



Islamophobia and the Construction of Global Historiography: A Critical Analysis of the Representation of Islamic History in International Discourse

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Abstract

The rise in Islamophobic incidents following 21st-century geopolitical events has sparked debate about the representation of Islamic history in global historiography. Several studies have highlighted the dominance of conflict-oriented interpretive frameworks, but the relationship between Islamophobia, historical source selection, and the formation of global narratives has rarely been systematically examined. This study aims to identify patterns of representation of Islamic history, explain the mechanisms of historiographic construction, and examine the epistemological implications of Islamophobia in international historical literature. This literature review employs a qualitative approach, drawing on critical historiography and critical discourse analysis. The research corpus includes historiographic works published between 2001 and 2025, selected based on thematic relevance, citation influence, and a focus on global Islamic history. The analysis was conducted in the following stages: narrative classification, terminology identification, argumentation pattern tracing, dominant theme mapping, and epistemological framework interpretation. The results reveal three main tendencies: the dominance of narratives of conflict and Islamic political expansion; the marginalization of the intellectual, scientific, economic, and institutional contributions of the Islamic world; and the use of terminology that associates Islam with security threats and the clash of civilizations. The analysis also uncovered source selection

practices that focused on Euro-Atlantic perspectives, neglected transregional networks of knowledge transmission, and limited use of Islamic primary sources. These patterns of representation reinforce the reproduction of stereotypes and narrow understanding of the complex history of Islamic civilization. These findings indicate the significant role of historiographical construction in shaping global perceptions of Islamic history and underscore the urgency of a reflexive, multi-perspective, and decolonial approach in contemporary historiographical studies.

Keywords: Islamophobia; Global Historiography; Islamic History; Discourse Analysis; Critical Historiography

Abstrak

Meningkatnya insiden Islamofobia pasca peristiwa geopolitik abad ke-21 memicu perdebatan mengenai representasi sejarah Islam dalam historiografi global. Sejumlah kajian menyoroti dominasi kerangka interpretatif yang berorientasi pada konflik, namun relasi antara Islamofobia, seleksi sumber sejarah, dan pembentukan narasi global masih jarang dikaji secara sistematis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi pola representasi sejarah Islam, menjelaskan mekanisme konstruksi historiografis, serta menelaah implikasi epistemologis Islamofobia dalam literatur sejarah internasional. Penelitian kepustakaan ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode historiografi kritis dan analisis wacana kritis. Korpus penelitian mencakup karya historiografi terbitan 2001–2025 yang dipilih berdasarkan kriteria relevansi tema, pengaruh sitasi, serta fokus pada sejarah Islam global. Analisis dilakukan melalui tahapan klasifikasi narasi, identifikasi terminologi, penelusuran pola argumentasi, pemetaan tema dominan, dan interpretasi kerangka epistemologis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga kecenderungan utama: dominasi narasi konflik dan ekspansi politik Islam; marginalisasi kontribusi intelektual, ilmiah, ekonomi, dan institusional dunia Islam; serta penggunaan terminologi yang mengasosiasikan Islam dengan ancaman keamanan dan benturan peradaban. Analisis juga menemukan praktik seleksi sumber yang berpusat pada perspektif Euro-Atlantik, pengabaian jaringan transmisi ilmu lintas kawasan, serta keterbatasan penggunaan sumber primer Islam. Pola representasi ini memperkuat reproduksi stereotip dan menyempitkan pemahaman tentang kompleksitas sejarah peradaban Islam. Temuan ini mengindikasikan peran signifikan konstruksi historiografis dalam pembentukan persepsi global terhadap sejarah Islam serta menegaskan urgensi pendekatan reflektif, multiperspektif, dan dekolonial dalam studi historiografi kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: Islamofobia; Historiografi Global; Sejarah Islam; Analisis Wacana; Historiografi Kritis

Introduction

The debate over the representation of Islamic history occupies a central position in the study of global historiography because it is closely related to the production of knowledge, power relations, and the formation of collective identities across civilizations. Global historiography is understood as the process of production, circulation, and legitimization of historical narratives through academic institutions, international media, educational curricula, and transnational knowledge networks (Drayton & Motadel, 2018). A postcolonial perspective views historical writing as a discursive practice influenced by ideological, political, and epistemological interests (Kirca, 2023). The orientalist framework introduced by

Edward Said explains the construction of Islam as “the Other” through categorizations of the exotic, irrational, and conflictual (Nebot & Boubrit, 2024). This pattern of representation emerges in various narratives of modern world history, particularly those related to Islamic expansion, the Crusades, the Ottoman Caliphate, and contemporary Middle Eastern political developments. The dominant narrative tends to emphasize conflict, violence, and civilizational backwardness while ignoring Islam’s contributions to the development of science, global trade, and cross-regional cultural exchange.

