

## **The Orientalist Discourse of Daniel Pipes: A Critical Evaluation**

Nabiel Almusawa<sup>1</sup>, Daud Rasyid<sup>2</sup>, Siti Atieqoh<sup>3</sup>

---

### **Abstract**

This study critically examines the thoughts and perspectives of Daniel Pipes, a prominent modern American Orientalist known for his controversial views on Islam and the Muslim world. The research analyzes the ideological underpinnings, methodological approaches, and political motivations that shape Pipes' discourse, particularly in post-9/11 Western perceptions of Islam. Employing a critical discourse analysis framework and drawing upon postcolonial theory—especially the insights of Edward Said—this study identifies recurring patterns of essentialism, securitization, and cultural superiority in Pipes' writings. The research argues that while Pipes positions himself as a scholar of political Islam, his works often blur the lines between academic inquiry and ideological advocacy. This critique contributes to broader discussions on Orientalism in contemporary settings and raises questions about the role of scholarship in perpetuating or challenging Islamophobic narratives in Western media and policy.

**Keywords:** Daniel Pipes, Orientalism, Islamophobia, critical discourse analysis, postcolonial theory, political Islam

---

### **1. Introduction**

The discourse on Islam and the Muslim world in the Western scholarly tradition has long been a tug-of-war between academic, ideological, and political interests (Saputra et al., 2023). One of the figures who is quite prominent in shaping public perception and Western policy towards Islam in

---

<sup>1</sup> Doctoral Candidate in Da'wah Science at As-Syafi'iyah Islamic University, Faculty of Islamic Studies, [nabiel.almusawa@gmail.com](mailto:nabiel.almusawa@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University-Jakarta, Assigned at As Syafiiyah Islamic University, Jakarta. Professor, [daud.rasyid@staff.uinjkt.ac.id](mailto:daud.rasyid@staff.uinjkt.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup> Doctoral Candidate in Da'wah Science at As-Syafi'iyah Islamic University, Faculty of Islamic Studies, [siti081@brin.go.id](mailto:siti081@brin.go.id), [atieqbasyuni@yahoo.co.id](mailto:atieqbasyuni@yahoo.co.id)

the contemporary era is Daniel Pipes. He is known as a modern orientalist, historian, and political analyst from the United States, whose thoughts focus largely on the study of political Islam (Islamism), Islamic history, and American foreign policy toward the Middle East region (Pipes, 2017a). His ideas reflect a conservative ideological tendency that views Islamism as a serious threat to the values of democracy and the security of the Western world. Daniel Pipes was born in Boston in 1949.

He completed his undergraduate and doctoral education at Harvard University. His dissertation discussing the military system in the Islamic world became the basis for his first book, *Slave Soldiers and Islam* (1981), which strengthened his reputation as an academic in Islamic studies. He also lived in Cairo to study Arabic and Islamic culture directly (Pipes, 1981). In addition to teaching at prestigious universities such as Harvard and the University of Chicago, in 1994, he founded the Middle East Forum (MEF), a think tank that is active in spreading conservative views on the Islamic world, as well as publishing the journal *Middle East Quarterly* (Pipes & Chadha, 2006).

Although Pipes claims to be able to distinguish between Islam as a religion and Islamism as a political ideology, many have criticized that this boundary is often blurred in practice. His thinking is considered to represent Islam as a single entity and equates the political expression of Muslims with radicalism. This criticism is in line with Edward Said's view in his book *Orientalism* (Said, 1978) which emphasizes that Western studies of the Eastern world are often framed by dominant and biased perspectives. Said said that Orientalism is not merely a scientific study but also a tool of power that depicts the East as passive, irrational, and inferior.

Further development of this thinking gave birth to the concept of neo-orientalism. This concept refers to a new form of Orientalism that not only depicts Islam as "the Other" but also as a threat to global security (Kerboua, 2016). In this context, Daniel Pipes' ideas, especially after the tragedy of September 11, 2001, are often considered to represent neo-orientalist views. Figures such as Ziauddin Sardar and Hamid Dabashi have criticized that this approach encourages the birth of Islamophobia and has an impact on discriminatory state policies against Muslims.

This research is important because it contributes to a critical study of contemporary orientalist discourse, especially about the formation of Western political ideology and policies towards the Islamic world. By focusing on the thoughts of Daniel Pipes, an influential but controversial figure, this research aims to understand how an intellectual's views can shape public perception and state policies. This study seeks to analyze how narratives from academic circles and policy institutions portray Islam in the eyes of Western society. Furthermore, this research seeks to explain how Orientalism, which has been considered a theoretical study, can turn into a real political and security strategy, especially in the United States' foreign and domestic policies towards the Islamic world.

In addition, this research also aims to broaden academic discussions on issues such as Islamophobia, liberal values, and the tension between security interests and ideological bias. By making Daniel Pipes a case study, it is hoped that it can be revealed how the role of an influential intellectual in shaping intercultural and interreligious relations in the global era. To answer these questions, this study has three main objectives. First, to analyze Pipes' criticism of Islam and Islamism. Second, to examine his views on the relationship between Islam and Western democracy. Third, to reveal the influence of his thoughts on the policies and attitudes of Western countries towards the Islamic world, especially the United States.

