

Submitted: 2026-03-30

Revised: 2026-04-13

Accepted: 2026-05-12

The Discourse on World War III from Islamic, Social, Economic, and Technological Perspectives: A Critical Analysis of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra and Armageddon

Muhammad Azhari*¹, Hari Nurdi²

¹ Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri 4 Banjarbaru, Banjarbaru

² Tentara Nasional Indonesia Angkatan Udara Syamsudin Noor, Banjarbaru

*Corresponding Author: muhammad77520@guru.sma.belajar.id

Abstract

This article aims to critically analyze the discourse on World War III from Islamic, social, economic, and technological perspectives, by examining the concepts of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra and Armageddon as representations of eschatological narratives within religious traditions. This study employs a qualitative approach through a literature review, examining hadith sources, Islamic and Western theological literature, as well as contemporary scholarly references relevant to global dynamics. The research findings indicate that Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra, from an Islamic perspective, is an eschatological concept rooted in hadith and cannot be directly equated with modern geopolitical phenomena such as World War III. Meanwhile, Armageddon in the Western tradition has developed within the framework of apocalyptic theology, which holds conceptual differences from Islamic perspectives. In the context of modern society, the discourse on World War III influences social constructions and collective perceptions of global threats. From an economic perspective, the potential for global conflict impacts market instability, resource crises, and rising inequality. In the technological sphere, the development of advanced weaponry and artificial intelligence expands the dimensions of warfare into non-conventional realms. Thus, this study underscores the importance of a balanced and contextual understanding when examining the relationship between religious narratives and global realities, in order to avoid oversimplification and promote a more comprehensive analysis.

Keywords: World War III, Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra, Armageddon, eschatology, technology, the global economy.

Introduction

The Discussions about a Third World War continue to circulate in the global public sphere, like an echo bouncing from one crisis to another from regional wars and geopolitical tensions to the military technology race. Amid these dynamics, a complex question arises: can this potential global conflict be linked to eschatological concepts in religion, specifically Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra in Islam and Armageddon in Western tradition? This question is significant because it not only touches on the theological realm but also impacts how societies understand global reality and respond to the uncertainty of the future (Huntington, 1996; Keddie, 2017).

From an Islamic perspective, Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra is understood as a major event preceding the end of time, as described in the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad. This narrative is often interpreted literally by some groups, while others attempt to understand it contextually by considering modern social and political conditions. On the other hand, Armageddon in Christian tradition has evolved as a symbol of the final battle, rich in theological and symbolic nuances. These differing interpretations highlight the complexity of linking religious texts to contemporary phenomena such as the potential for a Third World War (Esposito, 2010; Boyer, 1992).

As times change, the nature of warfare is no longer limited to conventional armed conflict. The modern world is witnessing a shift toward multidimensional warfare that involves economic, technological, and informational aspects. Energy crises, trade wars, and cyberattacks have become part of an increasingly broad spectrum of global conflict. In this context, the discourse on World War III is no longer understood merely as a physical war, but also as a “silent war” that affects global stability as a whole (Allison, 2017; Nye, 2011). From a societal perspective, narratives about a future major war also shape collective social and psychological constructs. Fear of global destruction can trigger apocalyptic attitudes, social pessimism, and even radicalism in the interpretation of religious texts. This indicates that eschatological discourse does not stand alone but is intertwined with an ever-changing social reality. Therefore, a critical and balanced approach is needed to understand the relationship between religious texts and global dynamics (Berger, 2014; Juergensmeyer, 2003).

A number of previous studies have examined the themes of eschatology and global conflict from various perspectives. Huntington’s (1996) study highlights the clash of civilizations as a potential source of future conflict, while Allison (2017) discusses the possibility of a major war resulting from rivalries among global powers. In an Islamic context, Esposito (2010) emphasizes the importance of understanding religious texts contextually to avoid being trapped in narrow interpretations. These studies indicate that research on World War III and eschatological narratives remains relevant and requires an interdisciplinary approach. Based on the above discussion, this study aims to critically examine the discourse on World War III from Islamic, societal, economic, and technological perspectives by analyzing the concepts of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra and Armageddon. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding and serve as an academic contribution to the development of Islamic and social studies, particularly in addressing evolving global issues.

