as Mecca was loved; Ibn Ḥajar's judgement that love of homeland is religiously legitimate; the juristic rule, found in the Ḥanbalī, Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafī sources examined, that a Muslim living under a guarantee of security may not betray its grantors; and the Abyssinian emigrants' prayers for the victory of the just Christian king who sheltered them. The article proposes a five-dimensional model of covenantal belonging (ethical attachment, civic contribution, religious integrity, reciprocal recognition and shared belonging) and argues that Waṭaniyyah rebuts the trope not by supplying better proof of loyalty but by contesting the premise that Muslim belonging is probationary. The contribution is theoretical: it moves the study of Australian Islamophobia from describing Muslim exclusion to articulating an Islamically grounded normative vocabulary of membership.

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1. Introduction

On 18 June 2026 the Australian National Imams Council responded to a National Press Club address by Senator Pauline Hanson with a sentence that compresses a political theory into seven words: "We are not guests asking to stay".[1] The statement went further, locating Muslim presence on the continent before British settlement and declaring that the community's place in Australia was "settled". What makes the statement analytically interesting is not its defiance but its grammar. It does not offer evidence of loyalty. It refuses the position from which such evidence is demanded.

That refusal answers a long-standing pattern. Since at least the early 2000s, Australian political and media discourse has framed Muslims as a population whose attachment to the nation is uncertain and must be continually displayed. Prime ministers have urged Muslim leaders to affirm their religion's peacefulness "and mean it"; senators have described Muslims as bearers of an "incompatible" culture; ministers have traced terrorism to the "background" of second- and third-generation citizens (sources in

[1] Australian National Imams Council, "Statement on Senator Pauline Hanson's National Press Club address", June 18, 2026, https://anic.org.au/statement-on-senator-paulinehansons-national-press-club-address/.

Section 6.1). The trope has a measurable social life. In July 2024, 34 per cent of adult Australians reported a somewhat or very negative attitude towards Muslims, up from 27 per cent a year earlier, and the figure stood at 35 per cent in 2025. The Australian Human Rights Commission found that almost 80 per cent of Muslim respondents to its national survey had experienced some form of unfavourable treatment.

The scholarship on these developments is substantial and, in its diagnosis, largely convergent. Australian researchers have shown how anti-Muslim sentiment is racialised, normalised by liberal elites, and institutionalised through counter-terrorism governance that divides Muslims into moderates and extremists. What this literature has done less often is examine the normative resources Muslims bring to the contest from within their own tradition. Modood, one of the field's architects, has conceded that analyses of Muslim "othering" tend to neglect Muslim agency and self-articulation. Systematic reviews reach a similar conclusion: Ozalp and Ćufurović found the Australian literature on Muslim youth dominated by a radicalisation lens, and Sufi and Yasmin's review of Islamophobia research from 2001 to 2022 found the construction of Muslims as "others" to be its dominant theme.

This article addresses that gap through the concept of Waṭaniyyah. The principal research question is: *How can Waṭaniyyah function as an Islamic ethical and political counter-discourse to the "disloyal Muslim" trope in Australian public life, and what does this reveal about the relationship between Muslim identity, citizenship, loyalty and national belonging?* Four supporting questions follow from it:

- RQ1. How is the "disloyal Muslim" trope constructed and reproduced in Australian public discourse?
- RQ2. What are the intellectual foundations of Waṭaniyyah in Islamic thought?
- RQ3. How does Waṭaniyyah challenge the assumed incompatibility between Muslim religious identity and Australian national belonging?
- RQ4. What does this framework imply for multicultural citizenship, public recognition and Muslim civic participation?

The overarching aim is to conceptualise Waṭaniyyah as an Islamically grounded counter-discourse that challenges conditional and probationary constructions of Muslim belonging in Australia. Seven objectives serve that aim: (O1) to examine how the trope is constructed and reproduced in Australian public life; (O2) to analyse the relationship between Muslim religious identity, loyalty and citizenship; (O3) to establish the intellectual foundations of Waṭaniyyah in classical and contemporary Islamic thought; (O4) to evaluate the limits of existing multicultural approaches to Muslim belonging; (O5) to conceptualise Waṭaniyyah as an ethical and civic counter-discourse; (O6) to show how civic contribution, religious identity and national attachment can coexist; and (O7) to propose an analytical framework for Muslim belonging beyond conditional acceptance.

The argument proceeds in three movements. The first shows that the disloyalty trope is less an empirical claim about Muslim behaviour than a discursive arrangement that makes Muslim belonging permanently provisional. The second reconstructs, from primary sources checked in the Shamela library, an Islamic account of homeland attachment that is affective, covenantal and contributive. The third argues that this account rebuts the trope in a specific sense: it does not answer the interrogation; it disputes the interrogator's authority to set the terms of membership.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

Five terms recur in this article and are frequently run together in public debate. Keeping them apart is a precondition of the argument.

Waṭaniyyah (وطنية) is used here for an Islamic ethical and political orientation towards one's homeland (*waṭan*): attachment to it, responsibility for its welfare, and fidelity to the covenants that structure life within it. The term itself is modern. Lewis and Ayalon trace how *waṭan*, originally a person's birthplace or place of residence, acquired political meaning in nineteenth-century Arabic under the influence of the French *patrie*, and how *waṭaniyya* (territorial patriotism) came to be distinguished from *qawmiyya* (ethno-linguistic nationalism). The concept's normative content, however, is assembled in this article from older materials: Prophetic reports, juristic doctrine and exegesis. The modernity of the word does not make the ethic it names an import.

Nationalism denotes a modern ideology holding that a people defined by shared descent, culture or territory should possess or control a state, and that loyalty to that people overrides other attachments. Waṭaniyyah, as defined here, does not entail this ideology and, as Section 6.7 shows, can be set against it.

Citizenship is a legal and political status, full membership of a community in Marshall's account, carrying civil, political and social rights. Muslims who are Australian citizens hold this status in full.

Belonging is a social, affective and political experience. Yuval-Davis analyses it at three levels: social location, identification and emotional attachment, and ethical-political values. Antonsich separates place-belongingness, the personal sense of being at home, from the politics of belonging, the contested claims about who belongs.

Loyalty, finally, is treated here as a political and discursive expectation: a demand that members display allegiance. The Australian citizenship pledge makes it the operative noun of admission ("I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people")[2]. The disloyalty trope works in the gap between citizenship and belonging. It concedes that Muslims hold the status while denying that they possess the attachment the status is presumed to express.

