

## **Between Popular Religiosity and Salafi Reference: A Sociological Reading of Value Transformation in Algerian Society**

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### **Abstract**

This research examines value transformations in Algerian society from a sociological perspective, focusing on the tension between inherited popular religiosity and the reformist Salafi reference. It highlights the family's central role in reproducing social values and norms, where Salafi discourse identifies disruptions in family relations caused by social changes, globalization, and shifting lifestyles, resulting in the erosion of traditional religious authority and the rise of alien individualistic values. The study also explores symbolic practices central to popular religiosity—such as religious feasts, vows (wa'da), and shrine visits—which perform social, cultural, and religious functions by fostering solidarity, organizing relationships, strengthening communal ties, and embodying collective memory.

In contrast, Salafi discourse rigorously reinterprets these practices as innovations (bid'ah) or polytheism (shirk), advocating their realignment with scriptural texts through direct monotheism (tawhid) and the elimination of symbolic intermediaries. This tension reveals a profound value conflict between textual purity and cultural custom, reflecting the complex interplay between social change and religious references in Algeria. Ultimately, value transformation unfolds through ongoing negotiation between cultural continuity and popular identity on one side, and Salafi-led religious reform on the other, positioning Algerian society as an arena for symbolic struggle between two contrasting value systems.

**Keywords:** Popular religiosity; Salafi reference; Value transformation; Algerian family.

### **1. Introduction**

Algerian society has, for decades, undergone profound social and cultural transformations that have affected its value structure and patterns of social organization, within a context of intertwined historical, political, and religious factors. These transformations have

given rise to a state of ongoing renegotiation regarding the references that regulate social behavior, particularly with the emergence of religious currents seeking to reinterpret social reality and regulate it according to specific normative systems. The Salafi current stands out as one of the most prominent and influential in the Algerian social sphere.

The Salafi discourse proceeds from an evaluative vision of society, based on subjecting social practices to the logic of conformity or nonconformity with Islamic law (sharia), thereby extending beyond the realm of worship to encompass various aspects of daily life. The family, funeral rituals, vows (wa'da), and shrine visits emerge as central arenas for this discourse's intervention, due to their religious and cultural symbolism and their role in reproducing values and regulating social relations within society.

The Algerian family, as the fundamental nucleus of socialization, constitutes a primary focus in Salafi representations, which seek to reorganize family relations according to religious conceptions centered on obedience, role regulation, and reinforcement of patriarchal authority. In contrast, funeral rituals, vows, and shrine visits represent deeply rooted collective practices in social memory, blending religious and popular heritage dimensions while performing solidarity and identity functions. However, they face strong rejection from Salafi discourse, which classifies them as innovations (bid'ah) or manifestations of doctrinal deviation.

This study adopts an analytical sociological approach, supported by fieldwork drawn from interviews with respondents affiliated with the Salafi current, aiming to deconstruct their representations of these social practices, reveal the mechanisms by which the Salafi reference reinterprets social reality, and uncover the resulting tensions and symbolic conflicts within Algerian society.

Accordingly, this article seeks to understand how the Salafi reference impacts the value system in Algerian society through analysis of representations of the family and family relations, funeral rituals, vows, and shrine visits—as revealing domains of the interaction between religion, cultural heritage, and social transformation.

## **2. Conceptual Framework**

### **2.1 Popular Religiosity: Definition and Concept**

Linguistically, popular religiosity is defined as everyday religious practices performed by individuals without the need for official institutional mediation, encompassing rituals, customs, and beliefs related to supernatural forces and divine power (Geertz, 1973).

Terminologically, it refers to the practiced system of religion that reflects individuals' interaction with symbols and the sacred, expressing the cultural and historical values of society. Here, daily religious rituals and practices serve as mechanisms for managing social risks, strengthening communal bonds, and regulating relations between the living and the dead (Boumaza, 2010; Addi, 2017).