The rise in anti-Muslim sentiment over the past two decades demonstrates the close relationship between historical representations and public perceptions of Islam. A Pew Research Center report (2016) noted the persistence of negative views of Muslims in several European and North American countries, particularly following the events of September 11, 2001, and various geopolitical conflicts linked to Islamic identity. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2024) reported that 47% of Muslim respondents in Europe experienced discrimination in employment, education, public services, and social participation. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief (2021) identified the reinforcement of historical stereotypes as a key factor in the reproduction of global Islamophobia. Similar representations are also found in history textbooks, international media coverage, museum exhibitions, and political security discourses that link Islam to civilizational threats and extremism (Qaruty et al., 2024). This pattern demonstrates a mechanism of knowledge reproduction that transforms historical narratives into social prejudice. The urgency of this study is heightened because historiographical distortions have implications for curriculum development, the legitimacy of public policy, interfaith relations, and the quality of intercivilizational dialogue.

Previous studies have addressed Islamophobia from various perspectives, although the relationship between global historiography and the construction of public perception has rarely been examined integratively. Bichi (2020) demonstrates the dominance of orientalism in shaping the image of Islam as a problematic entity through cultural and literary representations. Latif (2024) identifies the role of global media and international politics in the reproduction of anti-Muslim stereotypes. Liu (2021) emphasizes the contribution of state policies and identity politics to the strengthening of Islamophobia in the West. Frydenlund (2024) reveals the link between the Islamophobia industry, economic interests, and networks of transnational actors. Donner (2021) offers a critical reinterpretation of early Islamic historical sources to correct traditional narratives. Maltese (2021) analyzes the biased representation of Islam in world history textbooks and finds a dominant Eurocentric perspective. Despite enriching the discourse on Islamophobia and Islamic history, some studies remain fragmented. Orientalist studies focus more on cultural representations; media research emphasizes the dynamics of

contemporary communication; identity politics studies prioritize public policy; while Islamic historiography research tends to concentrate on the reconstruction of historical events. The theoretical gap arises from the limited analysis of the epistemological mechanisms linking the production of global historiography to the reproduction of Islamophobia across knowledge institutions. The empirical gap is evident in the limited number of studies on the simultaneous circulation of Islamic historical narratives across international academic spaces, global media, and world history curricula.

This research formulates four main questions: how global historiography shapes representations of Islamic history; how Islamophobia influences the construction of Islamic historical narratives; how epistemological mechanisms operate; and how representations of Islamic history are reproduced through contemporary international discourse. The analysis focuses on narratives of Islamic history circulating through international academic publications, global media, and world history curricula post-September 11, 2001. The research aims to identify the knowledge structures that shape global historiography, explain how Islamophobia operates as an epistemological tool, analyze the mechanisms of the production of historiographic authority, and map the patterns of the reproduction of representations of Islamic history in transnational spaces. The research's main argument positions historiography as an arena of power relations that determine the legitimacy of historical knowledge. Islamophobia is positioned as an epistemological framework that influences the process of source selection, theme determination, event interpretation, and the formation of collective memory. The theoretical contribution can be the development of an analytical model that integrates theories of orientalism, representation, and global historiography to explain the relationship between historical knowledge and the reproduction of prejudice. Practical contributions include providing a conceptual foundation for developing a more inclusive history curriculum, strengthening media literacy, formulating more balanced educational policies, and fostering intercivilizational dialogue.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a critical historiographical design, combined in a targeted manner with a Foucaultian-based genealogical critical discourse analysis, to examine the construction of Islamic historical representations in international discourse. The research focus is limited to the corpus of discourse produced between 2001 and 2025 to avoid anachronism and ensure traceability of epistemic changes. Primary data include journal articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, reputable academic monographs, and documents from international institutions, while secondary data are used to strengthen the theoretical framework of orientalism and the politics of representation. Data selection was carried out through a PRISMA-based systematic literature review protocol using a Boolean

