



Reconstructing Islamic Historiography Post-Orientalism: A New Paradigm for Historical Knowledge Production in Global Islamic Studies

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Abstract

The dominance of the orientalist paradigm in modern Islamic historiography has resulted in the construction of historical knowledge that tends to position Muslim societies as objects of representation through an external epistemological framework. Although post-orientalist critique has developed widely, studies that systematically explain the epistemological and methodological transformations of Islamic historiography within global knowledge production remain relatively limited. This study aims to analyze the process of reconstructing Islamic historiography post-orientalism and to formulate the characteristics of a new paradigm for the production of historical knowledge in global Islamic studies. The study uses a qualitative approach based on literature studies employing critical historiographical methods and epistemological analysis of the works of orientalist, postcolonial thinkers, and contemporary Islamic historiography, purposively selected for their relevance to the issue of historical knowledge production. The results show that the reconstruction of Islamic historiography proceeds through three main transformations. First, the deconstruction of essentialist, ahistorical, and Eurocentric assumptions that have shaped the narrative of Islamic history. Second, a methodological shift toward an interdisciplinary approach that integrates history, anthropology, sociology, area studies, and network analysis to explain the complexity of Muslim historical experiences. Third, the emergence of transnational historiography positions the Islamic world as a global space of interaction through the circulation of ideas, intellectual mobility, cultural exchange, and cross-regional political relations. This transformation has resulted in a historiographic paradigm that is more pluralistic, contextual, multi-perspective, and reflective of the

diversity of sources and historical actors. In conclusion, post-orientalist Islamic historiography offers a new epistemological framework that strengthens the decolonization of knowledge and the development of a more inclusive global study of Islam.

Keywords: Islamic Historiography; Post-Orientalism; Historical Epistemology; Transnational Historiography; Global Islam

Abstrak

Dominasi paradigma orientalisme dalam historiografi Islam modern telah menghasilkan konstruksi pengetahuan sejarah yang cenderung menempatkan masyarakat Muslim sebagai objek representasi melalui kerangka epistemologis eksternal. Meskipun kritik pasca-orientalisme telah berkembang luas, kajian yang secara sistematis menjelaskan transformasi epistemologis dan metodologis historiografi Islam dalam konteks produksi pengetahuan global masih relatif terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis proses rekonstruksi historiografi Islam pasca-orientalisme serta merumuskan karakteristik paradigma baru dalam produksi pengetahuan sejarah dalam studi Islam global. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi literatur, dengan metode historiografi kritis dan analisis epistemologis terhadap karya-karya orientalis, pemikir pascakolonial, serta studi historiografi Islam kontemporer yang dipilih secara purposif berdasarkan relevansinya terhadap isu produksi pengetahuan sejarah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa rekonstruksi historiografi Islam berlangsung melalui tiga transformasi utama. Pertama, dekonstruksi terhadap asumsi esensialis, ahistoris, dan Eurosentris yang selama ini membentuk narasi sejarah Islam. Kedua, pergeseran metodologis menuju pendekatan interdisipliner yang mengintegrasikan sejarah, antropologi, sosiologi, studi kawasan, dan analisis jaringan untuk menjelaskan kompleksitas pengalaman historis umat Muslim. Ketiga, munculnya historiografi transnasional yang menempatkan dunia Islam sebagai ruang interaksi global melalui sirkulasi gagasan, mobilitas intelektual, pertukaran budaya, dan relasi politik lintas wilayah. Transformasi tersebut menghasilkan paradigma historiografi yang lebih plural, kontekstual, multiperspektif, dan reflektif terhadap keragaman sumber dan aktor sejarah. Kesimpulannya, historiografi Islam pasca-orientalisme menawarkan kerangka epistemologis baru yang memperkuat dekolonisasi pengetahuan serta pengembangan studi Islam global yang lebih inklusif.

Kata Kunci: Historiografi Islam; Pasca-Orientalisme; Epistemologi Sejarah; Historiografi Transnasional; Islam Global

Introduction

Modern Islamic historiography has developed through intensive interaction between Islamic scholarly traditions and Western historical methodologies since the 19th century. The dominance of the orientalist paradigm shaped how Islamic history was written through philological, positivist, and source-critical approaches, positioning Islam as an external object of observation (Ekiz, 2023). This paradigm gave rise to reductionist tendencies that separated the historical experience of Muslims from internal epistemological frameworks such as the concepts of *khabar*, *sanad*, narration, the authority of scholars, and the tradition of knowledge transmission that underpinned classical Islamic historiography (Iqbal, Naeem, & Nor, 2025). As a result, many Islamic historical narratives were constructed based on methodological assumptions centered on Western intellectual experience, thus underrepresenting the diversity of historical practices, scholarly networks, and the

dynamics of Muslim knowledge production (Haq, 2023). Postcolonial, decolonial, and global historical critiques have given rise to demands for a reconstruction of Islamic historiography that integrates modern criticism of historical sources with Islamic epistemological traditions and the complexities of global interactions shaping the development of contemporary Islamic civilization (Al-Shuqairat, Al-Maani, & Aldajah, 2025).