In addition, this research also aims to broaden academic discussions on issues such as Islamophobia, liberal values, and the tension between security interests and ideological bias. By making Daniel Pipes a case study, it is hoped that it can be revealed how the role of an influential intellectual in shaping intercultural and interreligious relations in the global era. To answer these questions, this study has three main objectives. First, to analyze Pipes' criticism of Islam and Islamism. Second, to examine his views on the relationship between Islam and Western democracy. Third, to reveal the influence of his thoughts on the policies and attitudes of Western countries towards the Islamic world, especially the United States. Through this study, it is hoped that a more complete understanding can be obtained regarding the role of modern orientalist thought—as represented by Pipes—in shaping the Western world's perspective on Islam. This is important for building a fairer and more critical dialogue between the Islamic world and the West in facing today's global challenges.

## **2. Methodology**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a critical discourse analysis (CDA) method to deeply evaluate Daniel Pipes' thoughts as a modern orientalist. The main focus of this approach is to examine how language, narrative, and discourse construction are used by Pipes in framing Islam and the Muslim world, and to reveal the ideology hidden behind his texts. This approach also allows researchers to critique the power relations and knowledge structures that underlie Pipes' thoughts. The analytical steps in this study are carried out in stages. First, the author identifies the main discourse in Daniel Pipes' writings, by looking at how he describes Islam and Muslims in relation to the Western world. After that, an analysis is carried out on the language and choice of words used, to understand how Pipes conveys his views and inserts ideological messages in his texts. Furthermore, the author relates the contents of the writing to the social and political context at the time the work was created, such as the global political situation and the geopolitical background post-9/11. Finally, a critical evaluation is carried out to assess the impact of Pipes' thoughts, especially in forming negative perceptions of Islam and influencing the foreign policies of Western countries.

### **3. Findings**

Discussions of Orientalism, particularly in the West, regarding the Islamic world are still considered relevant today. Although the term Orientalism itself has begun to shift to Islamic Studies, since Edward Said questioned the need for Occidentalism to balance Eastern views of the West (Said, 2014). Daniel Pipes is an American historian and political commentator known for his views on Islam and Islamism. Daniel Pipes is also a controversial figure due to his views on Islam, the Middle East, and US foreign policy (Pipes, 2017c). Here are some of the main controversies surrounding his thoughts on Islam.

#### **Distinguishing between Islam as a Religion and Islamism as a Political Ideology**

Pipes consistently distinguish between Islam as a religion and Islamism as a political ideology. According to him, Islam is a religion that has existed for 14 centuries, while Islamism is a totalitarian ideology that emerged less than a century ago. He emphasizes that the main problem is not Islam itself, but Islamism as an extreme manifestation of Islam. Pipes states that Islamism is the problem, but moderate Islam is the solution (Pipes, 2013). He also believes that Islamism is a response to the principles of democracy and equality in the Western world. The clear difference between Islamism and traditional Islam is that Islamism emerged in the 1920s and is based on the idea that Muslims can become powerful and virtuous if they adhere to Islamic law in a comprehensive and comprehensive manner (Pipes, 2000). For more than 200 years, Muslims have taken many steps to learn what is right. They have experimented with various answers. One of these was liberal European business, such as in Britain and France, which continued until around 1920. Another attempt was to emulate evil European nations, such as Russia and Germany, and that lasted until 1970. The goal of the third business was to return to whatever was seen as the foundation of Islamic values during the early years of this century, such as the implementation of Islamic law. Islamism is the contemporary phenomenon that places Muslims at the forefront of world civilization (Grinin et al., 2019).

#### **Islamism as a Threat to Western Values of Democracy and Freedom**

Pipes views Islamism as a significant threat to democratic values and freedom in the Western world. In 1995, he wrote that, unbeknownst to most Westerners, a war had been unilaterally declared on Europe and the United States. After the events of September 11, 2001, in his book (Pipes, 1995), Pipes emphasized that militant Islamism had been growing for a quarter of a century and continued to grow, challenging the view that the threat had diminished. He also argued that Islamism was a threat to Western civilization and must be confronted with firm policies. He therefore supported stricter security policies,

including surveillance of Muslim communities in the West, and criticized immigration policies that he believed opened the door to radicalization (Pipes, 1990). Pipes was also known for opposing the construction of the Ground Zero mosque in New York after the 9/11 attacks, considering it a symbol of “radical Islam's victory.”

He also supports strict surveillance of Muslims in the United States, which many consider discriminatory (Pipes, 2017b). Various human rights organizations and Muslim groups accuse him of spreading Islamophobia. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) accuses him of promoting discriminatory policies against Muslims in the US (Pipes & Chadha, 2006). Pipes himself denies these accusations, saying that he only criticizes Islamism, not Islam as a religion. Pipes founded a project called “Campus Watch,” which aims to monitor academics in the US who are considered “pro-Islam” or overly critical of US policy in the Middle East. Critics view this project as a form of “witch hunt” against Muslim and liberal academics (Cooke, 2017).

### **Criticism of Overly Soft Policies towards Islamist Groups**

Pipes criticize the policies of Western governments and institutions, which he believes are too lenient or permissive toward Islamist groups. He highlights that many Western academics and media outlets adopt an apologetic stance toward Islamism and criticizes Middle East studies, which he deems biased and insufficiently critical of the Islamist threat. Pipes also criticize organizations such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), which he claims has ties to terrorist groups and acts as an apologist for Hezbollah and Hamas (Pipes, 1985).