In the Algerian context, popular religiosity manifests in various forms, including vow rituals (*wa'da*) and shrine visits, which combine social and religious dimensions. These practices reorganize ties between tribes or families while serving as means to strengthen connections with sacred sites and popular religious beliefs—despite the Salafi current viewing them as innovations (*bid'ah*) or polytheism (*shirk*) (Boumaza, 2010). Popular practices also include local religious and folkloric celebrations that contribute to reproducing shared values and cultural identity, thus emerging as a central element in understanding the relationship between religion and Algerian society (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991).

## **2.2 Salafism and the Salafi Reference**

Linguistically, the term "Salafism" derives from "al-salaf" (the predecessors), referring to the righteous ancestors—followers of the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) from among the Companions and Successors—and is used to denote emulation of them in religion and conduct (Al-Attas, 1995).

Terminologically, Salafism denotes an Islamic current that emphasizes returning to the original scriptural sources—the Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah—and applying them as understood by the righteous predecessors (*al-salaf al-salih*), with a focus on purifying religion from innovated practices, superstitions, and aberrant jurisprudential interpretations (Hirschkind, 2006). Key characteristics of Salafism include:

- Strict adherence to religious texts without contrary human interpretations.
- Rejection of innovations (*bid'ah*), superstitions, and religious traditions not attested in the era of the Prophet and Companions.
- Moral education and societal correction according to pure sharia standards.
- Emphasis on educational and pedagogical aspects in some branches (scholarly Salafism), or on jihadist and political aspects in others (jihadist Salafism) (Mamdani, 2004).

Linguistically, "reference" (*marji'iyya*) means the source of recourse or arbitration—the standard relied upon for judgment and action (Benhabib, 1992).

Terminologically, the Salafi reference refers to the epistemological and religious framework based on the righteous predecessors' understanding of scriptural texts, used as a normative model for regulating individual and social behavior. It encompasses the Qur'an, Prophetic Sunnah, and the understanding of the Companions and Successors, without resorting to later interpretations or practices viewed as innovated or contrary to sharia (Al-Attas, 1995).

In practical application, the Salafi reference manifests in:

- Precisely determining the permissible (halal) and prohibited (haram) according to scriptural texts, rejecting anything deemed innovation or superstition.
- Regulating daily practices in family and society, including religious rituals, family relations, education, and social conduct (Hirschkind, 2006).
- Framing society and moral socialization through religious education, viewing the family, schools, and mosques as spaces for reproducing this reference (Boumaza, 2010).

In the Algerian context, the Salafi reference forms the framework by which respondents measure value and social transformations—whether in family relations, funeral rituals, or the practice of vows and shrine visits—accepting or rejecting practices based on their alignment with this referential framework (Belkaïd, 2012).

From a sociological perspective, Salafism and its reference constitute a normative evaluative mechanism that reproduces religious values and imposes sharia compliance standards on social practices, in contrast to popular religiosity, which may contain superstitious or unregulated ritual elements (Hirschkind, 2006).

### **2.3 Value Transformation: Linguistic and Terminological Definition**

Linguistically, "transformation" refers to change or transition from one state to another, while "values" denote the set of principles and beliefs that guide individual and collective behavior and determine what is acceptable or unacceptable (Durkheim, 1912).

Terminologically, in sociology, value transformation is defined as the process of changing the system of values and social norms governing individual and collective behavior, whether resulting from economic, cultural, political changes, or interactions with other cultures (Inglehart, 1997). It is viewed as an indicator of societal dynamism, revealing society's capacity to reproduce or adapt values in response to internal and external changes.

From a sociological viewpoint, value transformation represents a core focus in studying relations between individuals and society, tradition and modernity, and religious reference and

social change. It enables understanding conflicts between inherited and emerging values, as clearly evident in Algerian society's family and ritual transformations in the face of the Salafi reference (Bourdieu, 1998; Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

### **3. Representations of the Family and Family Relations in Algerian Salafi Discourse**

This section of the research aims to analyze the relationship between the value transformations occurring in Algerian society and the Salafi current's representations of these transformations, focusing on the family as the primary nucleus for reproducing social values and norms. The family is not merely a biological or legal framework but a symbolic space where religious values, social customs, and patterns of socialization intersect (Ben Salama, 2012).