search strategy in the Scopus, JSTOR, and ProQuest databases, with inclusion criteria that required thematic relevance, a minimum citation index, and peer-reviewed status, while policy documents were treated as non-empirical discursive sources. Data were analyzed through inductive-deductive thematic coding stages, beginning with the identification of discourse units, actors in knowledge production, and historical contexts, followed by the mapping of intertextual relations across space and time. The validity of the analysis is maintained through triangulation of sources and an audit trail of the coding process, while interpretation is carried out to reveal the epistemic mechanisms that reproduce power relations and Islamophobic bias in global historiography in a systematic and replicable manner.

Results and Discussion

Genealogy of Global Historiography of Islam

The transformation of European knowledge since the Enlightenment has given rise to new ways of objectifying non-European societies through historical classification devices that link science, the state, and imperial expansion. Islam began to be positioned as an object of study that could be mapped, categorized, and reconstructed through modern epistemic standards developed within the European historical tradition (Tottoli, 2023). This situation created the conditions for the emergence of historiographic categories that were later considered natural in Islamic studies. A genealogical perspective demonstrates that concepts such as “Islamic civilization,” “the Muslim world,” or “the classical period of Islam” are not neutral categories that emerged spontaneously from historical facts, but rather products of intellectual construction formed through the relationship between the needs of colonial administration, the development of modern philology, and the search for the universality of human history (Masood & Arshad, 2023). This process resulted in Islam becoming a historical object understood through European conceptual tools, so that the boundaries of knowledge regarding the Muslim past were shaped from the outset by specific epistemic configurations.

The tradition of orientalism played a central role in the institutionalization of historical categories regarding Islam through the development of philology, textual criticism, and the study of Eastern languages. The main problem lies in the conceptual assumptions that accompanied its application. Textual criticism enabled the systematic reconstruction of chronology, while simultaneously generating a hierarchy of sources that placed written documents as the most reliable form of evidence (Backerra, 2024). Such epistemic preferences led to the marginalization of traditions of intellectual transmission, social memory, local chronicles, and the practices of knowledge lived within Muslim communities. Further consequences emerged through the establishment of a periodization that divided Islamic history into phases of expansion, prosperity, decline, and revival. This periodization emerged from a reflection of the nineteenth-century evolutionist paradigm, which viewed societal development as proceeding through linear stages (Davydov, 2020).

The resulting historical categories subsequently acquired scholarly status and continue to shape the interpretive framework of Islamic studies into the contemporary period.

The formation of modern Islamic historiography took place through a network of institutions linking universities, schools of Eastern languages, colonial institutions, imperial archives, and regional research centers. This institutional structure served a broader function than simply producing research, as it helped determine the scholarly authority that had the right to define the past of Muslim societies. Colonial archives provided the primary research material, while universities developed methodological standards governing the validity of historical interpretations. The relationship between archives and academic institutions resulted in a selection mechanism for knowledge that privileged certain sources while limiting the visibility of others. The dominant position of European scholarly institutions led to the interpretation of much of the historical experience of Muslim societies through the perspective of external observers (Seitakhmetova, Sagikyzy, & Turganbayeva, 2021). This situation demonstrates that modern Islamic historiography developed through the establishment of knowledge regimes that determined the objects, methods, and boundaries of legitimate interpretation.

The interpretive frameworks underpinning modern historiography extended the influence of European historical categories on readings of Muslim experiences. The concepts of the state, modernity, secularization, rationality, and progress were often used as universal analytical instruments to explain various forms of historical development (Becker, Rinado, & Guhin, 2023). The use of these categories had important consequences, as the experiences of Muslim societies were then measured against parameters rooted in European historical trajectories. Many historical phenomena were ultimately understood as successes or failures in following a particular developmental model. Such readings produced narratives that positioned the Islamic world as an aberration, a delay, or an unfinished form of development. The genealogy of historiography shows that the structure of interpretation has a role as important as empirical facts because the categories of analysis determine the types of reality that can be seen and described in historical narratives.