3. Literature Review and Research Gap

3.1 Islamophobia as racialisation and the loyalty question

Contemporary theory largely agrees that Islamophobia is a process of racialisation in which Muslimness is converted into a fixed, inherited and threatening group character. The lineage runs from Said's account of Orientalist knowledge through Sayyid's attempt to specify what counts as Islamophobia, to the Runnymede Trust's redefinition of the phenomenon as anti-Muslim racism. Meer and Modood identify four discursive moves through which public debate denies that Muslims can be victims of racism. One of them is decisive for this article: Muslims are perceived as disloyal or associated with terrorism, and so appear as a threat rather than a disadvantaged minority. The loyalty question is therefore not incidental to Islamophobia. It is one of the mechanisms that shields Islamophobia from being named.

[2] Department of Home Affairs, *What is the pledge* (. Australian Government. Accessed November 4, 2026, n.d.-b), https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/citizenship/ceremony/what-is-the-pledge.

Security studies have elaborated how this works institutionally. Pantazis and Pemberton extended the "suspect community"[3] concept from Irish Catholics in Britain to Muslims under post-2000 counter-terrorism law. Breen-Smyth reconceived the suspect community as an imagined collective produced by the securitised imagination, and Ragazzi argued that counter-radicalisation produces a "policed multiculturalism"[4] that enlists Muslims in their own surveillance. Mamdani's distinction between "good" and "bad"[5] Muslims captured the political sorting at stake, and Choudhury showed how expanding citizenship-deprivation powers produce "tolerated citizens"[6] who must keep demonstrating commitment to national values. Yazdiha found that Muslims in the United States can secure only provisional belonging, and only by reproducing the logics used against them.

The field is not unanimous. Sweida-Metwally argues that the racism frame marginalises hostility directed at Islam as a religion, Taras questions the political wisdom of labelling Islamophobes as racists, and Davison criticises the social-distance scales on which Australian prevalence estimates rely. Modood concedes that the "othering" paradigm has not resolved how to distinguish Islamophobia from reasonable criticism of Muslims and Islam. That concession matters here, and Section 4.4 responds to it with explicit criteria.

3.2 The Australian literature

Australian scholarship has mapped the trope with unusual density. Poynting and Mason traced a shift from anti-Arab to anti-Muslim racism in Britain and Australia that predated September 2001. Dunn et al. showed that anti-Muslim sentiment combines stereotypes of threat and inferiority with what they call fantasies that Muslims do not belong, and concluded that this racialisation corrupts belonging and citizenship for Muslim Australians. Noble and Poynting demonstrated how vilification after the 2005 Cronulla riots regulated Muslims' movement through public space, building on Hage's analysis of white Australians as self-appointed managers of national space.

A second strand examines governance. Abdel-Fattah showed that countering-violent-extremism programmes locate danger in a young Muslim's dissociation from normative Australian values and seek to produce self-governing Muslim subjects. Cherney and Murphy, from focus groups with 104 Muslims in three cities, found that being labelled a suspect community shapes how Muslims appraise their faith, their community and the authorities. Tittensor et al., interviewing young Muslims in Melbourne, found self-censorship and withdrawal into ethno-religious identity in response to misrecognition. Iner et al. documented how Muslim women bear a disproportionate share of public hostility.

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[3] C. Pantazis and S. Pemberton, "From the "old" to the "new" suspect community: Examining the impacts of recent UK counter-terrorist legislation," *British Journal of Criminology* 49, no. 5 (2009): 646–666, https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azp031.

[4] Ragazzi, F, "Suspect community or suspect category? The impact of counter-terrorism as "policed multiculturalism"," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42, no. 5 (2016): 724–741, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2015.1121807.

[5] Mamdani, M, "Good Muslim, bad Muslim: A political perspective on culture and terrorism," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 766–775, https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2002.104.3.766.

[6] Choudhury, T, "The radicalisation of citizenship deprivation," *Critical Social Policy* 37, no. 2 (2017): 225–244, https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018316684507.

3.3 Muslim agency, civic participation and counter-discourse

A third body of work documents what Muslims do. Peucker's synthesis of international and Australian evidence found that lived religiosity is generally not an obstacle to civic engagement and that mosque involvement tends to enhance it. In Melbourne, Vergani et al. found organised religiosity to be a predictor of civic engagement, and Johns et al. showed young practising Muslims enacting citizenship through faith-based practice. Patton described "everyday acts of citizenship"[7] through which young Shia Muslims contested the assumption that religiosity impedes good citizenship. Peucker found that Islamophobia pushes some Muslims into activism even as it drives others to withdraw.
Two findings in this literature caution against any simple celebration of Muslim "rebuttal". Abdel-Fattah argued that the ritual condemnations Muslim organisations issue after terrorist attacks partly reflect an internalised Islamophobia, a politically reactive consciousness. Harris and Hussein showed that young Muslims' role as "everyday explainers"[8] of Islam is unequally distributed labour that shifts responsibility for social cohesion onto those it targets. Any account of belonging as rebuttal must avoid becoming one more performance of proof.

3.4 Islamic political thought on residence, loyalty and minorities

A fourth literature, largely disconnected from the Australian one, concerns Islamic juristic and political thought. Abou El Fadl showed that classical positions on Muslim residence in non-Muslim lands were historically contingent and resist essentialist reduction to a *dār al-Islām* / *dār al-ḥarb* binary. March reconstructed Islamic grounds for residence in, and loyalty to, non-Muslim liberal democracies, centring on the *amān*, the contract of mutual security. In a related study, March showed how contemporary jurists move from a minimal "loyal resident alienage"[9] towards thicker obligations of solidarity with non-Muslims. Ramadan re-mapped the West as *dār al-shahāda*, an abode of testimony. Kamali argued that the ummah and the modern nation-state can be reconciled, and the *fiqh al-aqalliyyāt* (jurisprudence of minorities) literature, with its critics, records an active internal debate.
Two studies come closest to the present inquiry. Hassan analysed fatwas issued explicitly in response to the portrayal of Muslims as disloyal subjects, classifying them into alienation, conciliatory and engaging positions. Belhaj analysed loyalty fatwas of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, which argue for multiple, complementary loyalties. In the Netherlands and Norway, van Es examined how Muslims "talk back" to demands that they denounce terrorism.