The development of global knowledge production reflects a skewed representation that shapes Islamic historical narratives. UNESCO (2021) demonstrates the dominance of academic institutions in North America and Western Europe in international knowledge production, while the contribution of Muslim countries remains significantly lower. A report by the World Intellectual Property Organization (2022) also reveals the concentration of global knowledge infrastructure in a select few academic centers that control the flow of publications, citations, and scholarly legitimacy. A similar phenomenon is evident in contemporary Islamic studies, with Western publishers, journals, and research centers dominating and playing a significant role in shaping the research agenda for global Islamic history (As'ad, Zainuddin, & Hady, 2023). Simultaneously, there has been a wave of decolonization of knowledge, critiques of the orientalist canon, and increased attention to connected histories, the mobility of scholars, cross-regional intellectual networks, and the historical experiences of non-Western Muslim communities (Lee, 2023). These developments demonstrate that historiographical frameworks centered on a single region, nation, or perspective are increasingly ill-suited to explaining the complexity of Islamic history, which is shaped by transregional networks and global interactions. This situation makes the reconstruction of Islamic historiography an epistemological necessity for producing a more inclusive, multi-perspective representation of history, in line with the dynamics of global Islamic studies.

Recent literature demonstrates significant developments in critiques of orientalism while simultaneously exposing the limitations of existing historiographical frameworks. Jafari (2022) explains that representations of the East in the orientalist tradition are shaped by relations of knowledge and colonial power, which, in turn, influence specific constructions of Islam. This study successfully uncovers the ideological dimensions of knowledge production, but fails to offer an alternative historiographical model. McDougall (2024) demonstrates the diversity of Islamic historical experiences and critiques essentialist approaches that simplify Muslim realities into single categories. The focus of studies remains limited to critical readings of Islamic diversity without a systematic methodological formulation. Le Ha and Mohamad (2020) emphasize the importance of transnational networks of '*ulamā*', educational institutions, and intellectual mobility in the formation of global Islam. These findings broaden the scope of Islamic historical

analysis, although their implications for historiographical reconstruction have not been discussed in depth.

Salem (2021) develops a global historical perspective to explain the intellectual connectivity of the Islamic world across regions. This study enriches the understanding of historical interdependence but fails to formulate an epistemological foundation that integrates global history with the Islamic historiographic tradition. Maythem (2021) demonstrates that the idea of the Islamic world is a historical construct born through modern political and intellectual interactions. This research explains the conceptual transformation of the Islamic world but fails to address the need for a model of historical knowledge production that can methodically explain this process. Olivella and Mostowlansky's (2023) study on the decolonization of knowledge and connected history also focuses more on critiquing old paradigms than on developing a new historiographical framework that integratively connects Islamic epistemology, decolonial approaches, and global history. The research gap lies in the lack of a conceptual model that systematically explains the epistemological transformation, the authority of knowledge, the use of sources, and the methodology of post-orientalist Islamic historiography within the context of global Islamic studies.

This study analyzes the epistemological genealogy of orientalist historiography; the process of deconstructing its basic assumptions through post-orientalist critique; the methodological transformations that emerged after this paradigm shift; and the character of the new Islamic historiography that emerged within global Islamic studies. The research aims to develop an integrative conceptual framework that explains the relationship between Islamic epistemology, decolonial approaches, global history, and contemporary knowledge production. The main argument is that post-orientalist Islamic historiography not only revises the interpretation of Islamic history but also changes the structure of knowledge production by expanding epistemic authority, diversifying historical sources, recognizing the plurality of Muslim experiences, and strengthening transnational and interconnected perspectives. The theoretical contribution of this study is the development of an analytical model of post-orientalist Islamic historiography that connects orientalist critique, Islamic epistemology, and global history within a coherent conceptual framework. Its practical contribution is the provision of a methodological perspective for the development of Islamic historical research, the development of Islamic studies curricula, and the strengthening of a more inclusive representation of Islamic history in international academic discourse.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a critical intellectual history design that integrates historiographic-critical analysis as the main framework, historical hermeneutics as an interpretive strategy, and discourse analysis to examine the epistemological transformation of post-orientalist Islamic historiography in the