Major changes began to emerge in the mid-twentieth century, when several historians criticized the limitations of the classical orientalist model and introduced approaches that were more sensitive to social and economic dynamics and to transregional networks. The work of Marshall Hodgson (2002), Ira Lapidus (2002), Richard Bulliet (1994), and subsequent scholars prompted a shift in focus from elite political history to a more complex study of social interactions. The development of global history, connected history, and entangled history demonstrated the position of Muslim societies as active members of networks of knowledge exchange, trade, migration, and the formation of the Afro-Eurasian world (Olivella & Mostowlansky,

2023). This shift challenged long-held assumptions that positioned Islam as an isolated object or mere appendage of European history. Postcolonial criticism then broadened the debate by demonstrating the close relationship between knowledge production and power relations (Lumbard, 2024).

Despite widespread criticism of orientalism, many historical categories inherited from the nineteenth century persist in contemporary scholarship in more subtle forms. The golden age, decline, reformation, and transition to modernity are still frequently used as the primary framework for explaining Islamic history (Al-Shuqairat, Al-Maani, & Aldajah, 2025). Postcolonial critique helps explain this situation by focusing on the resilience of knowledge structures that have acquired long-term academic legitimacy. The influence of old categories is evident in the way research questions are formulated, sources are selected, and historical problems are constructed. Such epistemic traces reveal how historiography operates through the often unconscious reproduction of assumptions. A genealogical reading ultimately reveals that Islamic historiography is an arena for meaning-making, shaped by contestations among categories, institutions, and the authority of knowledge.

Islamophobia in Historiographical Narratives

Historiographic Islamophobia refers to patterns of historical representation that construct Islam as inherently different, problematic, or less compatible with normative categories associated with civilizational progress (Ponce, 2025). This understanding differs from academic critiques of Muslim events, actors, or institutions based on empirical evidence and methodological argumentation. Historical criticism remains a legitimate part of scholarly practice as long as it operates through source evaluation and contextual explanation. Islamophobia emerges when historical narratives transform diverse historical experiences into essential characteristics attributed to Islam as a whole (Qian, 2023). This analytical framework manifests itself through processes of essentialization, homogenization, and the construction of threat that attribute diverse social and political phenomena to fixed traits assumed to be inherent in Islamic tradition. Uenal et al. (2021) demonstrate that such representations operate through cultural mechanisms that render Islam not simply an object of historical explanation but rather a category assumed to explain itself.

The pattern of essentialization can be identified in the tendency of many global historical works to portray Muslim societies as homogeneous civilizational units, without accounting for the diversity of schools of thought, intellectual traditions, regional experiences, and evolving social configurations. The main problem lies in the omission of internal differentiation, which creates the impression of historical uniformity. Postcolonial critiques suggest that homogenization is a prerequisite for the formation of stereotypes, as empirical diversity is reduced to a single, stable identity (Matin, 2013). Works that interpret the political, cultural, and social behavior of Muslim societies through a single, religious logic tend to ignore the

complex relationships between religion, economics, ethnicity, social class, and local dynamics. As a result, Islam is positioned as the sole cause explaining a variety of different historical phenomena (Zencirci, 2021).

Another manifestation is seen in cultural determinism, which positions religion as the primary explanatory factor for almost all political dynamics in Muslim societies (Bahri et al., 2024). Historiography certainly has the right to consider religion an important variable when empirical evidence supports this conclusion. Problems arise when religion is used as a universal explanation without considering its interactions with political institutions, economic interests, elite competition, trade networks, and changing social structures. Ibrahim (2022) explains that cultural determinism operates through the assumption that the actions of Muslim actors can always be traced back to religious doctrine, while other factors are relegated to a secondary role. This narrative creates the impression that Muslim societies operate under a different historical logic from other societies, which are typically analyzed in terms of various social variables. Reducing historical complexity to a single dominant factor causes the Muslim experience to be read through a narrow interpretive framework and potentially reinforces assumptions about Islam's inability to adapt to social and institutional change.