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[7] Patton, C, "Multicultural citizenship, everyday diversity and religiosity: Young Australian Muslims forging a sense of belonging after 9/11," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 35, no. 1 (2014): 107–122, https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2013.864626.
[8] A. Harris and S. Hussein, "Conscripts or volunteers? Young Muslims as everyday explainers," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46, no. 19 (2020): 3974–3991, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1516547.
[9] A. F. March, "Sources of moral obligation to non-Muslims in the "jurisprudence of Muslim minorities" (fiqh al-aqalliyyāt) discourse," *Islamic Law and Society* 16, no. 1 (2009): 34–94, https://doi.org/10.1163/156851908X413757.

3.5 The research gap

These literatures converge on a shared problem without addressing one another. The Australian scholarship explains how the disloyalty trope operates and documents faith-motivated civic participation, but it describes that motivation in sociological terms such as a "culture of benevolence"[10] or a sense of "religious duty".[11] The Islamic political-thought scholarship reconstructs grounds for loyalty to non-Muslim states, but it addresses juristic permissibility, not the discursive politics of a specific national public sphere. The counter-discourse studies closest to this article concern European or general Western settings and focus on fatwas or denunciation rather than on homeland attachment as a concept.

The gap is therefore best classified as theoretical rather than empirical. Searches conducted for this study through Consensus, which indexes Semantic Scholar, OpenAlex and PubMed, combined *waṭaniyya*, *ḥubb al-waṭan* and *muwāṭana* with Australian and Western Muslim belonging, and returned no peer-reviewed study that mobilises Waṭaniyyah as a normative counter-discourse to the Australian loyalty trope. This is a finding about the retrieved corpus, not a proof of absence, and it should be re-checked in Scopus and Web of Science before publication. This article contributes to closing the gap by integrating the Australian critical literature with an Islamic normative account of homeland, tested against a corpus of Australian public texts.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Discourse and the conditions of speech

The article treats the disloyalty trope as a discursive formation in Foucault's sense: a set of statements that produces the objects it claims to describe and that regulates who may speak about them with authority. Foucault's account explains why Muslim testimony about loyalty is structurally discounted. Speakers already classified as suspect cannot certify themselves.

For method, the article adopts the discourse-historical approach (DHA) of Reisigl and Wodak as its primary analytical frame. The DHA identifies strategies of nomination (how actors are named), predication (what qualities are attributed to them), argumentation (the *topoi*, or warranting commonplaces, that license conclusions), and intensification or mitigation. Its historical orientation suits a trope that has been recycled across decades. Van Dijk's "ideological square", which emphasises the outgroup's negative qualities and the ingroup's positive ones while mitigating the reverse, is used to describe polarisation at the level of the sentence. Wodak's account of the "shameless normalisation" of far-right discourse explains how statements once confined to the margins migrate into mainstream speech. Fairclough's account of ideology as common sense informs the analysis but is not separately operationalised.

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[10] Peucker, M, "Muslim community volunteering: The civic-religious "culture of benevolence" and its sociopolitical implications," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46, no. 11 (2020): 2367–2386, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1543020.

[11] Peucker, "On the (in)compatibility of Islamic religiosity and citizenship in Western democracies".

4.2 Recognition, status and belonging

Two accounts of recognition are used for distinct purposes. Fraser's status model supplies the *diagnosis*: misrecognition is not primarily a psychological injury but institutionalised subordination that denies some people standing as full partners in social life. The disloyalty trope is a case of status subordination because it is embedded in institutions (pledges, counter-terrorism programmes, parliamentary speech), not only in attitudes. Taylor and Modood supply the *remedy*. Taylor's insistence that identity is formed dialogically, and Modood's argument that multicultural citizenship requires an inclusive national identity into which minority identities, including religious ones, are incorporated, point towards belonging that does not require Muslims to set their religion aside. Fraser's model is anti-identitarian and Modood's affirms identity. This article does not resolve that tension; it uses each where it is strongest.

Hage's distinction between passive and governmental belonging is central. Passive belonging is the feeling that one fits into the nation. Governmental belonging is the felt entitlement to manage the nation and decide who belongs. The disloyalty trope is an exercise of governmental belonging by those who claim the right to examine others. A counter-discourse that sought only passive belonging would leave that hierarchy intact. Isin's concept of "acts of citizenship", through which people constitute themselves as political subjects by making claims that break with expected scripts, provides the vocabulary for describing Muslim counter-discourse as an enactment rather than a plea.

4.3 Waṭaniyyah within the framework

Waṭaniyyah enters this framework as a normative resource operating at all three of Yuval-Davis's levels of belonging: a social location (Muslims settled in Australia), an emotional attachment (*ḥubb al-waṭan*, love of homeland) and a set of ethical-political commitments (covenantal fidelity, justice, public welfare). The disloyalty trope attacks the third level. It presumes that a Muslim's ethical commitments are owed elsewhere. Waṭaniyyah's significance lies in showing that the Islamic tradition itself generates the very commitments the trope says Muslims lack.

4.4 Criteria for identifying the trope

To respond to Modood's concern about distinguishing Islamophobia from legitimate criticism, this article treats a statement about Muslim loyalty as an instance of the Islamophobic trope only when three conditions hold together:

1. Suspicion is attributed to Muslims *collectively*, not to identified individuals or organisations.
2. The suspicion is *insensitive to conduct*: no demonstration of allegiance discharges it.
3. The suspicion is *inferred from religiosity or religious visibility itself*.

Criticism of a particular organisation's conduct, debate about counter-terrorism policy, and theological disagreement with Islam do not, by these criteria, constitute the trope. A claim that Muslim religiosity as such disqualifies a person from full national membership does.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research philosophy and design

The study is interpretivist and critical. It is interpretivist because its object is meaning: how loyalty, belonging and Muslim identity are represented and contested. It is critical because it treats those representations as bound up with power, and evaluates them against normative criteria. The design is qualitative, conceptual and documentary. No interviews, surveys or fieldwork were conducted for this article, and no claim is made about the views of Australian Muslims beyond what published studies and public statements report. The conceptual model in Section 7 is a theoretical proposal to be tested empirically, not a finding.

5.2 Data sources

The study draws on four bodies of material, kept analytically distinct (Table 1).