context of global Islamic studies. The research data consists of a selected corpus of literature that includes works of classical and modern Islamic historiography, orientalist and post-orientalist writings, as well as literature on intellectual history and knowledge production that have had significant influence due to their thematic relevance, academic authority, and contribution to the methodological debate in Islamic historiography. Data collection was carried out through a systematic literature review by searching international academic databases using keywords related to Islamic historiography, orientalism, post-orientalism, intellectual history, and global Islamic studies, and then selecting studies through inclusion and exclusion criteria that considered academic quality, substantive links, and the geographical representation of various scientific traditions. Data analysis was conducted through conceptual coding, mapping of intellectual genealogies, identifying citation networks and the circulation of ideas across regions, comparing historiographic discourses, and hermeneutic interpretation of the relationship between intellectual context, the authority of knowledge, and the construction of historical narratives. The results of the analysis were then synthesized to construct a conceptual model of post-orientalist historiography that explains epistemic shifts, the dynamics of knowledge production, and transnational interactions in the development of contemporary Islamic studies.

Results and Discussion

Epistemological Genealogy of Islamic Historiography in the Orientalist Tradition

The epistemological genealogy of modern Islamic historiography can be understood as the process of establishing a regime of knowledge born from the intersection of nineteenth-century European philology, German historicism, and the academic project of orientalism (Al-Shuqairat et al., 2025). The philological tradition developed as a scientific instrument for reconstructing the origins of texts through manuscript criticism, tracing redactional transmissions, and establishing the chronology of sources (Lutfullayeva et al., 2025). This framework is based on the assumption that the most authentic access to the past is obtained through written documents that can be rationally verified. The institutionalization of Oriental studies in European universities extended this principle to Islamic studies, positioning classical Arabic sources as objects of textual criticism (Lumbard, 2025). Philology served as an epistemic tool that determined what forms of knowledge were considered valid. This position enabled orientalist scholars to claim scholarly authority over Islamic history through standards of verification derived from the modern European academic tradition, while simultaneously establishing a hierarchy of knowledge between academic interpreters and the Muslim intellectual tradition.

This philological foundation gained broader legitimacy through the influence of historical positivism, which emerged after the idea of history as a scientific discipline based on empirical facts took shape. Leopold von Ranke's methodological

inspiration encouraged the search for reconstructions of the past based on evidence deemed closest to historical events (Wimmer, 2022). This principle influenced Islamic studies through the application of external criticism of the date of writing, the identity of the author, the political context, and the transmission channels of sources, coupled with internal criticism of narrative consistency and the possibility of ideological construction. The use of these methods resulted in a fundamental shift in the way Islamic sources were read. The validity of information no longer rested on the scholarly authority of the narrator or the recognition of the Muslim scholarly community, but rather on the document's ability to meet modern academic verification criteria (Al-Shuqairat et al., 2025). This shift marked the transformation of the source of historiographical authority from a network of '*ulamā*' (Islamic scholars) to an academic community mastering the tools of source criticism. Such epistemological changes became a crucial foundation for the development of modern Islamic studies and helped determine internationally accepted standards of historical knowledge.

The influence of positivism reached its most visible form through critical readings of the hadith, *khavar* (news), and early Islamic historical works. The works of Ignaz Goldziher, Joseph Schacht, Julius Wellhausen, and John Wansbrough demonstrate a tendency to treat Muslim sources as objects of methodological skepticism, to be tested against independent evidence (Husayn, 2022). This verification practice creates a hierarchy of evidence that often accords higher epistemic value to inscriptions, papyri, Byzantine chronicles, Syrian sources, or non-Muslim accounts than to the Islamic tradition. These methodological choices are not merely technical decisions, but rather expressions of epistemological assumptions about the most reliable sources of knowledge. The production of historical narratives is ultimately constructed through the selection of documents that meet certain empirical standards. As a result, Islamic history is presented as an object of academic reconstruction, to be separated from the normative function of religious sources. This situation demonstrates how research methods operate as mechanisms for establishing historical truth while simultaneously determining the boundaries of knowledge recognized as legitimate in the modern scientific community.

The historiographic narratives born of the orientalist paradigm shape the way Islamic history is explained. Document-based chronological reconstructions generate significant attention to state formation, the evolution of political institutions, dynastic conflicts, and changes in social structures. This focus differs from the classical Islamic historiographic tradition, which places the transmission of knowledge, scholarly authority, the biographies of scholars, and the formation of scholarly communities as crucial elements of historical writing (Indah et al., 2025). The dominance of the historical evolution model often leads to interpreting the development of Islamic societies through categories of political and social change derived from modern European historical experience. The use of universal

categories such as the state, rationalization, institutional development, or social transformation demonstrates how Western conceptual tools serve as the primary interpretive framework. The relationship between interpretive methods and outcomes is evident, as the choice of sources, analytical categories, and standards of evidence directly shapes the resulting narrative about the Islamic past.