Through this view, Pipes emphasizes the need for a tougher policy in dealing with Islamism in order to protect democratic values and freedom in the Western world (Hashemi, 2023). He is also skeptical of democratization in the Arab world, arguing that democratic transitions often lead to chaos or the strengthening of Islamist groups, because he considers authoritarianism in some Arab countries to be more stable than failed experiments with democracy (Yom, 2008). He also believes that conflict in the Middle East is not only caused by political and economic factors but also by ideological and cultural factors (Belcastro, 2019). He also accuses many Western academics and media outlets of being too apologetic towards Islamism and criticizes Middle East studies for being biased and not critical enough of the threat of Islamism (Pipes, 1984).

He founded the Middle East Forum (MEF), a think tank that promotes conservative policies on Middle East issues. In 2003, President George W. Bush appointed him to the U.S. Institute of Peace. This decision drew protests from many academics and Muslim groups because of his views, which were considered extreme towards Islam. Although he ultimately remained in office, the controversy reinforced his reputation as a divisive figure (Trumpbour, 2003). In one example, he stated: At its worst, intellectuals are able to

understand this passage by implicitly believing that “tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner.” (Understanding everything means forgiving everything), therefore the standard of “realism” at least attempts to explain all of Al-Qaeda's atrocities so that they can be understood. This view is now often whispered—whether in legal, academic, or government circles—about the strange new entity called ISIS/ISIL. They are considered to be well-educated students of the American school of thought, but they also operate outside conventional “truth” and are able to provide more accurate and realistic explanations of how and why modern jihadism emerged, how it functions, and how it can be encountered (Sidahmed, 2010).

In other words, there are three distinct stages of the Arab-Israeli conflict, each different from the other until the end of time. As a result, there are three distinct stages of Arab approaches. The first stage, known as the pan-Syrian stage, aimed to create a greater Syria. The next was the pan-Arab stage, which contributed to a greater Arab state. The third was the Palestinian nationalist stage. The current stage is that of radical Islam. There may be a fifth and sixth stage. As stated above, there is no doubt that there are changing approaches every few years, which show Muslims that Israel is not a fully legitimate state because it is located in a territory that has been contested by Muslims for more than 1000 years. According to a poll conducted by Flash Eurobarometer in November 2003, Israel is considered the most dangerous country in the world. This is an unusual view. It reflects not on Israel, but on the sad and unpleasant political situation in Europe. It reflects a lack of knowledge about the Middle East, the Arab-Israeli conflict, who the allies and enemies are, what the problems are and what the solutions are (Klug, 2005).

## **4. Discussions**

### **4.1. Understanding Orientalism and Western-style Islamic Studies**

In Islamic studies literature, the word “Orientalism” has a very negative connotation in the study of Islamic literature. There are three main factors related to this negative trend. First, the long history of “bitter experiences” experienced by Muslims in their interactions with non-Muslims. The term “bitter” refers to the period of Orientalism's development that was associated with imperialism. During the imperialist era, Western countries became more powerful than Eastern countries, so that Orientalism, which became the pillar of imperialism, had an impact on Eastern countries as objects of knowledge, while Western countries were the subjects of knowledge. As a result of this long-standing arrogance, the West was positioned as the examiner, while non-Western countries were treated as anthropological museums (Hanafi et al., 2003).

S. W. Said's magnum opus, *Orientalism*, highlights several problems found in Orientalist research. This issue is a very political and sensitive one, which is reflected in the formation of Western perceptions of the Arab and Islamic world. First, anti-Arab or anti-Islamic sentiments are rampant among

Western academics and policymakers, which is quite concerning in the context of Orientalism. Second, the tension between Arabs and Israeli Zionism, and its impact on American Jews, as well as on liberal culture and society in general. Arabs are viewed negatively because of the negative stereotypes that surround them. Third, there is no cultural position that allows Arabs to identify themselves positively, because the Middle East has been identified with the politics of superpowers, the petroleum economy, and the contrast between Israel, which is seen as democratic and peaceful, and Arabs, who are seen as barbaric, totalitarian, and terrorist (Said, 1996).

According to Said, Orientalism has an “intellectual sin” that they can never fully understand. Is this true? One of the things Said emphasizes is the self-righteousness of science, which always disguises itself as scientific and objective. Orientalism considers the results discussed, especially those related to Islam and the Eastern world, to be neutral and value-free. However, according to Said, Orientalist studies of Islam and the Eastern world are based on Western interests in the East, which are cultural, economic, and political in nature (Prasetyo, 1994). In Orientalism, external interests—as Said himself said, research and opinions about Islam expressed by Daniel Pipes in *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power*—directly help and maintain American political interests in Muslim countries. Pipes directly contributed significantly to the Reagan administration's treatment of Islamic societies. According to Said, this issue is clearly not just a methodological problem; it is also a political, economic, and cultural problem (Algar et al., 1988).