Table 1. *Sources of data*

Category	Materials	Role in analysis
Australian primary documents	Citizenship pledge and Australian Values Statement; *Multicultural Australia: United, Strong, Successful*; *Towards Fairness*; the Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia's report (2025) and the government response (2026); prime-ministerial transcripts (2014–2015); parliamentary speeches and statements (2016–2026); statements by ANIC; Victorian Government releases	Corpus for discourse analysis (Stages 1–3, 5)
Monitoring and survey reports	Scanlon Foundation *Mapping Social Cohesion* (2024, 2025); *Islamophobia in Australia Report V*; Australian Human Rights Commission	Context and triangulation
Islamic primary sources	Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Sunan Ibn Mājah; Ibn Ḥajar's *Fatḥ al-Bārī*; al-Sakhāwī's *al-Maqāṣid al-ḥasana*; al-	Normative analysis (Stage 4)

Category	Materials	Role in analysis
	Rāzī's *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*; Ibn Qudāma's *al-Mughnī*; al-Shāfiʿī's *al-Umm*; Ibn al-Mundhir's *al-Awsaṭ*; the Musnad of Aḥmad; al-Sarakhsī's al-Mabsūṭ; al-Suyūṭī, al-ʿAjlūnī and al-Albānī on popular sayings; Ibn Hishām's *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*	
Secondary scholarship	Peer-reviewed studies and academic monographs	Literature review, theory, interpretation

The Australian corpus is purposive and illustrative. Texts were selected because they are widely cited in the scholarly literature, were issued by actors with institutional authority (prime ministers, ministers, senators, statutory bodies, peak religious councils), and together span the period 2014–2026. The corpus is not a representative sample of Australian media or parliamentary discourse, and frequency claims are not made from it. The classical texts were consulted in the Shamela digital library. Each hadith, juristic ruling and exegetical remark cited in Section 6 was checked in the edition named in the reference list, in most cases against the full page. Items confirmed only through an editor's note are identified as such.

5.3 Analytical procedure

Analysis proceeded in six stages:

1. Representation. Dominant representations of Muslim loyalty and belonging were identified in the Australian corpus.
2. Strategies. Nomination, predication, argumentation and intensification strategies were coded following the DHA.
3. Linkage. The links between religious identity and foreignness, threat and conditional membership were traced, and each instance was tested against the three criteria in Section 4.4.
4. Normative analysis. Classical and contemporary Islamic sources on homeland, covenant and coexistence were analysed, with attention to authenticity, juristic context and internal disagreement.
5. Comparison. The dominant representations were placed alongside the Islamic counter-discourse and alongside Muslim public statements in the corpus.
6. Synthesis. The results were synthesised into the conceptual model.

5.4 Trustworthiness and reflexivity

Credibility was pursued through triangulation across document types and through the use of verified primary texts rather than secondary paraphrase. Where the source of a quotation is a media report rather than an official record, this is noted. The authors write from within the Islamic tradition and as scholars of Muslim minority citizenship. That position brings familiarity with the classical sources and an interest in the outcome. It was managed by including Islamic positions that reject Waṭaniyyah (Section 6.7) and

Australian scholarship that questions prevalence data, and by stating the limits of what a conceptual study can establish.

6. Analysis

6.1 The anatomy of the trope in Australian public life

The official lexicon of Australian membership is itself framed in terms of loyalty. Applicants for citizenship pledge "loyalty to Australia and its people" and visa applicants sign a statement undertaking to "conduct yourself in accordance with" listed values.[12] The media release launching the 2017 multicultural statement described Australia as an "immigration nation" defined not by race, religion or culture but "by our shared values".[13] These are not Islamophobic texts. They apply to everyone, and the values they list include freedom of religion. Their significance is that they make loyalty and value-conformity the currency of admission, which creates the vocabulary in which questions about particular groups can be posed.

The mainstream form of the trope used that vocabulary to make Muslim belonging conditional. In August 2014 Prime Minister Tony Abbott told a radio audience that "you don't migrate to this country unless you want to join our team".[14] In the same interview he cautioned that communities should not be caricatured on the basis of a militant few, a mitigation that van Dijk's square anticipates. The nomination strategy is inclusive (a "team"), but the predication is conditional: membership depends on a desire that some migrants are implied to lack. In February 2015 Abbott's National Security Statement went further, expressing the wish that Muslim leaders would describe Islam as a religion of peace "more often, and mean it".[15] The intensifier "and mean it" is the crux. It renders any affirmation insufficient because sincerity cannot be demonstrated. This meets the second criterion of Section 4.4: the suspicion is insensitive to conduct.

A second mechanism is genealogical. In November 2016 the then Immigration Minister Peter Dutton told Parliament that "out of the last 33 people who have been charged with terrorist related offences in this country, 22 are from second- and third-generation Lebanese Muslim backgrounds".[16] The nomination strategy here converts citizens born in Australia into bearers of an inherited "background", locating the source of risk in descent and religion rather than individual conduct. The rhetorical effect is to make belonging unachievable across generations, the clearest form of what this article calls *perpetual probation*.

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[12] Department of Home Affairs, *Australian values* (. Australian Government. Accessed November 4, 2026, n.d.-a), https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/social-cohesion/australian-values; Department of Home Affairs, *What is the pledge*.

[13] Turnbull, "Multicultural Australia".

[14] Abbott, T, "Interview with Ray Hadley, Radio 2GB", [Transcript ID 23742]. PM Transcripts, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, August 18, 2014, https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/node/31211.

[15] SBS News, "PM's national security statement: Quotes", February 23, 2015, https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/pms-national-security-statement-quotes/4btlbllf0.

[16] Dutton, P, "Questions without notice: Migration," in "House of Representatives Hansard", (ParlInfo ID chamber/hansardr/715fab49-01b7-4d20-89b0-5496732f6bc2/0165). Parliament of Australia, November 21, 2016, https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au.

The populist form is cruder, and its history shows it is a recycled script. In her 2016 Senate speech, Pauline Hanson recalled that her 1996 maiden speech had warned of Australia being "swamped by Asians", and then adapted the line: Australia was now "in danger of being swamped by Muslims", whose culture and ideology she called "incompatible with our own".[17] That the target could be exchanged while the template survived supports reading the trope as a racialised form rather than a response to anything Muslims did. The *topos* of numbers ("swamped") is joined to a predication of incompatibility, and the conclusion is a call to stop Muslim immigration and ban the burqa. In August 2018 Senator Fraser Anning described Muslims as the group least able to assimilate and proposed a popular vote as the "final solution to the immigration problem".[18] Both speeches meet all three criteria. Suspicion is collective, conduct-insensitive, and inferred from religion. They are also the plainest instances of collective essentialisation: Muslims are named as a single bloc whose character is fixed by religion. The third mechanism, the coding of religious visibility as threat, is most visible in Hanson's use of the burqa as a parliamentary prop, in August 2017 and again in November 2025. The gesture treats a garment as a sign of foreign allegiance. Its target is not incidental. In the most recent Islamophobia Register report, women and girls were 74.8 per cent of the victims of in-person incidents where gender was recorded. The visible Muslim woman is where the trope is most often enacted.