The assumption of historical objectivity plays a central role in the formation of the orientalist paradigm. Objectivity is understood as the researcher's ability to separate facts from normative beliefs, thereby enabling the reconstruction of the past through rational analysis (Andika, Surbakti, & Johari, 2025). This perspective encourages the treatment of historical texts, compilations of historical hadith, and classical manuscripts as documents recording facts, rather than as parts of an intellectual practice with pedagogical, ethical, and normative functions. Post-positivist critiques demonstrate that objectivity is never a neutral position, as every research process involves source selection, the use of conceptual categories, and specific theoretical assumptions (Berg & Jeong, 2022). Talal Asad (1993), Wael Hallaq (2018), and Shahab Ahmed (2016) demonstrate the limitations of approaches that separate historical knowledge from the intellectual horizons that shape it. Analysis of Islamic texts requires attention to the relationships among meaning, authority, social practices, and the knowledge structures that give rise to them. This perspective expands the scope of historiographic interpretation beyond the limits of documentary verification that dominated classical orientalism.

The formation of orientalist dominance occurs through the institutionalization of knowledge within universities, academic associations, international journals, manuscript cataloging projects, and research evaluation systems (Mufti, 2010). These academic structures shape the intellectual terrain that determines which methods achieve scientific legitimacy and which approaches are deemed inadequate to modern research standards. An analysis of knowledge production demonstrates that the spread of historiographic paradigms occurs through networks of academic power that regulate the distribution of scientific authority. Pierre Bourdieu's (1990) perspective on the intellectual terrain helps explain how methodological legitimacy is reproduced through educational institutions and scholarly publications. Meanwhile, Michel Foucault's (1980) concept of the relationship between knowledge and power demonstrates that knowledge production is always linked to the formation of interpretive authority. The dominance of philology and source criticism emerges from historical configurations that determine which forms of knowledge attain scientific status.

An evaluation of orientalism requires attention to the epistemological limitations that arise from the privileging of texts and empirical facts. An overemphasis on editorial stability often overlooks the social function of knowledge in the Islamic tradition, which developed through *sanad*, scholarly assemblies, teacher-student relationships, and oral transmission practices (Utami & Shahih,

2025). Reducing history to a collection of verifiable facts also narrows the scope for analysis to the symbolic, normative, and intellectual dimensions that shape the historical experience of Muslim societies. Generalizations about the development of Islam often arise when local diversity is compressed into a single evolutionary model following a modernization framework. Post-orientalist critique does not reject the contributions of philology or source criticism, but rather questions the claims of universality that accompany their application. A reflective approach demands recognition that each method has interpretive limits and that the analytical categories employed by researchers are part of the construction of knowledge that needs to be critically evaluated.

A genealogy of modern Islamic historiography demonstrates that orientalism functions as an epistemological paradigm that shapes how sources are read, facts are selected, authority is determined, and historical narratives are constructed. Philology, historical positivism, source criticism, and scientific objectivity operate as conceptual tools that produce a particular regime of knowledge about Islam. Historical production emerges from the interaction among sources, methods, analytical categories, and academic structures that legitimize certain interpretations. Awareness of this epistemological construction opens space for the development of a post-orientalist historiography that continues to draw on the power of source criticism without neglecting the Islamic intellectual tradition as a source of knowledge with its own internal logic. Such a framework enables the emergence of a historiographical model that is more dialogical, reflective, and sensitive to the diversity of historical experiences in the Islamic world, while also providing a conceptual foundation for the methodological transformation of contemporary global Islamic studies.

Epistemological Critique of Orientalism in the Study of Islamic History

Epistemological critiques of orientalism stem from questions about the conditions under which knowledge can attain the status of truth and academic legitimacy. The central issue is not simply the existence of a Western bias toward the East, but rather the epistemic configuration that determines who has the right to define Islamic history, what sources are considered valid, and what conceptual categories are used to explain the historical experiences of Muslim societies. The classical orientalist tradition developed through the assumption of intellectual evolutionism, which positioned European modernity as the pinnacle of human rationality (Kolland, 2024). This position resulted in an interpretive framework that cast Islam as an object of study to be explained through external categories. Post-orientalist critiques demonstrate that such knowledge constructions create an epistemic hierarchy that positions Muslim historical experience as data, while interpretative authority rests with Western academic institutions. This issue creates epistemological inequality, as Islamic sources and intellectual traditions lose their capacity to provide a basis for explaining their own history.