According to Daud Rasyid, there are several characteristics of Orientalism that are difficult to understand, including the following: 1. Difficulty in understanding Arabic well, with its more complex language and much lower level of comprehension compared to the context in which Arabic is used in various ways (*dalalat Al Arabiyyah Al Mutanawwi'ah*). This weakness affects the understanding of core Islamic references, such as the Qur'an and Sunnah, so that the understanding of Islam from its main sources becomes confused and unclear. 2. The perception of “superiority” as Westerners. According to Western Orientalism, “the West” is the “teacher” in all fields, especially in logic and civilization. They are unwilling to learn from the East, leading to an egoistic attitude. They believe that world history originates from the West and will ultimately return to the West. Indeed, some are willing to listen to others' opinions, provided they are supported by rational arguments. However, compared to the arrogant ones, they are few in number. 3. Western Orientalists' doctrines cannot be criticized, even to the point of blind fanaticism. Among them are two main doctrines, namely that the Qur'an is not the word of Allah and that Muhammad is not the Messenger of Allah. These two doctrines have become preconceptions, so they are already embedded in their minds before they conduct their research.

Therefore, the purpose of their research is only to confirm assumptions, not to seek truth objectively and “freely.” To that end, Western researchers

focus on false accounts, fraud, minor issues, syubhat (false accusations) as hujjah (arguments), and reasoning with things that are not recognized as evidence. They reject opinions that differ from their assumptions, even if they are more valid and argumentative (Rasyid, 2014).

#### **4.2. Why Western Orientalists often misunderstand Islam**

It was their introduction to Islamic civilization that made Europe a civilized world in the 9th and 10th centuries. At the time when Islamic centers in Spain were at their peak, intellectual centers in the West were merely fortresses inhabited by semi-barbaric nobles who could not read. However, the interaction between Islam and the West was not merely intellectual, but also involved military and economic contact. The Crusades, which lasted for 200 years, were one example of military contact, while there was also indirect contact between Islamic and European civilizations. (France, 2006)

During the Cold War period (1947-1991), the Muslim world, both as a region and as an ideology, was not an important factor influencing the decisions of the two ideological poles: the United States and the Soviet Union. However, in post-1970s Muslim-majority countries, several traumatic post-colonial shocks and some Cold War strategic errors drew the world's political attention to Islam as a political force. These incidents included the emergence of the Iranian Revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the resulting US aid to Afghanistan, and the seizure of power in Pakistan by the military ruler General Zia-ul-Haq (1924-1988) (Makdisi, 2002). In particular, during and after the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the 1979-1981 hostage crisis, the strong representation of what was termed Islamic political and militant media, literature, and history heightened Western attention to Islam to an unprecedented level. This Western awareness was instilled when several national/international Islamic movements created pressure on Muslim governments to conform to Islamic values after the Arab defeat by Israel in the Six-Day War in 1967 (Habibullah, 2020).

In short, both in Indonesia and internationally, Islamic studies (Islamic Studies) have reached their 'limits.' From this, we can see that over the past few years, the framework of Islamic studies, especially in Indonesia, has tended to repeat the same narrative: about Islam vis-à-vis issues of modernity, ranging from traditionalism vs. modernity, Western liberalism and democracy, and so on. In many ways, this framework has succeeded in describing the existing reality, although it is not entirely accurate (Ilmiah & Anugrah, 2012). Some people boast about the critical and objective spirit of Orientalists. However, Western Orientalists have proven that they do not fully use scientific methodology—which requires a researcher to be objective towards the object being studied—when dealing with Islam. In general, Western research finds it difficult to separate personal elements (subjectivity) that emerge in the form of anti-Islamic religious fanaticism when examining issues related to Islam. They can be honest about other religions and ideologies, except Islam. This is

explained by French anthropologist Gustave Le Bon in his book “Hadharat Al Arab” (Arab Civilization). The same is acknowledged by the famous Orientalist Montgomery Watt in his book “What is Islam?” (Soliman, 2017).

### **4.3. Questioning Islamic Studies and Daniel Pipes-style Thinking**

There are two groups of scholars or academics who have written about Islam since the events of 9/11. The first group consists of scholars who have an objective and fair attitude toward Islam. Conversely, the second group has been strongly anti-Islamic since before the events of 9/11. Like pouring gasoline on a fire, this second group took advantage of 9/11 to denigrate Islam. One of the leaders of Islamophobia is Daniel Pipes in his anti-Muslim movement in the US (Zakariya, 2020).

Regarding Pipes, Habibullah assessed that Pipes' travelogue on Naipaul sparked controversy among critics regarding his unreliable interpretation of Islamic culture and Muslims. However, Pipes expressed his support for the latter travelogue in his article “Beyond Belief: V. S. Naipaul” (1998). In this article, Pipes first reiterates his praise for the first travelogue, *Among the Believers*: “His [Naipaul's] reports from Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia have a unique yet brilliant quality.” Then, regarding Naipaul's *Beyond Believers*, Pipes argues: “This time around, his travels do not dwell so much on internal contradictions as on a widespread feeling that something is amiss.” Furthermore, referring to Naipaul's assumption that the Soviet Union would be replaced by the Muslim world, and Iran in particular, in the post-Cold War period, Pipes agrees: “Like the inhabitants of the Soviet Union in the 1980s, the [Muslim Iranian] people are tired of their history and their current suffering.” The reason for this is that the textual mediation between Naipaul and Pipes can be interpreted with the ‘theory of historical works,’ as outlined in *Metahistory* (Habibullah, 2020).