Fieldwork revealed that respondents view the Algerian family as profoundly affected by contemporary social and cultural transformations, whether linked to colonial legacy, changes in lifestyles, or the influence of globalization and modern media. In this context, Salafi discourse emphasizes that these transformations have disrupted the family value system, impacting spousal relations, parent-child dynamics, and patterns of authority within the family (Addi, 2017).

Respondents frequently drew temporal comparisons between past and present family relations, idealizing the traditional family as a normative model characterized by cohesion, dominance of religious values, and respect for hierarchy within the family structure. In contrast, the contemporary family is seen as experiencing value disintegration due to the decline of religious reference in favor of individualistic values perceived as alien to Algerian society (Saadoun, 2020).

Field analysis shows that this perception is not merely nostalgia for the past but an evaluative discourse through which the Salafi current seeks to reorganize family relations according to specific religious standards based on obedience, role division, and reinstatement of patriarchal authority as a mechanism for social regulation (Bourdieu, 1998).

The study also found that the family is employed in Salafi discourse as a central tool for preserving religious and cultural identity and resisting perceived external threats to values and morals, making family relations a privileged arena for religious discourse intervention and reinterpretation of social reality from a sharia perspective (Boumaza, 2010).

To systematically present and analyze these representations, the study relied on respondents' comparisons between past and present, reflecting their perceptions of shifts in family relations—both practices they reject and those they seek to reinforce. These comparisons are summarized in the following analytical table for deeper understanding of how the Salafi current perceives value transformations within the Algerian family.

**Table: Differences in Family Relations Between the Past and Present from the Salafi Perspective**

<b>Family Relations</b>	<b>In the Past</b>	<b>In the Present</b>
<b>Compliant with Sharia</b>	Family cohesion, cooperation, mutual respect, obedience to parents, maintaining kinship ties, younger respecting elders	Higher religious awareness, individual housing limiting certain forms of mixing
<b>Non-Compliant with Sharia</b>	Certain socially rejected customs and traditions, mixing (especially regarding in-laws "hamw"), unregulated dress, kissing/handshaking non-mahrams	Saturation with Western culture, inclination toward individualism, youth deviation, influence of technology and social media, excessive freedom, decline in parental role

This data enables understanding how respondents reinterpret family transformations not as a natural historical process but within a logic of religious normativity, measuring the new against an imagined referential model of the family in Salafi thought. Change is not rejected merely as change but as deviation from the presumed stable and continuous original value system.

Salafi discourse, as reflected in respondents' answers, tends to imbue family relations with a normative moral character, transforming daily social practices into indicators of commitment or deviation. This narrows the scope for functional sociological readings of the family in favor of moral-religious ones, evident in concepts like individualism, independent housing, or communication intensity often interpreted as signs of family disintegration rather than responses to broader economic and cultural shifts.

The analysis also reveals selective value appropriation: retaining modern elements adaptable to religion (e.g., heightened religious awareness or individual housing to regulate mixing) while rejecting others seen as direct threats to the family's value structure. This selectivity reflects an attempt to reconcile modern social realities with the Salafi reference as a regulatory framework for family behavior.

Furthermore, in respondents' views, the family is not reduced to a unit of socialization and mutual support but invested as a space for reproducing religious identity and resisting perceived cultural Westernization or value disintegration. Rigid stances toward certain modern transformations can thus be read as symbolic strategies to defend the value system rather than outright rejection of social change.

Accordingly, the table reflects not just a temporal comparison but a symbolic struggle between two value models: a traditional one grounded in Salafi religious reference and a modern social one reinterpreted and regulated accordingly. This confirms that family transformation in Algerian society occurs not in a neutral social vacuum but amid ongoing negotiation between value stability and demands of social change.

A prominent issue in Salafi discourse's evaluation of family relations is "al-hamw" (in-law interactions), viewed as widespread in Algerian families, especially post-independence, due to what respondents describe as religious ignorance and value vacuum. Many families, in their view, were unaware of the sharia-problematic nature of certain extended family interactions, normalizing practices like a brother's wife sitting with her father-in-law or accompanying her brother-in-law classified as sharia violations.