Decolonial studies expand this critique through the concept of the colonality of knowledge, which explains the continuation of epistemic domination after the end of formal colonialism (Alatas, 2024). The production of knowledge about Islam takes place through intellectual geography, which centers academic legitimacy on specific institutions, archives, methodologies, and verification standards. Relations between knowledge and power operate through academic mechanisms that determine the form of research questions, the classification of sources, and the boundaries of explanations deemed scientific. This perspective demonstrates that Islamic historiography emerged from a regime of knowledge that governed the distribution of interpretive authority. Epistemological critique then shifts the focus of discussion from questions of representation to an analysis of how global academic structures produce categories such as Islamic decline, intellectual stagnation, or political backwardness as seemingly natural facts. Awareness of these dimensions opens up space for an evaluation of the epistemic foundations that have shaped modern Islamic historical studies.

The debate over objectivity demonstrates an important distinction between methodological and epistemological critique. Methodological critique focuses on research techniques, source use, or data verification procedures, while epistemological critique examines the assumptions underlying the formation of knowledge (Hietanen et al., 2020). Philological orientalism has made significant contributions to manuscript editing, textual criticism, and the reconstruction of the chronology of Islamic history (Drira, 2025). Problems arise when these methodological tools are accompanied by assumptions that treat modern European rationality as the universal measure of the validity of knowledge. This condition encourages the reading of Islamic sources through a predetermined interpretive framework, so that the Muslim intellectual tradition is often positioned as an object of verification rather than a partner in epistemic dialogue. Post-orientalist critique rejects claims of epistemic universality that ignore the historical context in which the method itself was formed (Borowski, 2023). Objectivity is then understood as critical reflexivity toward the researcher's position, academic structures, and conceptual horizons that influence the process of historical knowledge production.

The issue of source hierarchy becomes an important arena for epistemological critique of orientalist historiography. Skepticism toward Muslim sources is often built on the assumption that the Islamic historical tradition emerged from a process of memory construction susceptible to political and theological interests (Riecken, 2019). Similar assumptions are rarely applied equally to non-Muslim sources, creating asymmetrical standards of evaluation. Epistemological critique does not deny the importance of historical skepticism, as every source requires critical examination. The critique focuses on the imbalance in evaluative procedures that transform methodological skepticism into epistemic preference. The Islamic historiographical tradition developed complex verification mechanisms through

sanad criticism, *rijāl*, dynastic chronicles, administrative documentation, and knowledge transmission practices that enabled the tracing of the authority of information (Kusuma et al., 2025). The presence of these tools demonstrates the Muslim scholarly community's development of its own historical rationality.

Analysis of representation takes on deeper meaning when situated within the epistemic structures that determine how history is understood. Narratives of political fragmentation, sectarian conflict, or intellectual stagnation often emerge from processes of archival selection, fact categorization, and interpretive priorities that direct attention to specific aspects. Historiography shapes horizons of meaning that influence perceptions of a society's historical identity (Haapala, 2021). A postcolonial perspective demonstrates that representation emerges through the relationship between symbolic power and the authority of knowledge. Islamic history is often read through categories derived from European historical experience, reducing the diversity of Muslim experiences to a single pattern of development (Grinell, 2020). Epistemological critique demands a more contextual reading, considering the intellectual frameworks that gave rise to sources, historical actors, and the social dynamics that shaped the production of historical meaning.

The transformation of post-orientalist criticism has moved toward developing a historiographical model that recognizes the plurality of sources of knowledge. The development of studies in connected histories, entangled histories, and global intellectual history demonstrates an effort to avoid narratives that place the West as the sole center of world historical development (Capan, 2020). This approach explores the circulation of ideas, scholarly networks, intellectual exchanges, trade mobility, and cross-regional interactions as factors that shape Islamic history. This framework allows for a more complex reading of the relationship between Muslim societies and the global world, without becoming trapped in an East-West dichotomy. This shift in orientation also encourages the dialogical use of Muslim and non-Muslim sources through equal critical evaluation. The researcher's position is understood as an interpretive subject who must openly account for their epistemic assumptions.

The post-orientalist reconstruction of Islamic historiography demands recognition of the diversity of knowledge traditions that contribute to the formation of historical narratives. A decolonial framework offers the concept of pluriversality as an alternative to the epistemic universalism that has dominated scientific production. Plurality creates space for various intellectual traditions to serve as sources of legitimacy for knowledge. Islamic historiography takes on a new position when the sources, concepts, and methodologies developed within the Muslim tradition are treated as integral to global scholarly discussions rather than merely as objects of research. This perspective allows for the development of interpretative models that are more sensitive to the historical context, local experiences, and intellectual dynamics of Muslim societies. This kind of reconstruction shifts the focus

of the study from the search for a single authority to an epistemic dialogue that acknowledges the diversity of ways of understanding the past.