Daniel Pipes is a well-known American academic and writer who founded and led the Middle East Forum, a conservative think tank. He also founded Campus Watch, an organization that criticizes the management of Middle East funds at various American universities. Educated at Harvard University, where his father was a professor and lecturer, he later taught at the same university, as well as at the University of Chicago and the US Naval Academy. Uncomfortable with the academic intellectual world, he left the campus in 1986 and founded the Middle East Forum four years later. His goal was to formulate and promote American interests in the Middle East. Pipes is widely known for his motto: Radical Islam is the problem, moderate Islam is the solution (Kramer, 2010).

Campus Watch does not focus solely on Israel, but is a comprehensive critique of Middle East studies. How does Pipes see Campus Watch five years from now? He said: “Well, we have two main goals; the first is short-term and the second is long-term. The short-term goal is to increase discussion about Middle East issues; to enlighten people, make them less easily politicized,

make them more tolerant of some different perceptions. No one really embodies radical Christian ideology—that's just fantasy. On the contrary, there is a real connection between radical Islam, fascism, and communism—so I see this as an authentic totalitarian movement emerging to gain a more religious foundation than others have been able to achieve.”(Bale, 2009). This understanding is clearly absurd and baseless. The Islamophobic lens that Pipes uses to portray Islam as a threat is the attitude of conservative groups that gained traction in the US, especially after the September 11 attacks (Belt, 2014). Meanwhile, data shows that it was not Muslims who triggered major wars around the world, such as World War I and World War II.

Daniel Pipes should be a writer, historian, and political commentator rather than a scientist. He is the founder of the Middle East Forum and the Campus Watch Project. His writings focus on US foreign policy, the Middle East, Islam, and Islamism. He promotes the use of militarism to serve US and Israeli interests in the Middle East. His organization supports the war in Iraq and has previously called for military action against Syria (Landes, 2024). His mission is to defame all Muslims and the entire Muslim community in the United States for his own political and religious agenda. Pipes is known for his hostility toward Muslims and his defense of Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. Daniel Pipes has become the world's most prominent purveyor of anti-Muslim hatred. He maneuvers to avoid criticism, then abandons his previous biased views to avoid being labeled a fanatic or ignorant. Then he returned to his old ways and claimed innocence. He claimed to respect Muslims but more often insulted them (ElGuindy & Yacoub, 2012).

The Center for American Progress has released a report titled, “Fear, Inc. The Roots of Islamophobia Networks in America,” in which the founder and president of the Middle East Forum, Daniel Pipes, and Campus Watch, are listed. The second chapter of the report, “The Experts on Islamophobic Misinformation,” begins (on page 27) by listing the Middle East Forum as one of “five major think tanks led by scholars who are primarily responsible for shaping much of the anti-Islam message that pollutes our national discourse today.” The section (beginning on page 41) outlining Pipes' alleged “Islamophobia” includes a collection of quotes he frequently uses, in which he repeatedly emphasizes that “militant Islam is the problem, moderate Islam is the solution.” The report notes that Norwegian terrorist “Anders [Behring] Breivik quoted Pipes and the Middle East Forum eighteen times in his manifesto,” while omitting the fact that Breivik referred to figures from across the political and historical spectrum. While Behring Breivik refers to “us” on the Right, he also refers to Leftist philosophers (György Lukács, Karl Marx, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Antonio Gramsci) and Leftist politicians (Tony Blair, Barack Obama). He also mentions Islamists (Osama bin Laden, Anwar Shaaban) (Ali et al., 2011). This analysis is essentially just a blind defense of Pipes' thinking, which is becoming increasingly absurd as it becomes more contemporary, and is beginning to use a new analysis, which some researchers call the theory of Islamic epidemiology (Islam is portrayed

as if it were a contagious disease), which raises the risk factor for governments regarding the danger of Islam, which in reality does not exist (Sheehi, 2010).

A small group of conservative foundations and wealthy donors are the lifeblood of the Islamophobia network in the United States, supporting a central nervous system composed of a group of misinformed experts. Like Daniel Pipes, who relies on these experts to misrepresent the dangers of Sharia law. This small network produces talking points and messages that are repeated by every segment of this interconnected network of money, grassroots leaders, media speakers, and elected officials. This small group of radical ideologues has fought to define Sharia as a “totalitarian ideology” and a “military-political-legal doctrine” committed to destroying Islam and Muslims in America. This network misinterprets Sharia as a totalitarian ideology full of hatred and committed to replacing the US Constitution with a radical Islamic caliphate. A radical Islamic caliphate that would subjugate and punish all non-Muslims (Rahim et al., 2018).

This description is unrecognizable to the vast majority of Muslims here and abroad. Sharia is followed partially and in different ways by every devout Muslim. There are no Ten Commandments that summarize Sharia. Instead, for Muslims, Sharia is the ideal law of God as interpreted by Muslim scholars over centuries to achieve justice, honesty, and compassion through personal religious observance such as prayer and fasting. Unimpressed, the Islamophobic network's description of Sharia is disseminated based on a sophisticated misinformation campaign designed to attract donations to right-wing foundations, grassroots think tanks, and conservative Christian fundamentalist groups, to raise political campaign contributions and votes for radical right-wing politicians, and to increase the political power of right-wing media organizations (Wilar, 2021).