Respondents attribute persistence of these behaviors to dominant social customs based on excessive family intermingling, justified by kinship or hospitality and reproduced through tradition, constraining devout individuals' ability to object within the family system. Family relations are thus read as inherited interaction networks governed more by custom than conscious religious regulation.

Salafi discourse also notes the decline of the extended family home due to the rise of nuclear families a transformation approached ambivalently: criticized for accompanying sharia-noncompliant practices like mixing, yet viewed positively when providing greater value regulation and privacy. This selective stance illustrates the Salafi discourse's relationship with family transformations: acceptance or rejection based on alignment with the adopted religious reference.

Respondents see positive aspects of modern transformations in reinforcing family sanctity, enabling stricter application of sharia rulings—individual housing being a key example. However, this acceptance remains selective, countered by clear rejection of globalization- and modernity-linked changes seen as producing Western-inspired family models based on individualism and dismantling familial bonds.

They link these to family disintegration and severed kinship ties, arguing the Western model weakens intergenerational solidarity, impacting Algerian families. Increased influence of social media is highlighted for reshaping intra-family relations, reducing direct interaction, dismantling collective daily practices, weakening family regulation, and linked to rising youth deviation and divorce rates.

Conversely, some respondents acknowledged positive modern developments, particularly growing religious awareness reducing unregulated traditional practices (e.g., in breastfeeding and family relations). This indicates a shift from spontaneous wide intermingling to greater regulation and distinction between kinship circles.

Thus, this table analysis reveals respondents' stance toward modern family transformations as markedly ambivalent: rejecting modernity's aspects read as threats to the value system while selectively accepting elements enhancing religious regulation and family reorganization. This underscores that family representations are primarily built on normative-value criteria rather than simple past-present opposition.

Respondents' representations ultimately determine family relations—past and present—through a Salafi religious reference subjecting them to compliance or noncompliance with sharia. The traditional family model is glorified for its cohesion and regulation values, while modern transformations linked to globalization and modernity are critiqued for negative impacts on family cohesion, kinship ties, and socialization role. However, the stance is not absolute rejection; certain modern aspects—like individual housing and growing religious awareness are accepted when reinforcing sanctity and regulating intra-family relations. This reflects a selective position reinterpreting family transformation through normative-value logic, negotiating between preserving the referential family model and contemporary social change demands.

#### **4. Funeral Rituals in Algerian Society**

Funeral rituals represent deeply entrenched customs and traditions in Algerian society, serving as symbolic forms of collective expression of death and loss. Like other social practices, these rituals have undergone transformations linked to accelerating social and economic changes. Despite these shifts, funeral rituals retain a fundamental function: preserving social structure and cultural values, enabling society to confront the transformations imposed by the contemporary world.



From a sociological perspective, funeral rituals are defined as "a set of symbolic and social practices adopted by society in dealing with death, expressing a system of shared values and meanings while contributing to the reproduction of social solidarity" (Durkheim, 1981). They encompass various perceptions and practices performed by the deceased's family and social circle, such as condolence visits, food preparation, Qur'an recitation, and organizing mourning gatherings—practices that reflect the nature of social relations and prevailing patterns of solidarity.

According to sociology, the values and practices associated with funerals serve as social mechanisms primarily aimed at enhancing cohesion and social unity, especially during critical moments that threaten individuals' psychological and social equilibrium, such as death (Bourdieu, 2002).

In this framework, condolence (ta'ziya) is one of the primary funeral social interactions, enjoying religious and social consensus due to its solidarity and supportive dimension for the bereaved.

However, debate—particularly in Salafi discourse—centers on certain practices that have accompanied funeral rituals and evolved into binding social customs over time, such as intensive gatherings at the deceased's home, involving food preparation and receiving large numbers of mourners. These are viewed as psychological and economic burdens on the family during a time of grief and exhaustion. This accumulation of customs has introduced practices classified, from a normative religious perspective, as sharia violations, yet they persist due to the force of custom and social tradition.

Thus, funeral rituals in Algerian society represent a fertile ground for the intersection of the religious and social, where the ritual's solidarity function intertwines with pressures of social custom, opening the way for reinterpretation in light of value transformations and differing religious references.