Literature Review

Discussions of a Third World War in the global literature generally stem from geopolitical and international relations analyses that emphasize the dynamics of power among nations. Samuel P. Huntington, through his theory of the clash of civilizations, asserts that future conflicts will be influenced more by cultural differences and civilizational identities than by ideology alone (Huntington, 1996). Meanwhile, Graham Allison introduced the concept of the Thucydides Trap, which explains the potential for major conflict arising from rivalry between established and emerging powers within the global system (Allison, 2017). This perspective suggests that the possibility of a Third World War is more often interpreted as a logical consequence of structural tensions in global politics. From an analytical perspective, this approach provides a strong

foundation for interpreting the reality of global conflict, yet it leaves gaps because it fails to address the theological and cultural dimensions that also shape how societies understand the narrative of future major wars.

The concept of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra in Islamic studies is widely discussed in hadith literature and the works of classical scholars. In *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, Ibn Kathir details various accounts of major events leading up to the end of time, including a great battle involving the Muslim community. Similarly, Al-Nawawi in *Syarh Shahih Muslim* emphasizes the importance of caution in interpreting eschatological hadiths to avoid falling into excessive speculation (Ibn Kathir, 2005; Al-Nawawi, 1996). This literature demonstrates that Islamic tradition possesses a robust methodological framework for maintaining a balance between faith and scholarly caution. From a critical perspective, understanding Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra should not be separated from the methodological context of hadith itself. When the text is understood literally without considering its historical and epistemological context, the potential for distortion of meaning becomes significantly greater.

The concept of Armageddon in Western tradition has developed as part of apocalyptic theology, which has had a wide-ranging influence on culture and public perception. Paul Boyer argues that beliefs about the end times have shaped society's perspective on global conflict and the future of the world (Boyer, 1992). Furthermore, Bernard McGinn explains that the apocalyptic tradition has become an integral part of the development of Western thought, continually adapting to the changing times (McGinn, 1998). Thus, Armageddon is understood not only as a theological doctrine but also as a social and cultural phenomenon. Reflectively, the concept of Armageddon appears to have transcended the boundaries of theology and transformed into a collective symbol that lives in the modern imagination. It is present not only in sacred texts but also in the media, politics, and global discourse that shape how humans interpret the threat of destruction.

Contemporary studies show that modern warfare cannot be separated from economic and technological dimensions. Joseph E. Stiglitz highlights that globalization creates economic interdependence that is vulnerable to global conflicts and crises (Stiglitz, 2010). Meanwhile, Klaus Schwab asserts that the Fourth Industrial Revolution has transformed the global power landscape through digital technology, artificial intelligence, and automation systems (Schwab, 2016). This suggests that future conflicts will not only occur on the battlefield but also in increasingly complex economic and technological spheres. Within this analytical framework, the economic and technological dimensions have become the primary arenas of modern conflict. War is no longer always visible in physical form but can unfold covertly through the control of data, algorithms, and global strategic resources.

A number of studies from reputable journals in the context of contemporary Islam emphasize the importance of a contextual approach to understanding eschatology. Muhammad Huda argues that Islamic eschatological concepts must be interpreted in a way that is relevant to the changing times so as not to become trapped in a static understanding (Huda, 2021). Meanwhile, Nugroho Susanto emphasizes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in examining the relationship between religious texts and global realities (Susanto, 2020). This study opens the door to integration between classical traditions and modern challenges. From an analytical perspective, an

interdisciplinary approach is an urgent necessity in this study. Without integration between theology, social sciences, economics, and technology, the resulting understanding will remain fragmented and ill-equipped to address the complexities of global reality.

Based on the literature reviewed, it can be concluded that the discourses on World War III, Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra, and Armageddon have distinct conceptual roots but intersect in shaping human perceptions of global conflict. The existing literature highlights the need for a critical, contextual, and interdisciplinary approach to fully understand these phenomena. As a final point, the strength of this study lies not merely in the number of references, but in the ability to weave various perspectives into a cohesive analytical whole, thereby bridging the gap between text, context, and the ever-evolving global reality.

Method

This study addresses a fundamental issue: the tendency to oversimplify the connection between the issue of a Third World War and eschatological concepts such as Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra and Armageddon. This problem arises from the conflation of normative interpretations of religious texts with empirical analyses of complex global phenomena. Many studies still interpret hadith texts literally without considering their historical and methodological contexts, while modern geopolitical phenomena are often interpreted speculatively without an adequate analytical framework. This situation is exacerbated by a lack of integration between Islamic perspectives and social, economic, and technological approaches, resulting in a partial and reductive understanding (Esposito, 2010; Allison, 2017; Huda, 2021). In my view as a researcher, this issue is not only related to differences in interpretation but also concerns a scientific way of thinking that is not yet fully mature in bridging text and context. There is a kind of “logical leap” that is too far-reaching, from hadith to global geopolitics, without going through an adequate analytical process.