Pipes accuse Islamists of having no simple beliefs, claiming that all Islamists are extremists at heart. Although the methods and means of struggle of various Islamist groups may differ, whether they seek power through democracy or revolution, once Islamists come to power, their totalitarian and autocratic tendencies will emerge, leading them to establish an Islamic state. Pipes also strongly criticizes the approach of the US State Department under President Bill Clinton, which he considers too lenient toward Islamists. According to Pipes, the US State Department viewed “most Islamists as decent people, serious individuals espousing ...a renewed emphasis on ©2020 International Journal of West Asian Studies 12: 202-217 212 traditional values” (Pipes, 2002: 44-45). Furthermore, the US government took the position of cooperating with Islamists as long as they had no connection to terrorist activities. Pipes strongly criticized this stance because it implied that the US government would sit down and cooperate with Islamists who were hostile to the US and Israel (Gerges, 2013).

Criticism of these statements aims to make American supremacy appear normal by framing it as a racist perspective. Islamophobia—one of the forms

of racism in contemporary America—emerged quickly, viewing Muslims and Islam as a threat. This analysis identifies contemporary racism that echoes religious rhetoric. The difference is mainly due to our knowledge and perceptions of the existing object. The existence of Muslims is thus shrouded in preconceived notions that equate them with terrorists. Language constructs their identity as terrorists. Linguistic boundaries beyond language and boundaries of knowledge have mutilated the reality of a Muslim individual to exist as a normal human being. This neat perspective has proven to be an American myth in the 21st century. It reveals the soul of American writers to belittle Islam and Muslims. This is an assumption that places Islam and Muslims at a lower hierarchy in the American social order. Global changes reflect 'an unlimited shift in the meaning [of racism] conveyed from one signifier to another'. Islamophobia leaves a lasting effect on people's minds where 'the logic of hatred and racism' is packaged to justify the logic of the clash of ignorance (Riaz, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

Daniel Pipes is an American orientalist, historian, and political analyst known for his views on Islam, the Arab world, and Middle East policy. He has written extensively on Islamism, Islamic history, and the relationship between the Western and Muslim worlds. Daniel Pipes is also an American historian and political observer known for his studies on the Middle East, Islam, and US foreign policy. He is often associated with conservative views on Islam and the Arab world and is known as a critic of political Islam.

Daniel Pipes is an American historian and political commentator known for his views on Islam and Islamism. Daniel Pipes is also a controversial figure due to his views on Islam, the Middle East, and US foreign policy. Here are some of the main controversies surrounding his thoughts on Islam: First, Pipes consistently distinguishes between Islam as a religion and Islamism as a political ideology. According to him, Islam is a religion that has existed for 14 centuries, while Islamism is a totalitarian ideology that emerged less than a century ago. Second, he argues that Islamism is a threat to democracy and Western civilization and must be confronted with firm policies. And third, Pipes criticizes Western governments and institutions for being too soft or permissive toward Islamist groups. He highlights that many Western academics and media outlets are apologetic toward Islamism and criticizes Middle East studies for being biased and insufficiently critical of the threat of Islamism.

To discuss Pipes' thinking, it is important to understand that in Islamic studies literature, the word “orientalism” has a very negative connotation. This negative view is related to three main factors. First, the long history of “bad experiences” experienced by Muslims in their encounters with non-Muslims. These bitter experiences are related to the history of the growth of Orientalism, which went hand in hand with imperialism. In Orientalism, perspectives or

approaches are often conspicuously driven by external interests. For example, the views on Islam expressed by Daniel Pipes in *In the Path of God: Islam and Political Power* directly help and maintain American political interests in Muslim countries.

There are two core doctrines held by Orientalists, including Pipes, namely that the Qur'an, in the view of Westerners, is not the word of God and that Muhammad is not the Messenger of God. These doctrines were already ingrained in their minds before they began their research (preconceptions), because they were religious doctrines that had been instilled in them since childhood. As a result, their research was directed only to support their assumptions, not to seek the truth objectively and "freely." There are two groups of scholars or academics who wrote about Islam after the events of 9/11. The first group consists of scholars who are objective and fair toward Islam. The second group is represented by those who have held strong anti-Islamic views even before the 9/11 attacks. This second group seized the opportunity to slander Islam, like pouring oil on a fire. One of the leading figures in this Islamophobic movement is Daniel Pipes in his anti-Muslim campaign in the US.

Daniel Pipes should be a writer, historian, and political commentator rather than a scholar. He is the founder of the Middle East Forum and Campus Watch Project. His writings focus on US foreign policy, the Middle East, Islam, and Islamism. He promotes the use of militarism to serve US and Israeli interests in the Middle East. His organization supports the war in Iraq and has previously called for military action against Syria. Pipes misrepresents the dangers of Sharia law. Along with a small group of other radical ideologues, they have fought to define Sharia as a "totalitarian ideology" and a "legal-political-military doctrine" committed to destroying Islam and Muslims in America.