Indicators of historiographical Islamophobia are also evident when conflict and violence are presented as inherent expressions of Islam, rather than as historical phenomena born of specific political conditions (Hidayatulloh, Anshar, & Hasan, 2025). The focus on war, military expansion, or dynastic conflict is not a methodological issue, as similar themes are present in the historiography of various civilizations. Problematic characteristics emerge when conflicts involving Muslim actors are interpreted as a natural consequence of Islamic teachings, whereas conflicts in other traditions are attributed to political, economic, or geopolitical factors. This imbalance in explanatory patterns results in differing standards for interpreting comparable historical objects. Critical discourse analysis demonstrates that representation operates through the selection of linguistic categories that directly link violence to religious identity. This relationship forms cognitive associations that place Islam in proximity to images of threat, aggression, and confrontation.

The narrative of Islamic decline provides another example of how historical hierarchies can be produced through seemingly neutral analytical categories. The thesis of Islamic decline is an interpretive device that often positions European experiences as a universal standard of development (Heiran-Nia, 2021). Such a position results in readings that assess Muslim societies by their proximity to or distance from a particular model of modernity. Blaydes and Paik's (2021) critique demonstrates that the linear assumption of progress fails to account for the diverse trajectories of social development across Muslim regions from the Middle Ages to the early modern era. The construct of stagnation becomes problematic when used

to signify civilizational inferiority and explain backwardness through the internal character of Islam. This logic shifts attention away from the factors of colonialism, global economic transformation, changing trade networks, and international political dynamics that have shaped the historical trajectories of Muslim societies. As a result, Islam is presented as the cause of decline, rather than as a tradition interacting with broader historical structures.

The representational effects of essentialization, cultural determinism, associations with violence, and narratives of stagnation do not stop at the level of historical texts. Research on collective memory and knowledge production shows that recurring narratives can shape the interpretive frameworks that readers use to understand particular social groups (Haas, Eskinazi, & Jodelet, 2025; Lopez, van Alphen, & Carmona, 2025). Historiography holds a crucial position because it is often considered to produce objective knowledge about the past. This epistemic status confers stronger legitimacy than political opinion or popular stereotypes. The reproduction of the image of Islam as a homogeneous, conflictual, and backward civilization has the potential to shape interpretive horizons that influence subsequent research agendas, source selection, and even the formulation of academic questions. This cycle of knowledge reproduction explains why some representations persist despite decades of methodological critique.

The reproductive character of Islamic representations is evident through the interaction between historiography, education, media, and policy discourses that adopt similar historical categories. This relationship demonstrates how categories that gain academic legitimacy tend to migrate across various arenas of knowledge production. Textbooks, popular works, historical documentaries, and even geopolitical narratives often utilize interpretive frameworks that have long circulated in academic literature. This cross-institutional circulation expands the reach of historical representations while strengthening the stability of their meanings. A study by de Moor and Wahlström (2019) shows that narrative adaptation often preserves the basic structure of interpretation, even as the terminology changes. This explains why equivalent conceptual transformations do not always accompany critiques of classical orientalism. Some old assumptions persist through new, more refined forms of representation that are more readily accepted as objective descriptions of Islamic history.

This analysis leads to a conceptualization of historiographical Islamophobia as a representational mechanism that operates through five interrelated stages: the homogenization of historical objects, the reduction of causality to religious identity, the selective association of Islam with violence, the construction of a civilizational hierarchy through narratives of stagnation, and the reproduction of interpretive categories through institutions of knowledge. This framework demonstrates that historiographical Islamophobia is not identical to critiques of Islamic history or

conflicts involving Muslim societies. Its primary focus is how narratives are constructed, categories are used, and historical meanings are produced.

Epistemological Mechanisms of Islamic Historical Representation

The interpretation of the Islamic past has always depended on validation regimes that determine which sources are acceptable as historical knowledge (Sirajudeen & Aminullahi, 2023). Foucault's archaeology of knowledge perspective demonstrates that archives are not neutral repositories of facts, but rather discursive spaces that shape the possibility of the emergence of certain objects of knowledge (Schmidgen, Dotzler, & Stein, 2023). Consequently, administrative archives, diplomatic reports, colonial records, and state documentation have acquired a privileged position because they conform to modern historiographic standards of evidence. This situation has resulted in an epistemic filtering process that makes Muslim historical experiences more visible when presented in formal documentation, while local chronicles, traditions of scholarly transmission, collective memory, and *sanad* (chains of lineage) networks experience reduced academic visibility.