6.2 Contestation and institutional response

The corpus also records contestation. After Anning's speech the Senate passed, without opposition, a motion reaffirming a non-discriminatory immigration policy and adding "faith"[19] to the grounds on which selection must not discriminate. Hanson's 2025 burqa protest led to her suspension for seven consecutive sitting days on a censure motion moved by Senator Penny Wong. In September 2024 the federal government appointed a Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia. His 2025 report made 54 recommendations, including clarifying the protection of Muslims under the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* and reviewing the impact of counter-terrorism laws on Muslim communities. Announcing the government's July 2026 response, the Minister for Home Affairs declared that "Islamophobia is real".[20] The response announced measures including an education taskforce and training for parliamentarians and public servants. In Victoria, the anti-vilification reforms of 2025 created new criminal offences from September 2025 and stronger civil protections from April 2026.

These developments show that the trope is contested within Australian institutions. Yet the response remains framed largely through harm and safety: Muslims as targets to be protected. That framing is necessary, but it leaves the deeper question of membership

[17] Hanson, P, "First speech," in "Senate Hansard", (ParlInfo ID chamber/hansards/16daad94-5c74-4641-a730-7f6d74312148/0140). Parliament of Australia, September 14, 2016, https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au.

[18] RNZ, "Australian MPs condemn Fraser Anning for "final solution" Muslim ban speech", August 2018, https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/world/364171/australian-mps-condemn-fraser-anning-for-final-solution-muslim-ban-speech.

[19] SBS News, "Anning outrage: Parliament revives Hawke-era motion condemning White Australia policy", August 15, 2018, https://www.sbs.com.au/news/anning-outrage-parliament-revives-hawke-era-motion-condemning-white-australia-policy.

[20] Albanese, "Albanese Government strengthens actions against Islamophobia".

untouched. A community can be protected and still treated as a guest. The ANIC statement quoted at the outset speaks to that residual question, and it is there that Waṭaniyyah becomes relevant.

6.3 Homeland as an object of love: the Prophetic record

The first foundation of Waṭaniyyah is the Prophetic legitimation of attachment to place. Al-Tirmidhī records, on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, the Prophet's address to Mecca: "How good a land you are, and how dear to me! Had my people not driven me out of you, I would have lived nowhere else".[21] Al-Tirmidhī graded the report *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ gharīb* min hādhā al-wajh. A second report, through ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAdī b. al-Ḥamrāʾ, has the Prophet declare Mecca the best of God's lands and add that he would not have left had he not been expelled. In both reports love of homeland coexists with departure under coercion. Attachment is not dissolved by displacement.

The more significant text for a migrant minority concerns not the native homeland but an acquired one. Al-Bukhārī records that after the emigration, when Abū Bakr and Bilāl fell ill with Medina's fever and Bilāl longed in verse for the familiar places of Mecca, the Prophet prayed: *Allāhumma ḥabbib ilaynā al-Madīnata ka-ḥubbinā Makkata aw ashadd*, "O God, make Medina beloved to us as we love Mecca, or more".[22] The report is often cited for the merits of Medina. Its relevance here is different. The Prophet asks that love for a place of settlement be cultivated to the point of equalling or exceeding love for the place of origin. Belonging to a new homeland is presented not as a betrayal of the old one but as an object of prayer. This reading is the authors' interpretation, not a classical gloss, though it rests on an authenticated text.

Al-Bukhārī also records that when the Prophet returned from travel and saw the walls of Medina, he urged his mount forward "out of love for it".[23] Commenting on the parallel report at no. 1802, where the words "out of love for it" are an addition that al-Bukhārī cites without a full chain from al-Ḥārith b. ʿUmayr, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī drew an explicit conclusion:

> «وَفِي الْحَدِيثِ دِلَالَةٌ عَلَى فَضْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ، وَعَلَى مَشْرُوعِيَّةِ حُبِّ الْوَطَنِ وَالْحَنِينِ إِلَيْهِ»[24]
>
> "The hadith indicates the merit of Medina and the legitimacy of love of one's homeland and longing for it".

Ibn Ḥajar's term is *mashrūʿiyya*, legitimacy or religious sanction, not obligation. The precision matters. Ibn Ḥajar treats homeland attachment as religiously legitimate. He does not make it obligatory, still less a pillar of faith.

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[21] M. b. ʿĪ. al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (A. M. Shākir, M. F. ʿAbd al-Bāqī, & I. ʿA. ʿAwaḍ, eds.; 2nd ed., Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1975), no. 3926.

[22] M. b. I. al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ* ([al-Sulṭāniyya ed.]. al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kubrā al-Amīriyya, 1893), nos. 1889, 3926; cf. Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (M. F. ʿAbd al-Bāqī, eds., Maṭbaʿat ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1955), no. 1376.

[23] al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 1886.

[24] A. b. ʿA. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-bārī bi-sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (M. al-D. al-Khaṭīb, eds.; 1st Salafiyya ed., 13 vols., al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya, 1960–1970), 3:621.

6.4 A saying that is not a hadith

Popular Muslim discourse often invokes the phrase *ḥubb al-waṭan min al-īmān* ("love of the homeland is part of faith")[25] as a Prophetic saying. It is not one, and an argument resting on it would fail on its own terms. Al-Sakhāwī reported that he had not found it, and al-Suyūṭī likewise said he had not come across it. Al-Albānī graded it fabricated. Al-Sakhāwī nonetheless added that its meaning is sound, and al-ʿAjlūnī records that this judgement rested on the believers' complaint in Q 2:246 that they had been driven from their homes. Al-Albānī rejected even the meaning, arguing that love of homeland is instinctive, like love of self and wealth, and is neither praiseworthy in itself nor a requirement of faith. Earlier critics reported by al-ʿAjlūnī had made a related point from Q 4:66, noting that hypocrites also love their homelands.