This description is unknown to most Muslims. Sharia is followed in different ways by every devout Muslim. On the contrary, for Muslims, Sharia is the most ideal law from Allah, as interpreted by Muslim scholars over centuries, whose purpose is to achieve justice, honesty, and compassion through personal religious observance such as prayer and fasting, as well as social and political ethics. Therefore, Edward Said's critique of reorienting the way Orientalists think is highly relevant, namely, it is time for Orientalists to stop conducting their studies with a subjective and culturally biased approach, and instead begin to understand Islam and the Eastern world through the lens of Eastern religion and culture itself (objectively), so that Orientalists like Daniel Pipes can reconstruct their way of thinking to better understand Islam in a moderate manner, as per his own theory of moderate Islam that he has always championed.

## References

- Algar, H., Tapper, R., Banuazizi, A., Cobban, H., & Kechichian, J. A. (1988). *Future reviews*. Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/01436598808420093>
- Ali, W., Clifton, E., Duss, M., Fang, L., Keyes, S., & Shakir, F. (2011). *Fear, Inc: The roots of the Islamophobia network in America*. Center for American Progress Washington, DC. <https://www.meforum.org/setting-the-record-straight/fear-inc-the-roots-of-the-islamophobia-network-in-america>
- Bale, J. M. (2009). Islamism and totalitarianism. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 10(2), 73–96. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/14690760903371313>
- Belcastro, F. (2019). Conflict in the Middle East. In *The Routledge Handbook to the Middle East and North African State and States System* (pp. 287–296). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429342486-20>
- Belt, D. D. (2014). *Framing Islam as a Threat: The use of Islam by some US conservatives as a platform for cultural politics in the decade after 9/11*. <https://vtchworks.lib.vt.edu/items/7052b71c-8c39-4b07-8284-f94ec7530be9>
- Cooke, M. (2017). 1. Home 2. E-Zine 3. Opinion 4. Contesting campus watch: Middle East studies under fire The academy and democracy at risk. *Arab World Books*. <https://www.arabworldbooks.com/en/e-zine/contesting-campus-watch-middle-east-studies-under-fire-the-academy-and-democracy-at-risk>
- ElGuindy, A., & Yacoub, M. H. (2012). Heart failure with preserved ejection fraction. *Global Cardiology Science and Practice*, 2012(1), 10.
- France, J. (2006). *The Crusades and the Expansion of Catholic Christendom, 1000-1714*. Routledge.
- Gerges, F. A. (2013). What changes have taken place in US foreign policy towards Islamists? *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, 6(2), 189–197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17550912.2013.788869>
- Grinin, L., Korotayev, A., Tausch, A., Grinin, L., & Korotayev, A. (2019). Islamism and its role in modern Islamic societies. *Islamism, Arab Spring, and the Future of Democracy: World System and World Values Perspectives*, 59–124. [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-91077-2\\_3](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-91077-2_3)
- Habibullah, M. (2020). VS Naipaul's Travel Anecdotes and Daniel Pipes' Historiography: A New Historicist Reading. *Asiatic: IIUM Journal of English Language and Literature*, 14(2), 74–88.
- Hanafî, H., Anam, M. S., Abduh, & Fahrudin, A. (2003). *Cakrawala baru peradaban global: revolusi Islam untuk globalisme, pluralisme dan egalitarisme antar peradaban*. Institute for Religion and Civil Society Development (Ircisod).
- Hashemi, N. (2023). Political Islam: a 40-year retrospective. In *Handbook of Middle East Politics* (pp. 25–42). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Ilmiah, M. I. S., & Anugrah, I. (2012). *Membaca 'Islam' Secara Ilmiah: Sebuah Kritik*. <http://indoprogess.com/2012/09/24/membaca-islam-secara-ilmiah-sebuah-kritik/>