This epistemic filtering operates through conceptual categories that govern the reading of sources. Historical facts never exist without interpretation, as each piece of evidence is understood through analytical tools that define what is considered relevant, rational, or significant (Italia, 2018). The critiques of Talal Asad (1993), Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000), and Walter Dignolo (2011) demonstrate the universality of modern categories, born from specific historical experiences and then projected as general explanatory frameworks. When the concepts of the state, secularization, bureaucratic rationalization, or institutional differentiation are used as primary parameters, Islamic history is often read through developmental measures derived from European trajectories. Consequently, the caliphate, transregional networks of the '*ulamā*' (Islamic scholars), the legal authority of the madhhab (schools of thought), and non-state political structures are often interpreted as forms that do not yet fully meet the criteria of modern institutions.

The operation of interpretive categories has further consequences in the formation of historical visibility and invisibility. Phenomena that fit the modernization framework tend to appear as indicators of progress, while social configurations that operate through a different logic are often positioned as anomalous (Kusano & Jami, 2022). Postcolonial critiques explain this situation through the concept of the colonality of knowledge, which operates by structuring explanatory hierarchies (Gani & Khan, 2024). Islamic educational networks, the practice of transmitting knowledge based on *sanad*, and religious authorities operating across political boundaries are often reduced to regional variations of a universal developmental model. Such reductions result in a narrowing of interpretive horizons as historical complexity is forced into pre-existing categories. The relationship between sources and categories ultimately shapes a particular

pattern of representation of Islam, one that reflects the interpreter's knowledge structure rather than the diversity of historical experiences of Muslim communities.

The legitimacy of historical representation is further determined by the structure of academic authority that governs who has the right to produce authentic knowledge. Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) perspective on the scientific landscape helps explain that the validity of knowledge is determined not only by the quality of argumentation but also by institutional positions that generate symbolic authority. Research universities, reputable journals, academic publishers, citation indexes, and peer-review networks form recognition mechanisms that determine which works attain primary reference status. These relationships create an epistemic hierarchy that influences the global circulation of interpretations of Islamic history. Narratives originating from centers of knowledge production with high academic capital are more likely to become international reference standards than perspectives developed in peripheral intellectual circles. This situation demonstrates the close relationship between power and knowledge, as scientific authority functions as a selection mechanism that determines which interpretations achieve legitimacy, are reproduced, and sustain themselves over the long term in academia.

The structure of scientific legitimacy operates through a process of layered validation. The first stage occurs when sources are selected based on specific evidential standards. The next stage emerges through the use of interpretive categories that guide the reading of facts. The next stage operates through academic institutions that verify the interpretations through formal scientific procedures. Each layer produces additional filters that influence the final form of historical representation. Miranda Fricker's (2007) concept of epistemic injustice helps explain how some knowledge traditions lose authority not because of a lack of information, but because of imbalances in the structure of recognition. Scholarly literature, local chronicles, and the intellectual memory of Muslim communities often face legitimacy barriers when evaluated against criteria designed for different types of evidence. This situation suggests that historical representations emerge solely from a validation process that determines who is trusted, which sources are considered credible, and which frameworks are accepted as scientific explanations.

The debate over the validity of historical knowledge becomes even more complex when confronted with the Islamic intellectual tradition, which has its own set of verification tools. Jonathan Brown (2009) and Wael Hallaq (2001) demonstrate that *sanad*, scholarly reputation, continuity of transmission, and networks of scholarly authority serve as evaluation instruments that regulate the credibility of information. This system is not identical to the modern model of document criticism, but it cannot be reduced to a non-historical practice. While modern historiography treats written documents as the primary measure of validity, some forms of knowledge developed through intellectual relations and scholarly transmission have been methodologically marginalized.