The debate is more useful to the present argument than the spurious saying would have been. Al-Albānī's objection, that homeland attachment is natural rather than a mark of faith, serves the rebuttal well. If love of homeland is an ordinary human disposition, then Muslims possess it as other people do, and the trope's assumption that their faith suspends it has no theological basis. A reading attributed to ʿAlī al-Qārī, transmitted in the editor's notes to al-Sakhāwī's text, is suggestive. Having said that the saying has no basis, al-Qārī proposed that, if its wording were sound, it could refer to a love grounded in maintaining kinship ties and doing good to the town's poor and orphans. This attribution could be confirmed only through the editor's citation and should be treated as provisional. If confirmed, it offers a classical model of civic love defined by service rather than sentiment.

The Qurʾān itself treats expulsion from one's home as a grave injury. Commenting on Q 8:72, al-Rāzī observed that the Qurʾān, in Q 4:66, "made leaving one's homelands equivalent to killing oneself".[26] The same verse of Sūrat al-Anfāl contains a clause directly relevant to loyalty: believers owe help to fellow believers who seek it "except against a people between whom and you there is a treaty (*mīthāq*)".[27] Treaty obligation limits even religious solidarity.

6.5 Covenant fidelity: the juristic core

The juristic tradition provides the most direct answer to the disloyalty trope, because it addresses the precise scenario the trope imagines: a Muslim living among non-Muslims. In the Ḥanbalī, Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafī sources examined here, the rule is that a Muslim who enters non-Muslim territory under a guarantee of security (*amān*) may not betray, defraud or harm its people. Ibn Qudāma states the reasoning with clarity. Betraying them is forbidden because the guarantee was given on the condition, understood even if unstated, that the Muslim would not betray them and that they would be safe from him; such betrayal is treachery, "and treachery has no place in our religion" (*wa-lā yaṣluḥu fī dīninā*

[25] M. b. ʿA. al-R. al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Maqāṣid al-ḥasana fī bayān kathīr min al-aḥādīth al-mushtahara ʿalā al-alsina* (Vol. 2, Ḥ. al-D. b. A. Ḥamdān, eds., Maktabat al-Maymana al-Madaniyya; Dār al-Maymana, 2017), no. 394.

[26] F. al-D. al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-kabīr)* (3rd ed., Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1999), 15:515.

[27] Qurʾān, Al-Anfāl, 8:72.

al-ghadr).[28] Al-Shāfiʿī held that Muslims under *amān* may not wrong or betray their hosts, and that even if those hosts commit hostilities, the Muslims should first formally repudiate the covenant rather than act treacherously, which he disapproved of. Al-Sarakhsī, for the Ḥanafīs, declared treachery forbidden and its proceeds impure. The Ḥanafī school differed on the separate question of judicial liability after departure. Ibn al-Mundhir framed the relationship as reciprocal: the Muslim is safe by their guarantee and they are safe by his, and "trusts are to be rendered to the righteous and the wicked, the believer and the polytheist".[29]

March has shown how contemporary jurists extend this logic to residence and citizenship in liberal democracies. The extension is an argument by analogy, and this article presents it as such. The analogy is, however, *a fortiori*. If a temporary safe-conduct granted to a visitor generates binding fidelity, then citizenship, a far thicker and more reciprocal relationship, generates fidelity at least as strong. The juristic ground of the obligation, an implicit condition known "in meaning" even where it is unstated, maps closely onto the unwritten terms of modern membership.

The implication for the trope is direct. The trope assumes that Islamic commitment is the source of potential disloyalty. The classical juristic tradition makes Islamic commitment the source of an obligation of fidelity. A Muslim who betrays a society that has guaranteed her security violates her own religious law.

6.6 Precedents of plural membership

Two episodes from the early community give these principles historical form. During the first emigration, a group of Companions lived in Abyssinia under the Negus. Umm Salama's report, preserved by Ibn Isḥāq and in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad, describes their dwelling there "in the best of abodes, with the best of neighbours".[30] When a rival rose against the Negus, the emigrants feared his defeat, prayed for his victory and for his firm establishment in his land, and rejoiced at the news of his success. Here a Muslim minority identifies its own welfare with the stability of a just ruler who did not share its religion. The Negus's later religious status is debated in the sources; the point here rests on his reign during the emigrants' stay and on their description of him as the best of neighbours. The episode is arguably closer to the Australian Muslim situation than Medina is, because the Abyssinian Muslims lived under non-Muslim governance.

The second precedent is the Ṣaḥīfat al-Madīnah, the document of Medina preserved by Ibn Isḥāq. It declares the believers of Quraysh and Yathrib and those who joined them "one community (*ummah*) to the exclusion of other people", and then declares that the Jews of Banū ʿAwf are "a community alongside the believers (*ummah maʿa al-muʾminīn*); to the Jews their religion and to the Muslims theirs",[31] with the same status extended to other Jewish clans. The wording requires care. The Jewish clans are an

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[28] M. al-D. Ibn Qudāma, *Al-Mughnī* (Ṭ. al-Zaynī et al., eds., Maktabat al-Qāhira, 1968–1969), 9:295.

[29] M. b. I. Ibn al-Mundhir, *Al-Awsaṭ min al-sunan wa-l-ijmāʿ wa-l-ikhtilāf* (Y. b. Kamāl et al., eds.; 2nd ed., Dār al-Falāḥ, 2010), 6:311.

[30] Ibn Hishām, ʿA. al-M, *Al-Sīra al-nabawiyya* (M. al-Saqqā, I. al-Abyārī, & ʿA. al-Ḥ. Shalabī, eds.; 2nd ed., Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1955), 1:338; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal* (S. al-Arnaʾūṭ, ʿĀ. Murshid, et al., eds., Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 2001), 3:268, where the editors grade the chain ḥasan.

[31] Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1:501–503.

ummah "with" the believers, not "one *ummah*" with them, and the document's authenticity and early versions remain debated. Even on a cautious reading, however, the text establishes political co-membership with explicit preservation of religious difference. Shared obligations of defence did not require religious sameness.