Methodological Transformation in Post-Orientalist Islamic Historiography

Criticism of orientalism since the 1970s has triggered fundamental changes in the epistemological foundations of Islamic historiography. The classical orientalist tradition rested on positivistic assumptions that placed the authenticity of texts as the primary source of validity for historical knowledge (El Houkayem, 2023). Research focused on philological criticism, chronological reconstruction, and verification of source transmissions to obtain a supposedly objective picture of the past. The development of historical theory, postcolonial studies, and critiques of Eurocentrism led to a reexamination of these assumptions. Islamic history was then understood as the result of the interaction between narratives, social practices, institutions, and power relations that shape the production of historical knowledge (Faruque, 2024). This epistemological shift shifted the goal of historiography from a mere search for historical facts to an analysis of the processes by which historical meaning is formed. Reconstruction of the past is treated as a study of how various social actors construct, negotiate, and pass down historical representations within constantly changing political, intellectual, and cultural contexts.

This epistemological shift led to a conceptual transformation in the units of analysis within Islamic historiography. The philological tradition places texts at the center of research. At the same time, the post-orientalist paradigm broadens its focus to social networks, religious institutions, cultural practices, intellectual mobility, and the historical experiences of Muslim communities. The influence of postcolonial thought and social historiography has encouraged recognition of the socially constructed nature of historical sources, shaped by interests, positions of authority, and the contexts in which knowledge is produced (Steinmetz, 2025). This shift has transformed the way researchers read chronicles, *tārīkh* (historical works), *ṭabaqāt* (literary texts), biographies of scholars, and travelogues. These sources are understood as arenas for the formation of meaning, demonstrating the relationship between religious authority, political legitimacy, and social structure. Islamic historiography has subsequently moved toward an approach that combines source analysis with an examination of the context of knowledge production, allowing for a more comprehensive explanation of the relationship between texts and social reality.

Historical anthropology has made a significant contribution to this methodological transformation by shifting the way historical sources are read. This approach adopts the principle of cultural interpretation, which views social actions, symbols, rituals, and religious practices as key elements in shaping historical experience. Reading sources does not stop at narrative content, but rather explores the social meanings underlying the emergence of a narrative (Arni, 2018). Interpretive techniques such as thick description allow researchers to connect texts

to the daily practices of Muslim communities, local authority structures, and the symbolic systems that govern social relations. Classical historiography is treated as a representation of social experience containing traces of power negotiations and the formation of collective identities. The use of oral traditions, ritual practices, communal memory, and local cultural expressions broadens the scope of historical sources beyond those previously dominated by written documents. This approach produces historical reconstructions that can explain the relationship between the social life of Muslim communities and the formation of historical narratives passed down across generations.

The use of social theory deepens the methodological transformation by shifting the research focus toward the relationship between structure and agency. Contemporary Islamic historiography utilizes practice theory, structuration theory, and network analysis to explain the process of religious knowledge production (Al-Shuqairat et al., 2025). Scholars, rulers, merchants, and intellectual communities are understood as actors operating through various social structures that both constrain and open up opportunities for action. This perspective allows research into the development of schools of thought, the formation of educational institutions, the spread of religious authority, and intellectual mobility to be conducted through analysis of concrete social relations. Prosopographic studies, mapping of teacher-student networks, and analysis of relationships between centers of knowledge demonstrate that the transmission of Islamic ideas occurred through multidimensional interactions involving people, institutions, geographic space, and intellectual resources (S. S. Ahmed et al., 2025). This methodological shift broadens the object of historiographic research so that the dynamics of Islamic history are understood as the result of ongoing negotiations between individual actions and the social structures that shape the historical space of Muslim society.

Cultural history enriches the reconstruction of Islamic historiography through attention to representation, collective memory, symbolic language, and practices of meaning production. This approach focuses on how Muslim communities construct identity, legitimacy, and authority through narratives produced and passed down across generations (Al-Shuqairat et al., 2025). Historical analysis focuses on the process of constructing understandings of events. The study of symbolic language, narrative strategies, and ideological representations opens up opportunities to understand how historical memory is formed, maintained, and used to support specific social interests. This approach broadens the range of research sources by incorporating material artifacts, religious architecture, calligraphy, visual manuscripts, and other cultural expressions that document the historical experiences of Muslim communities. Historical reconstruction then moves beyond political chronicles to an analysis of how historical meaning is produced and disseminated through various cultural media within specific social spaces.