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method, focusing on the collection and analysis of data from various relevant sources. Primary data in this study include hadiths related to Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra as well as Western religious texts discussing Armageddon, while secondary data are derived from academic books and reputable journal articles indexed in Scopus and SINTA 1. Data collection was conducted through documentation and systematic searches of scientific databases, followed by classification based on research themes: Islamic, Western, social, economic, and technological perspectives. Subsequently, the data was analyzed using content analysis techniques and a comparative approach to identify similarities, differences, and the relevance of these concepts within the contemporary global context (Creswell, 2014; Krippendorff, 2018; Susanto, 2020). In my view, this approach is akin to assembling a mosaic: small pieces that were initially separate are gradually arranged to form a complete picture. Without patience in this process, the results of the analysis will be prone to bias and lack depth.

Result and Discussion

The Transformation of the Meaning of War in the Modern Global Context

Research findings indicate that the meaning of war in the modern global context has undergone a significant shift, in terms of its form, actors, and the instruments employed. Whereas in the past war was synonymous with direct armed conflict between nations, in contemporary developments, war has transformed into a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing economic, technological, informational, and even psychological aspects. New forms such as cyberwarfare, digital disinformation, and economic sanctions indicate that global conflicts no longer always manifest in physical forms but are also present in invisible spaces that are actually more difficult to control (Allison, 2017; Nye, 2011). In my analysis as a doctoral student, this transformation reflects a paradigm shift from “hard power” toward a combination of “soft power” and “smart power.” War is no longer merely about military strength, but also about the ability to control information, influence public opinion, and master strategic technology.

This study found that the actors in global conflicts have also undergone changes. Whereas states were previously the primary actors, the roles of non-state actors such as technology companies, transnational organizations, and even individuals are now increasingly significant. The emergence of digital platforms has created space for conflicts involving numerous parties outside formal state structures. This has expanded the spectrum of war, making it more complex and difficult to map conventionally (Schwab, 2016; Singer, 2009). In my view, this shift is akin to opening a “new stage” in global conflict, where the line between civilian and military becomes blurred. Anyone with access to technology and information now has the potential to become part of such conflicts.

The economic dimension has become a primary arena in the transformation of modern warfare. Economic sanctions, trade embargoes, and manipulation of global markets serve as instruments to weaken adversaries without directly deploying military force. The impact of this economic warfare is often more far-reaching and prolonged, as it directly affects the lives of civilians and the stability of nations (Stiglitz, 2010; Rodrik, 2011). In my view, economic warfare is actually more “silent yet deadly.” It does not produce the sound of explosions, but slowly erodes a nation’s strength from within, like water that drips ceaselessly until it can bore a hole through stone. Another transformation is evident in the increasingly dominant role of technology in shaping the course of global conflicts. The use of artificial intelligence, military drones, and autonomous weapon systems has transformed the way wars are waged. Furthermore, cyberwarfare has emerged as a new threat capable of paralyzing a nation’s vital infrastructure without the need to deploy troops to the battlefield (Schwab, 2016; Nye, 2011). As a researcher, I assess that technology has become the “new heart” of modern warfare. It not only accelerates the conflict process but also exponentially amplifies the scale of its impact.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the transformation of the meaning of war in the modern global context demands a new approach to understanding conflict. War can no longer be understood narrowly as a physical clash between states, but rather as a complex phenomenon involving various dimensions of life. Thus, analysis of the issue of a Third World War must also take these changes into account to

avoid being trapped in outdated and irrelevant understandings (Allison, 2017; Schwab, 2016). In my view, understanding war today is like reading a text that is constantly changing; if we continue to use old methods, we will always miss its meaning.

The Concept of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra from an Islamic Perspective

Research findings indicate that the concept of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra from an Islamic perspective is part of eschatological studies derived from the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), particularly those narrated in authentic hadith collections such as Sahih Muslim. Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra is described as a great war occurring toward the end of time, involving major powers and serving as one of the signs of the approaching Day of Judgment. In some accounts, this war is associated with a conflict between Muslims and a major power often identified as Rome (Rum), which in the classical context refers to Western powers (Al-Nawawi, 1996; Ibn Kathir, 2005). In my analysis as a researcher, it is important to emphasize that the term “Rum” in the hadith cannot be equated directly with modern political entities. There are historical and symbolic dimensions that must be carefully understood, so that interpretations of the hadith do not become trapped in a narrow, temporary understanding.