The Salafi current in Algerian society, as expressed by several respondents, rejects what is known as the "deceased's dinner" and related practices like Qur'an recitation and pronouncing the shahada, considering them innovations (bid'ah) not attested from the Prophet ﷺ or the Companions (Bouguerra, 2015). One respondent stated: "This is an innovation; when we measure it against what people did in the Prophet's ﷺ time, we find it contrary to him and the Companions. Nothing is reported of the Prophet ﷺ doing this dinner or this recitation; rather, it is known that the Prophet ﷺ commanded silence."

Salafis believe true worship in this context lies in silence and reflection during the funeral procession and burial, away from distractions that might divert the heart from being affected by death. They cite Qur'anic verses such as {No bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another} and Imam Malik's saying: "If it benefited him (meaning the Qur'an), it would have benefited him while alive," to emphasize that reward cannot be gifted to the deceased through physical acts of worship.

From a sociological viewpoint, these positions reveal tension between normative religious dimensions and socio-cultural aspects of funeral rituals. In religious anthropology, funeral rituals are "a set of practices and symbols employed by society to strengthen social solidarity, facilitate psychological coping with death, and reproduce the value and cultural system" (Durkheim, 1981; Malick, 2000). Rituals like condolence, food preparation, receiving mourners, and Qur'an recitation extend beyond the religious to function as social mechanisms for strengthening bonds, regulating collective emotions, and reproducing shared values (Cherbi, 2018).

Sociological analysis emphasizes that Salafi rejection of these practices stems not purely from social critique but from a normative religious standard seeking to realign social practice with original texts, reflecting an ongoing conflict between social custom and normative sharia interpretations. From this perspective, funeral rituals provide insight into how religion interacts with cultural heritage and social custom, and how they are reread through different religious references, highlighting religion's role as a factor in social regulation and a value reference organizing individual behavior.

## **5. Vows (Wa'da) and Shrine Visits in Salafi Discourse: A Sociological Reading**

Vows (wa'da) and shrine visits are symbolic practices deeply rooted in Maghrebi popular heritage in general and Algerian in particular. Historically linked to collective social occasions, they renew kinship ties, reinforce social solidarity, facilitate reconciliation between adversaries, restitution of rights, and the return of wives to their husbands' homes. From this viewpoint, wa'da can be seen as a traditional social mechanism for reproducing social cohesion and overcoming crises within rural and local structures (Ben Jabbar, 2012).

However, according to Salafi discourse, this socio-functional character has undergone profound transformation, especially during and after the colonial period, where wa'da was stripped of its original social content, retaining only its celebratory form. This led to intertwining with popular and superstitious beliefs lacking clear sharia basis (Ben Jabbar,

2012). Respondents attribute this shift to the spread of popular religiosity based on seeking intercession from righteous saints (awliya'), requesting benefit or averting harm from them—classified in Salafi reference as manifestations of polytheism (shirk) and innovation.

In this context, one respondent expressed: "It is among the things that befell this ummah and caused shirk with God; they clothe themselves in these vows during visits, seeking benefit, harm, and fulfillment of needs from the grave's occupant" (Ben Jabbar, 2012).

This discourse reflects a strict Salafi vision viewing popular religiosity as producing symbolic intermediation between worshipper and worshipped via saints and shrines, contradicting the Salafi conception of tawhid based on direct relation between human and God without intermediaries (Gellner, 1981). Thus, shrine visits and vows are understood as practices associating others with God in fulfilling needs, granting saints symbolic authority exceeding religiously acceptable limits.

Respondents also highlight perceived contradictions in social actors' consciousness: verbal denial of belief in the saint alongside actual practices involving slaughter, vowing, and symbolic approach: "Every wa'da is attributed to a saint; if you advise them it's impermissible, they say: 'We don't believe in it; we just prepare food,' while they slaughter sacrifices to approach the saint—this is slaughter for other than God; it's forbidden to eat from it or buy/sell in it" (Akacha, 2011).

Sociologically, this contradiction expresses duality in religious consciousness within society, where popular beliefs coexist with official or reformist religious discourse without critical awareness of conflict. These practices reveal social custom's power in reproducing religious behavior despite Salafi deconstruction attempts (Boumaza, 2010).