The methodological transformation of post-orientalism is also reflected in the shift in focus to historical actors. Classical historiography tended to focus on rulers, political elites, and prominent scholars as the center of narratives (Aurell, 2021). The development of social historiography, microhistory, and subaltern studies has expanded attention to groups that previously lacked representation. Local communities, women, merchant networks, peripheral groups, Sufi communities, and ordinary people have been positioned as active actors shaping the development of Islamic history. This shift demands methodological changes related to the use of sources and research techniques. Oral traditions, local archives, economic documents, administrative records, material artifacts, and community cultural traces have become crucial sources for reconstructing the experiences of non-elite groups. This approach allows the identification of historical dynamics that are not always visible in official sources. The reconstruction of Islamic history has become more pluralistic by accounting for the diversity of social experiences that shaped the development of Muslim societies across regions and periods.

Contemporary methodological developments also demonstrate the integration of philology, historical anthropology, social theory, cultural history, and digital approaches. This integration creates a triangulation framework that allows researchers to examine sources at various levels of analysis. Philological rigor continues to serve to verify the authenticity and textual context of historical sources. Anthropological analysis helps explain the social practices underlying narrative production. Social theory provides tools for understanding the relationships between actors and structures, while cultural history explains the formation of meaning, representation, and collective memory. The use of digital methods such as intellectual network mapping, manuscript metadata analysis, and visualization of scholarly mobility expands the capabilities of contemporary research in Islamic historiography. This integrative model enables historical reconstruction by combining source verification, cultural interpretation, social analysis, and exploration of broad historical data that would otherwise be unattainable through a single approach.

The Production of Historical Knowledge within the Framework of Global Islamic Studies

The production of Islamic historical knowledge within the framework of global Islamic studies stems from a fundamental shift in how we understand historical space, historical actors, and the process of constructing narratives of the past. Global Islamic studies views Islam as a historical configuration shaped by interregional connectivity, human movement, the circulation of texts, and the exchange of intellectual practices across political and cultural boundaries (Ringer, 2022). This perspective broadens the unit of historiographic analysis from territorial boundaries to the network of relationships connecting various Muslim communities over time. This shift results in an epistemological reconstruction of Islamic

historiography, which previously tended to operate through fixed spatial categories and rigid civilizational boundaries. Post-orientalist historiography treats relations, interactions, and circulation as the primary categories of analysis, thereby understanding Islamic history as a process of social world formation through interregional connections (Wahid, 2025). This framework allows exploration of historical connections obscured by the dominance of regional and national narratives, which fragment Muslim experiences into discrete units of study.

This shift in historiographic orientation is closely related to the development of global history, connected history, and transnational approaches, which shift historians' attention from isolated entities to processes of historical connection. Global history explains patterns of interaction across regions on a broad scale (Scarfi & Andrade, 2023), while connected history traces concrete encounters that lead to the exchange of ideas, institutions, and social practices between communities (Biedermann, 2021). A transnational perspective complements both by analyzing the mobility of actors, documents, and knowledge across national and regional boundaries (Tedeschi, Vorobeva, & Jauhiainen, 2022). The integration of these three approaches has transformed the way Islamic history is written, as the research focuses on the relational processes that shaped the intellectual dynamics of the Muslim community. Post-orientalist historiography utilizes this framework to identify the pathways of the circulation of ideas, the formation of scholarly authority, and the changes in religious concepts that emerged through ongoing interactions between various centers of Islamic learning.

The mobility of knowledge is a key mechanism enabling the formation of a global historiography of Islam. Knowledge undergoes selection, adaptation, reinterpretation, and negotiation as it enters different social environments (Salem, 2021). The travels of scholars, trade, migration, diplomacy, and the movement of manuscripts created a space for interaction that transformed the meaning of religious concepts and intellectual traditions. This perspective shifts the understanding of historical sources from stand-alone textual artifacts to products of social relations that record the circulation of knowledge. Historiographic analysis traces the transmission routes, contexts of use, communities of readers, and structures of authority that enabled these sources to gain legitimacy. The production of historical knowledge is then understood as the result of the interaction between the mobility of actors, the transfer of ideas, and changing social contexts that reshaped the meaning of knowledge as it moved across Muslim regions.

The intellectual networks of scholars provided the institutional foundation for the formation of a transregional space of Islamic knowledge. Teacher-student relationships, the tradition of *ijāza* (Islamic diplomacy), scholarly correspondence, educational networks, and the circulation of manuscripts formed an epistemic community that connected various centers of Islamic learning. The function of these networks was not limited to channels for distributing knowledge; rather, they served

as mechanisms for producing scholarly authority that determined the legitimacy of interpretations, the validity of sources, and the recognition of specific scholarly works. Global Islamic historiography employs a network analysis approach to reconstruct these patterns of relationships, enabling an understanding of the development of ideas through a structure of connectivity that transcends geographical boundaries (Al-Shuqairat et al., 2025). This approach demonstrates that the formation of Islamic intellectual traditions occurred through collaboration, competition, negotiation, and selection among actors and scholarly institutions.