The findings of the study indicate that classical scholars did not provide detailed technical explanations regarding the exact time, location, or form of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra. Instead, they emphasized caution in interpreting eschatological hadiths and avoiding excessive speculation. This approach suggests that Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra is better understood as part of the great signs of the Day of Judgment, which are of a supernatural nature and cannot be fully grasped by human reason (Ibn Kathir, 2005; Al-Qurtubi, 2004). In my opinion, this attitude of the classical scholars actually reflects methodological maturity in understanding religious texts. Rather than insisting on certainty, they chose to preserve a space of uncertainty as part of the realm of faith.

This study found that Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra not only has a physical dimension in the form of warfare but also embodies moral and spiritual values. The hadiths discussing this event are often accompanied by messages about the importance of faith, patience, and steadfastness in facing great trials. Thus, this concept does not merely speak of conflict, but also of the formation of the community’s character in the face of crisis (Esposito, 2010; Huda, 2021). In my view, this is where the essence of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra lies not in the depicted sounds of war, but in the resonance of the values it leaves behind. It is like a silent warning urging humanity to prepare, not with weapons, but with awareness.

Research findings also indicate a tendency in contemporary discourse to link Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra with the issue of World War III. However, this approach is considered methodologically flawed because it overlooks the distinction between normative texts and empirical reality. Several studies emphasize the importance of a contextual approach in understanding hadith to prevent a reduction in meaning that could mislead public understanding (Susanto, 2020; Esposito, 2010). As an academic

reflection, I believe that directly linking Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra to specific global events risks obscuring the text's central message. When a text is forced to address realities that may not be relevant, what is lost is not only its meaning but also the wisdom it contains. Thus, the results of this study confirm that Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra, from an Islamic perspective, is an eschatological concept that is normative, symbolic, and rich in spiritual value. Its understanding requires a critical, contextual, and proportionate approach to avoid falling into simplistic interpretations. In this context, Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra is more appropriately understood as a reminder of humanity's limitations in predicting the future, as well as an impetus to strengthen the dimension of faith in facing the dynamics of the times.

Armageddon in Western Tradition and Its Implications

Research findings indicate that Armageddon in Western tradition is an eschatological concept deeply rooted in the Book of Revelation within the Christian tradition. Armageddon is understood as the final battle between the forces of good and evil that will determine the ultimate fate of humanity. In theological studies, Armageddon is not always interpreted literally as a physical war, but is also often understood as a symbol of cosmic and moral conflict involving the spiritual and existential dimensions of humanity (Boyer, 1992; McGinn, 1998). In evolving analyses, the concept of Armageddon has undergone a transformation of meaning alongside the changing times. In the modern era, Armageddon has not only become part of religious doctrine but has also entered the realms of popular culture, politics, and even military strategy. Several studies indicate that this apocalyptic narrative influences Western society's perspective on global conflict, including in framing the threat of a major war as something inevitable (Weber, 2005; Strozier et al., 2010). This suggests that Armageddon has transcended theological boundaries and become part of the social construction that shapes collective perceptions.

The implications of Armageddon in a modern context are also evident in the way society responds to technological advancements and the potential for global destruction. Advances in military technology, such as nuclear weapons and autonomous weapon systems, are often associated with the possibility of massive destruction reminiscent of apocalyptic narratives. In this regard, Armageddon can be understood as a reflection of humanity's anxiety regarding the destructive power it has created itself (Gray, 2007; Kermode, 2000). Furthermore, in the social and political spheres, the Armageddon narrative has the potential to influence policies and ideological stances, particularly in the context of international relations. Some religious and political groups in the West use this concept as an interpretive framework for viewing global conflicts, which can ultimately reinforce polarization and justify certain actions. Thus, Armageddon functions not only as a theological concept but also as a discursive instrument with tangible impacts on global dynamics (Juergensmeyer, 2003; Almond et al., 2003). The findings of this study indicate that Armageddon in Western tradition has

complex and multidisciplinary dimensions, encompassing theological, social, political, and technological aspects. Therefore, understanding this concept requires a critical and contextual approach to avoid falling into narrow or deterministic interpretations. In this context, Armageddon is better understood as a symbol reflecting the tension between human hopes and fears regarding the future, rather than as a literal prediction that is certain to occur.

The Impact of Discourse on World War III on Society, the Economy, and Technology

Discussions of a Third World War have proven to have a significant impact on the social fabric of society. Narratives about the potential for large-scale global conflict tend to shape a collective mindset characterized by anxiety, uncertainty, and apocalyptic tendencies. In some contexts, these conditions influence how society views the future, trigger defensive attitudes, and even reinforce social polarization and group identities. Furthermore, the spread of unverified information through digital media accelerates the formation of exaggerated threat perceptions, thereby creating social tensions that are not always grounded in factual reality (Berger, 2014; Juergensmeyer, 2003; Huda, 2021). In a more reflective analysis, this phenomenon demonstrates that the power of narrative often surpasses the power of facts themselves. When the public is constantly exposed to visions of global conflict, the resulting psychological reality can become just as potent as the actual conflict that has not yet occurred.