Respondents emphasize shrine sanctification, reaching exaggerated symbolic and material levels—some shrines featuring high-quality tiling and air conditioning, unavailable even to the living: "Sufis played a major role in sanctifying such places; today it's evolved—we see shrines with the finest tiles, air conditioners, things hard for the living to afford. This is madness, unreasonable, all innovation" (Bouguerra H, 2015).

This stance reveals symbolic conflict between religiosity models: popular one based on symbol, intermediation, and baraka; Salafi seeking to desacralize spaces and persons, regulating practice via text and pure tawhid (Boumaza, 2010; Gellner, 1981). Salafi rejection

extends beyond doctrinal to social-cultural dimensions, viewing them as reproducing religiosity patterns deemed alien to "true religion."

Thus, Salafi position on wa'da and shrine visits fits a broader project of reengineering religious and social fields through deconstructing popular heritage and reinterpreting it via normative religious reference subjecting practice to sharia compliance or noncompliance (Boumaza, 2010).

Salafi conception of grave construction and shrine building relies on historical-doctrinal reading viewing it absent from early Islam, emerging from later political-sectarian shifts. Salafis trace grave veneration origins to the Ubaydi state, using religious symbolism for political-sectarian purposes, later adopted by Sufi orders as fixed rituals (Ben Jabbar, 2012).

Salafi rejection draws on doctrinal interpretation linking excess in righteous to humanity's first shirk experience (Noah's people), citing relevant Qur'anic verses. Shrine visits and building are seen as intermediation contradicting pure tawhid; popular practices viewed as manifestations of religiosity based on seeking help from other than God (Boumaza, 2010).

Salafis classify grave visits into: shirk-based (seeking benefit from occupant), bid'ah-based (worship like Qur'an recitation at graves), and permissible (for reflection and supplicating mercy for deceased) (Ben Jabbar, 2012; Bouguerra, 2015).

Sociologically, this classification reflects Salafi attempt to redefine religious project by delegitimizing popular religiosity symbolically, substituting strict textual model sharply separating sacred and human. It highlights value conflict between custom/collective memory logic and text/tawhid logic, making wa'da and shrine visits intense tension fields between religion as socially rooted practice in Algerian cultural structure and religion as doctrinal system (Durkheim, 1981; Bourdieu, 2002).

Despite decline in many beliefs and superstitions linked to wa'da and shrine visits due to rising religious awareness, formal education, media, and social networks dismantling traditional metaphysical notions, these practices have not vanished entirely but reproduced in new symbolic-cultural forms. In many regions, celebratory-entertainment aspects dominate, including popular praises, folk arts like equestrian displays, and traditional foods reflecting regional authenticity.

Yet Salafi discourse maintains absolute prohibition, viewing "wa'da" term laden with prior doctrinal connotations inseparable from original context. In Salafi view, wa'da is not

cultural/social space but extension of deemed shirk practices, especially linked to thanksgiving for wishes, success, healing, or circumcision—explaining persistent rejection even after stripping direct doctrinal content.

From sociological-anthropological perspective, wa'da is symbolic mechanism reproducing social cohesion, reconnecting individuals to community (tribe, neighborhood, region) via annual organization: occasion for rearranging relations, renewing kin ties, settling disputes, reinforcing solidarity and mutual aid. Often transformed into open popular theater in natural spaces showcasing collective cultural expressions to wide audiences, gaining performative-touristic dimension beyond narrow religious frame.

Wa'da combines elements: space for popular arts like praises, dhikr, supplication; also, entertainment, recreation, cultural tourism—reflecting local identity and symbolic history. This religious-cultural-social interplay makes it complex practice hard to reduce doctrinally, readable as living cultural heritage mirroring collective living patterns and shared memory.

These practices preserve core social values: generosity, hospitality, good neighborliness, cooperation, mutual aid—part of Algerian society's symbolic capital. However, Salafi insistence on prohibiting wa'da even in de-shirked forms reflects deeper value conflict between strict textual tawhid logic and custom/cultural identity logic, making wa'da indicative of tensions and transformations in Algerian society's relation to religion, heritage, and modernity.