6.7 The Egyptian genealogy and its internal critics

The modern articulation of Waṭaniyyah emerged in nineteenth-century Egypt. Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī, the scholar most associated with the term's political career, devoted a chapter of *al-Murshid al-amīn li-l-banāt wa-l-banīn* (first published 1872) to "the sons of the homeland and what is due from them".[32] Hourani presents al-Ṭahṭāwī as the first Arab thinker to give the homeland a moral claim on all its inhabitants, joining the Islamic ethic of the just ruler to a civic idea of patriotism. Gershoni and Jankowski trace how Egyptian national identity was first constructed in territorial terms and later redefined through Islamic and Arab orientations, so that religious and national attachments were combined rather than opposed. The genealogy shows that Muslim thinkers worked out the relationship between faith and homeland before, and independently of, Western integration demands, even though their vocabulary was shaped by contact with European political thought. The convergence between this tradition and Western multicultural theory is therefore not a borrowing by Muslims of a framework designed to manage them. The genealogy is also contested, and a credible argument must say so. Sayyid Quṭb's *Maʿālim fī al-ṭarīq* held that the Muslim's only true homeland is the faith and that attachment to land, race or nation is a form of *jāhiliyya*. Shavit documents how Salafī approaches to minority jurisprudence counsel separation where wasaṭī approaches counsel integration. March concedes that the prohibitions on alliance with non-Muslims in the *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ* literature are not mere medieval legalisms. These positions exist, and opponents of Muslim inclusion cite them as proof. Three responses can be made. The juristic covenant rule examined above binds even those who reject patriotic sentiment, so the fidelity obligation does not depend on embracing Waṭaniyyah as an emotion. Quṭb's rejection reaches territorial attachment itself, and on that point the two positions cannot be reconciled. His objection, however, was to land, race or nation replacing faith as the bond of loyalty, whereas Waṭaniyyah as defined here places homeland love within obligations that faith itself imposes. And al-Albānī's naturalist objection, as argued above, supports the conclusion that Muslims share ordinary attachments to home. The internal debate thus concerns whether homeland love is a religious virtue, not whether Muslims may be faithful members of the societies in which they live.

7. A Conceptual Model of Covenantal Belonging

The analysis supports a model of Muslim belonging, termed here *covenantal belonging*, with five interconnected dimensions (Figure 1). Each dimension answers a feature of the trope analysed in Section 6 and is grounded in the sources examined above (Table 2).

[32] R. R. al-Ṭahṭāwī, *Al-Murshid al-amīn li-l-banāt wa-l-banīn* (M. A. Abū Zayd, Intro., Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 2011).

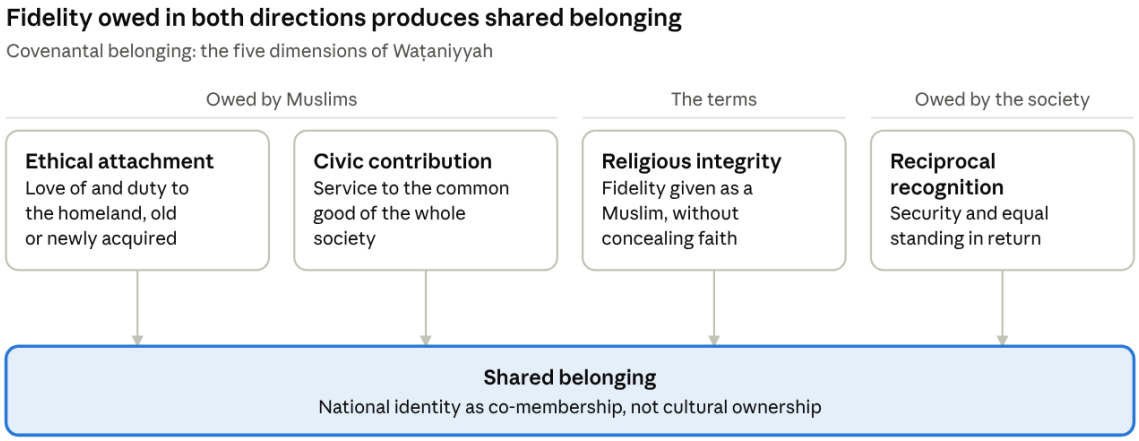


Figure 1. The covenantal belonging model of Waṭaniyyah: five dimensions

Table 2. *The five dimensions of covenantal belonging*

Dimension	Definition	Islamic grounding	Feature of the trope it answers
Ethical attachment	Love of and responsibility for the homeland, including an acquired one	Prayer for love of Medina; Ibn Ḥajar on the legitimacy of *ḥubb al-waṭan*	Collective essentialisation: attachment presumed to lie elsewhere
Civic contribution	Active service to the common good of the whole society	Abyssinian prayers for a just ruler; al-Qārī's conditional reading of love as service to the town's poor	Membership made conditional on proof ("join our team")
Religious integrity	Fidelity to the homeland without concealment of faith	"To the Jews their religion and to the Muslims theirs" (Ṣaḥīfat al-Madīnah); Ibn Qudāma on residence where faith can be openly practised	Coding of religious visibility as threat
Reciprocal recognition	Mutual security and acknowledgement as a two-way covenant	Ibn al-Mundhir: each party safe by the other's guarantee	Perpetual probation; unilateral loyalty testing
Shared belonging	National identity as inclusive co-membership rather	*Ummah maʿa al-muʾminīn*; Egyptian *waṭaniyya* as	Claims to decide who belongs (governmental belonging)

Dimension	Definition	Islamic grounding	Feature of the trope it answers
	than cultural ownership	territorial, non-ethnic	

The dimensions interact in a determinate way. *Ethical attachment* and *civic contribution* constitute the Muslim's side of the covenant: love expressed as responsibility. *Religious integrity* specifies the terms on which that side is offered. Fidelity is given as a Muslim, not in spite of being one, because the covenant rule is itself a religious obligation. *Reciprocal recognition* is the condition under which the covenant holds. The classical model of *amān* is mutual by definition, and a covenant demanded of one party alone is not a covenant. *Shared belonging* names the outcome when the other four are present: a national identity in which Muslims are co-authors rather than examinees.

The model's critical edge lies in the fourth dimension. The disloyalty trope demands a unilateral, perpetually renewable demonstration of allegiance. The covenantal model holds that fidelity is owed, and is owed as a matter of religious law, but that it is owed within a reciprocal relationship whose other party also has obligations: security, equal standing, and freedom to practise religion openly. This is why Waṭaniyyah rebuts the trope rather than merely answering it. To *answer* the trope is to supply evidence that Muslims are loyal, and so to accept that the question is legitimate. To *rebut* it is to show that the question misdescribes the relationship. Muslims are already bound by fidelity, by their own law. What remains in question is whether the society honours the reciprocal terms.

The distinction may be summarised as a contrast between two models of membership (Table 3).