The relationship among sources, interpretive categories, and academic authority demonstrates that representations of Islamic history are shaped by mechanisms far more complex than mere fact-gathering. Each stage produces a filtering process that determines which experiences gain visibility, which explanations are deemed plausible, and which actors have the authority to define the past. This analysis leads to a conceptual model of historiographic representation composed of three interrelated mechanisms: source filtering, validity hierarchization, and the reproduction of interpretive authority. Source filtering determines the objects of knowledge that can emerge. Validity hierarchization determines the forms of evidence that gain legitimacy. The interaction among these three mechanisms explains why certain representations of Islam have persisted across generations despite mounting methodological criticism.

Reproduction of Islamic Historical Discourse in Contemporary Global Discourse

Islamic historiographic literature has gained global resilience through the canonization of knowledge, which occurs through citation networks, scholarly publications, international indexing, and the establishment of standard references. Wahid's (2025) study shows that several classic orientalist and post-orientalist works remain central to international citation networks, allowing their interpretive categories to be reproduced across academic generations. This mechanism explains how concepts such as the decline of Islamic civilization, the modernization of Muslim societies, or the relationship between Islam and violence remain dominant analytical frameworks despite widespread methodological criticism. The circulation of knowledge occurs through a cumulative process, as new research tends to reference works that have already achieved high legitimacy. This phenomenon creates what is known as canon formation: the development of a corpus of knowledge that determines research themes, objects of study, and historical categories deemed relevant to understanding the Islamic past globally (Oberauer, 2022).

The reproductive nature of historiography becomes increasingly apparent as academic categories move into the public communication arena through expert networks, policy research institutions, media organizations, and the global knowledge industry. This transfer occurs through a process of conceptual translation that transforms academic terminology into language accessible to the public. Several studies on post-September 11th news coverage have shown that the use of historical analogies regarding the conflict between the Islamic world and the West often relies on categories long established in academic literature (Kumar, 2010; Silva, 2017; Zelizer, 2018). Such framing practices reduce historical complexity to a narrative more easily recognized by a wider audience. The relationship between historiography and the media, therefore, cannot be understood as a direct relationship between research and news publication, but rather as a series of

mediations involving experts, commentators, policy institutions, and media organizations that function as translators of historical knowledge into the international public sphere.

The digital ecosystem extends this reproduction process through mechanisms different from those of conventional media. Search engines, online encyclopedias, video platforms, social media, and algorithmic recommendation systems serve as knowledge-distribution infrastructures that determine the visibility of a historical narrative. A study by Adriaansen and Smit (2025) shows that the frequency of access, network connectivity, and content popularity influence the likelihood that an interpretation reappears in the digital space. This situation often results in established representations of Islamic history gaining structural advantages due to greater availability, frequent reference, and greater accessibility for users. Content on the caliphate, the Crusades, extremism, or relations between Islam and the West, for example, tends to have a much higher circulation rate than intellectual history, trade networks, or the scholarly contributions of Muslim societies. This situation demonstrates how contemporary historiographical reproduction is increasingly influenced by the logic of digital visibility that operates through algorithmic selection.

The international education curriculum serves as another arena of reproduction, linking academic historiography to the formation of a new generation's historical consciousness. World history textbooks, the International Baccalaureate program, international relations curricula, and various world history modules often employ periodizations and categories derived from dominant historiographical traditions (Powel, 2020). This educational influence does not operate through a linear process of indoctrination, as some reproductionist approaches assume, but rather through the normalization of interpretive categories that are continually used in learning. Students still have room for intellectual critique and negotiation, but the conceptual choices available from the outset shape the initial boundaries of historical reading. This situation explains why terms such as golden age, decline, reform, or transition to modernity persist in various academic circles.

The international political arena exhibits distinct forms of reproduction, as history serves as a source of legitimacy for security narratives, collective identities, and global policies. Kalhousová, Finkel, and Kocián (2024) demonstrate that political actors frequently use historical analogies to explain contemporary threats. The rhetoric of the war on terrorism, debates about Muslim migration to Europe, and discourses about the clash of civilizations demonstrate the use of representations of Islamic history as symbolic legitimation tools. The function of history in this context is not to produce an accurate reconstruction of the past, but rather to provide an interpretive framework that explains current political action. This process results in selective reproduction, as only certain historical aspects receive repeated attention.

Consequently, historical categories that have developed in academic literature are transformed into political instruments that influence global perceptions of Islam's place in the contemporary international order.