Shrine visits phenomenon spreads geographically-historically in Algerian religious-popular heritage, forming over long trajectory as complex practice intertwining religious, symbolic, cultural, social dimensions. Not limited to narrow worship, it performs multiple social functions: strengthening collective bonds, reproducing local religious memory, consolidating solidarity linked to popular sacred.

Shrine visits dominate daily religious behavior of wide segments, embodied in inherited practices invoked in individual/collective crises (illness, infertility, hardship, seeking baraka). Understood only in socio-cultural context: expressing popular religiosity patterns based on symbolic intermediation with sacred, rooted in collective conceptions of sainthood, baraka, intercession.

Yet unaffected by social change and contemporary religious transformations? No—become clear religious-value conflict field with Salafi rise rereading heritage strictly

doctrinally. In Salafi discourse, reduced to doctrinal dimension as shirk or bid'ah, deviating from pure tawhid—subject to ongoing rejection and symbolic criminalization.

Conversely, local society, zawiyas, and Sufi currents view shrines as part of religious-spiritual heritage, extension of collective memory historically preserving religious identity, resisting colonialism, organizing social-symbolic life locally. Thus, shrine-linked cultural heritage becomes fertile ground for ongoing conflict between contrasting religiosity modes: normative textual (Salafi) vs. popular-spiritual (zawiyas/local society).

This conflict reflects persistent tension between doctrinal purification logic and cultural continuity logic based on custom/collective memory, making shrine visits not mere practice difference but indicator of broader struggle over defining legitimate religion, acceptable religious boundaries, and heritage's role in shaping Algerian religious identity amid contemporary social transformations.

## **6. Conclusion**

This article has sought to analyze the representations of the Algerian Salafi current regarding a set of socially significant symbolic practices, through three central domains in the reproduction of Algerian society's value system: the family and family relations, funeral rituals, and vows (wa'da) and shrine visits. This thematic diversity has enabled an examination of how social reality is reinterpreted according to a normative religious reference that subjects daily practices to the logic of conformity or nonconformity with sharia.

The analysis results highlighted that Salafi discourse does not engage with these practices as historical, evolving social expressions but rereads them from a strict doctrinal and moral perspective, leading to their classification within binaries of truth/falsehood, Sunnah/innovation (bid'ah), and monotheism (tawhid)/polytheism (shirk). This is clearly evident in representations of the family, where the traditional family model is invoked as an ideal normative prototype, while modern transformations are held responsible for perceived value disintegration and decline in family regulation—without sufficient consideration of the broader economic and cultural contexts that produced these changes.

In the same vein, the study of funeral rituals revealed a clear Salafi tendency to strip these rituals of their social and symbolic character, confining them to a purely devotional dimension. This leads to the criminalization of several practices deeply rooted in collective memory that performed solidarity and mutual aid functions within society. This orientation is understood

within a broader logic aiming to reshape society's symbolic field according to a religious vision that rejects intermediation and custom, emphasizing religious individualism and textual discipline.

Regarding wa'da and shrine visits, the analysis showed that they constitute one of the most contentious issues in value and religious conflict, representing a model of popular religiosity that integrates religious, cultural, and social dimensions. Salafi discourse revealed an exclusionary stance toward this heritage, reducing it to its doctrinal aspects while overlooking its social and historical functions—making these practices an arena for symbolic struggle between the Salafi reference on one side and zawiyas and local society on the other.

Accordingly, it can be said that the Algerian Salafi current does not merely work on correcting beliefs and worship but seeks to reengineer society's value system by intervening in its most intimate and symbolic domains. However, this reformist project continually collides with the persistence of cultural heritage and its capacity for adaptation and resistance, producing a state of ongoing negotiation between value stability and the demands of social change.

This study concludes that the conflict between Salafi discourse and traditional social practices cannot be reduced to a purely religious dimension but must be read within a broader sociological framework that considers symbolic power relations, dynamics of value transformation, and religion's functions in reproducing social cohesion. Understanding these representations thus remains a fundamental entry point for analyzing the nature of religious and social transformations in Algerian society within a contemporary context characterized by multiple references and competing modes of religiosity.

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