Power relations play a crucial role in the formation of global Islamic historiography. Intellectual networks do not always reflect equal relations, as the distribution of knowledge authority is influenced by access to educational institutions, political patronage, economic resources, and the social position of the actors involved (Umar et al., 2025). The production of historical knowledge occurs through a process of negotiation that determines which ideas are accepted, disseminated, or dismissed (Araújo, 2025). Post-orientalist historiography advances a more critical analysis of these mechanisms by positioning Muslim communities as historical subjects who actively shape knowledge, while simultaneously acknowledging internal hierarchies within Islamic intellectual spaces (Ali, 2025). This approach avoids romanticizing networks of *'ulamā'* as homogeneous and harmonious spaces of exchange. Attention to power relations enables more accurate historical reconstruction by revealing how scholarly legitimacy is shaped through interactions among social structures, scholarly institutions, and knowledge-production practices that developed across various historical contexts.

The transformation of global Islamic historiography is also underpinned by institutional changes that influence how historical knowledge is produced, verified, and disseminated. International archives, manuscript digitization, cross-border academic collaboration, transregional research centers, and the development of digital humanities have expanded access to sources and accelerated the exchange of methodological perspectives (Chaturvedi & Saxena, 2026). This knowledge infrastructure enables researchers to connect sources previously scattered across regions, thereby reconstructing difficult-to-recognize historical connections with greater precision. Historiographic production utilizes data corpora that reflect the interconnectedness of the Islamic world at various scales. These institutional changes have also encouraged the emergence of interdisciplinary approaches that combine intellectual history, network analysis, mobility studies, and the sociology of knowledge to produce more comprehensive interpretations of the dynamics of Islamic history.

A key characteristic of post-orientalist Islamic historiography is its ability to integrate various levels of analysis into a coherent interpretative framework. This approach connects local experiences with global processes without losing the specificity of each historical context. Intellectual traditions that developed in a

region are understood as part of a broader network of relationships, allowing exploration of changes in ideas through interaction, adaptation, and transformation across regions. Global Islamic historiography does not seek to construct a uniform universal narrative, but rather to reconstruct the complex relationships that shaped the development of Muslim societies. The focus of research shifts to the dynamics of concept circulation, the formation of scholarly authority, the exchange of methodologies, and encounters between communities that produce new configurations of knowledge. This perspective expands the analytical capacity of Islamic historiography to explain historical changes that cannot be understood through narrow regional or national approaches.

Conclusion

The reconstruction of post-orientalist Islamic historiography confirms a fundamental shift in the production of historical knowledge from a paradigm centered on philological-positivistic readings to a reflective, pluralistic, and interconnected epistemological framework across regions. Key findings demonstrate the emergence of a new historiographical paradigm that positions historical sources, intellectual actors, mobility networks, and Muslim social experiences as interacting elements, so that the authority of knowledge is no longer concentrated on external perspectives but rather constructed through dialogical relationships between sources, between scholarly traditions, and between historical spaces. This paradigm broadens the theoretical foundations of global Islamic studies by integrating postcolonial perspectives, transnational history, and interdisciplinary approaches, resulting in a more inclusive and contextual reading of Islamic history. Practical implications are evident in strengthening the methodology of Islamic historical research, diversifying the use of sources, and developing a contemporary Islamic studies curriculum. The limitations of this study lie in the dominance of conceptual literature analysis, the lack of empirical verification of specific historical cases, and the lack of coverage of the variety of historiographic experiences in non-Arab Muslim regions. Future research agendas should be directed towards cross-regional comparative studies, the exploration of archives and alternative sources, the mapping of global intellectual networks, and the use of digital historiography to test the operationalization of the post-orientalist paradigm using broader empirical evidence.

Acknowledgments

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Author Contribution Statement

HA initiated the research concept, developed the research design, conducted the data analysis, wrote the main draft of the manuscript, coordinated the revision process, and served as the corresponding author. AAM contributed to data collection and validation, literature search, and review of the manuscript's substance. MN

played a role in interpreting the research results, refining the analysis, and editing the manuscript's content to align with the research objectives. SK contributed to the evaluation of the methodology, checking the consistency of the argumentation, verifying citations and references, and final review of the manuscript before it was approved for publication. All authors read, approved, and are accountable for the final version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

This manuscript contains no conflicts of interest whatsoever, whether financial, professional, institutional, or personal, that could influence the preparation, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of the research results. The entire manuscript was prepared independently, in accordance with the principles of academic integrity and scientific objectivity.

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