Table 3. *Probationary and covenantal belonging compared*

Feature	Probationary belonging	Covenantal belonging
Who grants membership	One party, the majority	Both parties, as a reciprocal bond
Status of fidelity	Must be proved, continually	Presumed and binding, by the minority's own law
Effect of suspicion	Membership revocable	Breach must be shown, not inferred from faith
Place of religious identity	Obstacle, to be minimised	Ground of commitment, openly held
Obligations of the society	None stated	Security, equal standing, freedom of practice

8. Discussion

8.1 Theoretical contribution

The article makes three contributions. First, it reframes the study of the Australian loyalty trope. Existing scholarship has shown how the trope is produced. This article adds an analysis of the normative vocabulary with which it can be contested from within the tradition it targets. In doing so it responds to Modood's call for attention to Muslim intersubjectivity and normative agency, and to the gap identified by Ozalp and Ćufurović and Sufi and Yasmin.

Second, it extends the Islamic political-thought literature from juristic permissibility to discursive politics. March's movement from "loyal resident alienage"[33] to thicker solidarity is given a specific public-sphere application, and Hassan's typology of fatwa responses to disloyalty claims is complemented by a concept that operates beyond the fatwa genre. The covenantal model specifies what an "engaging"[34] response, in Hassan's terms, can look like when it is articulated as a theory of membership rather than a legal opinion.

Third, the article proposes the distinction between probationary and covenantal belonging as an analytical tool. It can be used to classify public texts, to evaluate policy, and to frame empirical research on how Muslims themselves understand their membership.

8.2 The risk of rebuttal becoming proof

The most serious objection to the argument comes from the Australian literature itself. Abdel-Fattah and Harris and Hussein warn that Muslim responses to suspicion can reproduce the burden they resist. A Waṭaniyyah discourse addressed to non-Muslim audiences could become one more condemnation ritual or one more explanatory performance. Yazdiha's finding that provisional belonging is purchased by internalising the logic of suspicion sharpens the concern.

The covenantal model is designed to avoid this trap, but avoiding it depends on how the concept is used. Waṭaniyyah functions as rebuttal only when it is articulated as an intrinsic Islamic position, addressed first to Muslims themselves as an account of their obligations and entitlements, and only secondarily to the wider public. Its claim is not "we are loyal, please believe us". It is that "fidelity is our law, and reciprocity is yours to honour". The ANIC statement illustrates the distinction. It did not offer a list of contributions as evidence. It asserted settled membership. Whether such statements shift public discourse is an empirical question this article cannot answer.

8.3 Limits of multicultural recognition

The analysis also clarifies the limits of conventional multicultural approaches (O4). Australian multicultural policy has paired recognition of diversity with an expectation of shared values and civic commitment. Kymlicka's liberal theory of minority rights, organised around the distinction between external protections and internal restrictions, has been criticised for sidelining religion, a point Modood presses. Joppke describes a retreat from multiculturalism driven partly by a liberal state newly assertive in imposing liberal principles. Civic expectations of this kind are not objectionable in themselves. The difficulty arises when they are applied asymmetrically, as loyalty tests for one group. Fraser's status model explains why recognition that remains at the level of celebration and protection leaves subordination intact. The Islamophobia envoy's recommendations and the government's response, framed through safety and harm, address the injury without addressing the standing. Modood's insistence on incorporating minority identities into the national "we" comes closer, and covenantal belonging can be read as

[33] March, "Sources of moral obligation to non-Muslims in the "jurisprudence of Muslim minorities" (fiqh al-aqalliyyāt) discourse".
[34] Hassan, "Law-abiding citizen".

an Islamic articulation of what that incorporation requires from the minority side and what it demands in return.

8.4 Implications for policy and practice

Three practical implications follow (RQ4):

- Policy. The covenantal model suggests that measures against Islamophobia should be evaluated not only by whether they reduce harm but by whether they abandon conditional loyalty-testing. A useful test is whether Muslims are addressed in the same terms as other citizens or as a population whose allegiance must be secured. The envoy's recommendation to review the impact of counter-terrorism laws is relevant here.
- Muslim institutions. The model offers a vocabulary of civic responsibility that does not depend on condemnation rituals. Mosques that open their doors, as in Victoria's state-funded Mosque Open Day delivered with the Islamic Council of Victoria, enact contribution without submitting to examination.
- Islamic education in minority settings. The model indicates the value of teaching the covenant tradition and the Medinan prayer accurately, while retiring the spurious *ḥubb al-waṭan min al-īmān* from sermons and curricula.

9. Conclusion

This article asked how Waṭaniyyah can function as a counter-discourse to the "disloyal Muslim" trope in Australian public life. The analysis of an illustrative corpus of Australian public texts identified three mechanisms through which the trope operates: collective essentialisation, perpetual probation and the coding of religious visibility as threat. It showed that the trope recurs in mainstream and populist registers and that, despite growing institutional contestation, official responses have addressed Muslims chiefly as targets to be protected rather than as members whose standing is settled (O1, O2). The examination of primary sources, checked at page level in the Shamela library, showed that the Islamic tradition legitimates love of homeland, including an acquired homeland, and that it obliges Muslims living under a guarantee of security to keep faith with those who extend it. It also documented the early community's experience of plural co-membership. The spurious saying that love of homeland is part of faith was set aside in favour of authenticated foundations (O3).

The study evaluated the limits of multicultural recognition (O4) and proposed a five-dimensional model of covenantal belonging (O5, O7). It argued that the model shows how religious identity, civic contribution and national attachment can coexist, because Islamic commitment is the ground of fidelity rather than its rival (O6). The central claim is that Waṭaniyyah rebuts the trope by disputing its premise: the relationship between Muslims and their homeland is covenantal and reciprocal, not probationary.

The study has limitations. Its Australian corpus is illustrative rather than representative, so it cannot establish the frequency or distribution of the trope. The statements of Hanson and Dutton were checked against Hansard, but Anning's 2018 speech was checked only through media reports. The conceptual model has not been tested against Muslim self-understanding.

Three directions for future research follow. Qualitative fieldwork with Australian Muslims, for example a case study of Melbourne, could examine whether and how

covenantal reasoning features in Muslims' own accounts of belonging. Systematic corpus analysis of parliamentary and media texts could measure the distribution of probationary and covenantal framings over time. Comparative research could test the model in other liberal democracies with significant Muslim minorities, beginning with the United Kingdom and Canada. A concept that names what Muslims owe their homeland, and what their homeland owes them, should be tested against the lives of those it describes.