- Kerboua, S. (2016). From Orientalism to neo-Orientalism: Early and contemporary constructions of Islam and the Muslim world. *Intellectual Discourse*, 24(1), 7–34. <https://www.igntu.ac.in/eContent/IGNTU-eContent-356314486898-MA-PoliticalScience-2-Dr.GeorgeT.Haokip-Paper202ContemporaryPoliticalTheory-Unit3.pdf>
- Klug, B. (2005). Is Europe a lost cause? The European debate on antisemitism and the Middle East conflict. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 39(1), 46–59. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220500045253>
- Kramer, S. (2010). A conversation with Daniel Ulbricht. In *Ballet Review* (Vol. 33, Issue 3, p. 75). Jewish Times of South Jersey. <https://www.danielpipes.org/8988/a-conversation-with-daniel-pipes>
- Landes, R. (2024). Israel Victory: How Zionists Win Acceptance and Palestinians Get Liberated. *Middle East Quarterly*, 31(4), 1B-1B. [link.gale.com/apps/doc/A815699302/AONE?u=anon~581079c4&sid=googleScholar&xid=d35d0553](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A815699302/AONE?u=anon~581079c4&sid=googleScholar&xid=d35d0553). Accessed 22 June 2025.%0A
- Makdisi, S. (2002). Reflections on ‘Imaginative geography and its representations: orientalising the oriental.’ *Race Critical Theories: Text and Context*, 437–440.
- Pipes, D. (1981). *Slave soldiers and Islam: The genesis of a military system*. Yale Univ Pr.
- Pipes, D. (1984). Breaking All the Rules: American Debate over the Middle East. *International Security*, 9(2), 124–150.
- Pipes, D. (1985). Fundamentalist muslims between America and Russia. *Foreign Aff.*, 64, 939. <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/fora64&div=63&id=&page=>
- Pipes, D. (1990). The Muslims are coming! The Muslims are coming. *National Review*, 42(22), 28–31.
- Pipes, D. (1995). There are no moderates: Dealing with fundamentalist Islam. *The National Interest*, 41, 48–57.
- Pipes, D. (2000). Islam and Islamism: Faith and ideology. *The National Interest*, 59, 87–93.
- Pipes, D. (2013). Can Islam be reformed? *Commentary*, 136, 31–34.
- Pipes, D. (2017a). *In the path of God: Islam and political power*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203788790>
- Pipes, D. (2017b). Smoking out Islamists via extreme vetting. *Middle East Quarterly*.
- Pipes, D. (2017c). *The Rushdie Affair: The Novel, the Ayatollah and the West*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315134703>
- Pipes, D., & Chadha, S. (2006). CAIR: Islamists fooling the establishment. *Middle East Quarterly*, 13(2). <https://www.meforum.org/middle-east-quarterly/cair-islamists-fooling-the-establishment>
- Prasetyo, H. (1994). Pembetulan Orientalisme Kemungkinan dan Batas-batasnya. *Dalam ISLAMIKA Jurnal Dialog Pemikiran Islam (Bandung: Mizan)*.
- Rahim, R. A. A., Ramli, M. A., Kahal, S. M., bin Yusof, M. Y., Salleh, S., Abd Razak,

- M. I., Hassan, P., & Abidin, M. Z. H. Z. (2018). Perkaitan Islamophobia Dan Orientalisme Klasik: Satu Analisis. *Ideology Journal*, 3(2), 183–198.
- Rasyid, D. (2014). Pembaruan & Orientalisme dalam Sorotan. In *Hilal Media Group*.
- Riaz, H. (2017). *Racism and Islamophobia: A critique of selected American literary texts*. PhD thesis.[unpublished], Fatima Jinnah Women University, Pakistan.
- Said, E. W. (1978). Orientalism. *The Georgia Review*, 31(1), 162–206. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41397448%0A%0A>
- Said, E. W. (1996). Orientalisme (Terjemahan Asep Hikmat). *Bandung: Pustaka*.
- Said, E. W. (2014). Orientalism reconsidered. In *Postcolonial criticism* (pp. 126–144). Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315843452-5/orientalism-reconsidered-edward-said>
- Saputra, R., Arrasyid, A., & Ritonga, M. (2023). Contestation of Islamic Discourses: Responses of West Sumatra Scholars to Contemporary Religious Discourses. *INFERENSI: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 17(2), 193–206. <https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.18326/infsl3.v17i2.193-206>
- Sheehi, S. (2010). *Islamophobia: The ideological campaign against Muslims*. SCB Distributors. [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=W09K8RCvIX8C&oi=fnd&pg=PT8&dq=+Sheehi,+Stephen.+Islamophobia:+The+Ideological+Campaign+Against+Muslims.+SCB+Distributors,+2010.&ots=Tkva4HEKjn&sig=uMmIPrPnOAwjRWcJ60Yzv8XHV3g&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Sheehi%2C](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=W09K8RCvIX8C&oi=fnd&pg=PT8&dq=+Sheehi,+Stephen.+Islamophobia:+The+Ideological+Campaign+Against+Muslims.+SCB+Distributors,+2010.&ots=Tkva4HEKjn&sig=uMmIPrPnOAwjRWcJ60Yzv8XHV3g&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Sheehi%2C)
- Sidahmed, A. S. (2010). ‘Jihadiology’ and the problem of reaching a contemporary understanding of Jihad. In *Islam in the Eyes of the West* (pp. 111–134). Routledge.
- Soliman, A. (2017). European Muslims transforming the public sphere: Religious participation in the arts, media and civil society. In *European Muslims Transforming the Public Sphere: Religious Participation in the Arts, Media and Civil Society*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315107424>
- Trumbour, J. (2003). The Clash of Civilizations: Samuel P. Huntington, Bernard Lewis, and the Remaking of Post–Cold War World Order. In *The New Crusades* (pp. 88–130). Columbia University Press.
- Wilar, A. S. (2021). Fenomena Christian Prince dan Ustaz Charis Bangun Samudra. *Theologia in Loco*, 3(1), 90–108. <https://doi.org/10.55935/thilo.v3i1.209>
- Yom, S. (2008). The Dilemmas of American Democracy Promotion in the Arab World. *Yale J. Int’l Aff.*, 3, 131.
- Zakariya, H. (2020). Debunking Islamophobia: The Roles of Daniel Pipes in the Representation of the Muslims. *International Journal of West Asian Studies*, 12, 202–217. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337137728\\_Mendedahkan\\_Kedangkalan\\_Islamofobia\\_Peranan\\_Daniel\\_Pipes\\_dalam\\_representasi\\_i mej\\_Muslim/citation/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337137728_Mendedahkan_Kedangkalan_Islamofobia_Peranan_Daniel_Pipes_dalam_representasi_i mej_Muslim/citation/download)