The interaction among academia, media, education, digital spaces, and politics shapes collective cognitive schemas that influence how society understands Islamic history. Chajuan Hu's (2024) study demonstrates that public perceptions are formed through the accumulation of representations that circulate across various institutions of knowledge. The influence of historiography emerges when categories that initially operated as academic concepts become naturalized as knowledge. This transformation explains why some historical assumptions persist despite intense criticism in scholarly circles. The power of reproduction can limit the spectrum of interpretations considered plausible. This process results in long-term stability of meaning as persistent narratives gain a dominant position in shaping the historical imagination of global society (Lopez et al., 2025).

The phenomenon of reproduction does not always take the form of an identical repetition of old narratives. Narrative adaptation allows historiographic categories to be modified to suit evolving global issues without losing their primary interpretive structure (Al-Shuqairat et al., 2025). Narratives of the decline of Islamic civilization, for example, are often reformulated into debates about the deficits of democracy, the limitations of political institutions, or the problems of global integration. The concept of the clash of civilizations has also been transformed into discourses of transnational security and global radicalism. Such changes demonstrate that a category's sustainability depends on the ability of interpretative frameworks to adapt to new contexts. The perspective of traveling concepts helps explain this process, as historical meanings move across institutions, regions, and knowledge regimes while undergoing semantic adjustments. Narrative adaptation therefore becomes a crucial mechanism that allows certain representations to survive despite changes in language and contexts of use.

This analysis leads to a conceptual model of historiographic reproduction composed of five interrelated mechanisms: canonization of knowledge, translation across institutions, digital visibility selection, narrative adaptation, and cognitive internalization. Canonization determines which historical categories acquire academic legitimacy. Translation across institutions enables these categories to migrate into media, education, and policy. Digital visibility selection reinforces the distribution of certain representations through algorithmic infrastructure. Narrative adaptation maintains the relevance of historical categories when confronted with contemporary issues. Cognitive internalization explains how public perception forms through repeated exposure to the same interpretations. This framework offers a more specific explanation of the relationship between historiography, the global circulation of knowledge, and the formation of perceptions about Islam. The model's primary contribution is its ability to explain why certain historical

representations persist across generations despite the proliferation of academic critiques and the generation of increasingly diverse alternative readings.

Conclusion

The representation of Islamic history in international discourse has been proven to be shaped through historiographical practices that place the historical experience of Muslims within European-oriented interpretive categories, particularly through source selection, historical periodization, the construction of conflict themes, and the granting of greater authority to Western academic narratives. This pattern simplifies the diversity of Islamic historical experience and reinforces the image of Islam as an entity synonymous with backwardness, political tension, or resistance to modernity. These findings demonstrate the relationship between global historiographic construction and the reproduction of Islamophobic perceptions at the discursive level, while also broadening the study of critical historiography by emphasizing the role of epistemological power relations in the formation of historical knowledge. Practical implications include the need to evaluate historical literature, develop more inclusive curricula, and enhance cross-cultural historiographical literacy. Limitations include a focus on a specific literary corpus, a limited scope of academic discourse, and an interpretative approach that has not yet addressed the empirical impact of Islamic historical representations on public perception. The next research agenda can focus on comparing Western and non-Western historiographies, analyzing global history textbooks, and integrating comparative methods and reception studies to examine how historiographical narratives shape social perceptions of Islam.

Acknowledgments

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Author Contribution Statement

HNA contributed to the conceptualization of the study, the development of the methodology, data analysis, the writing of the initial draft, substantive revisions, and correspondence regarding the manuscript. AMQ contributed to the literature review, validation of the analysis, and editing of the manuscript. MIR contributed to data collection and processing, interpretation of the findings, and refinement of the discussion. AHZ contributed to critical review, verification of arguments, and academic editing. DJ contributed to the final validation of the manuscript, alignment of the writing structure, and approval of the final version submitted for publication.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research, manuscript preparation, analysis, interpretation of the results, and the decision to submit this article for publication were not influenced by any personal, professional, institutional, or financial interests that could potentially create a conflict of interest. All authors also declare that they have no relationships or affiliations that could affect the objectivity,

integrity, or independence of the research. Therefore, this manuscript does not contain any conflicts of interest.

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