Discussions of a Third World War From an economic perspective, this implies increasing instability in the global economic system. Escalating geopolitical tensions are driving market volatility, disruptions in global supply chains, and uncertainty in international investment. Furthermore, energy and food crises are becoming increasingly prominent issues as inter-state conflicts escalate. This situation indicates that the global economy is highly vulnerable to international political dynamics, where the mere perception of potential conflict is sufficient to influence market behavior (Stiglitz, 2010; Rodrik, 2011; Allison, 2017). Upon closer examination, the modern economy resembles a tightly interconnected network, once a single node is shaken, the tremors ripple throughout the entire system. In this context, the prospect of war is not merely a political issue but also a psychological factor that broadly impacts economic stability.

Discussions of a “Third World War” in the realm of technology are driving accelerated innovation while simultaneously increasing the risk of destructive use of technology. Advances in artificial intelligence, autonomous weapon systems, and cyber technology have transformed the nature of conflict, making it more complex and difficult to control. War is no longer confined to the physical realm but also unfolds in the digital domain through cyberattacks and information manipulation. This indicates that technology functions not merely as a supporting tool but as a primary factor in determining the direction and nature of future conflicts (Schwab, 2016; Singer, 2009;

Nye, 2011). In this context, technology appears to be a double-edged sword on one hand, it paves the way for progress, yet on the other, it amplifies the potential for destruction. As the discourse on war continues to intensify, the trajectory of technological development risks shifting from productive innovation toward destructive innovation.

The findings of this study indicate that the impact of the discourse surrounding a Third World War is not merely hypothetical but has already tangibly affected various aspects of life. Society is experiencing psychological and social pressures, the economy faces growing uncertainty, and technology is advancing under the shadow of potential conflict. These three aspects are intertwined and form a complex global dynamic, thus requiring a comprehensive and interdisciplinary analytical approach (Esposito, 2010; Susanto, 2020). Upon a more thorough examination, it becomes clear that the discourse on war is not merely a story about the future, but also a force that is gradually shaping the reality of the present.

The Relevance of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra to Discussions of World War III

The results of the study indicate that the concept of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra in Islamic tradition is part of an eschatological narrative derived from the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, which describe the occurrence of a great war toward the end of time. In various accounts, this event is associated with a large-scale conflict involving major powers, accompanied by the moral and spiritual dynamics of humanity. However, a study of classical texts reveals that scholars did not explicitly link this event to a specific geopolitical context, but rather positioned it as part of the unseen realm that must be approached with caution in interpretation (Al-Nawawi, 1996; Ibn Kathir, 2005). Furthermore, in the modern context, the discourse on World War III has emerged as a response to rising global geopolitical tensions, the arms race, and multidimensional conflicts involving economic and technological aspects. Although there are similarities in terms of the massive scale of the conflict, analysis indicates that World War III, as a contemporary phenomenon, possesses characteristics that are fundamentally different from the description of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra. Modern warfare is not merely military in nature but also encompasses cyber warfare, information warfare, and global economic dominance, elements not explicitly mentioned in classical texts (Allison, 2017; Nye, 2011).

Further discussion confirms that attempts to identify World War III as a direct manifestation of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra tend to be speculative and lack a strong methodological foundation. A literal approach to hadith risks disregarding historical context as well as the principles of interpretation developed within the Islamic scholarly tradition. Therefore, a contextual approach is needed that can distinguish between the normative meaning of the text and the ever-evolving empirical reality (Esposito, 2010; Susanto, 2020). On the other hand, the relevance of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra to the discourse on World War III can be understood substantively, not literally. The values

contained in the hadith, such as the importance of steadfastness in faith, vigilance against sedition, and preparedness to face crises, can serve as an ethical framework for responding to global dynamics. Thus, this concept remains relevant in fostering the spiritual and social consciousness of society, without needing to be forced into a prediction of specific events. Upon closer examination, the tendency to link these two concepts directly appears to be driven more by a psychological need to seek certainty amid global uncertainty. However, if not balanced by a critical scientific approach, this can actually lead to biased and misleading interpretations. Therefore, it is important to situate Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra within a proportionate theological framework, while also understanding World War III as a geopolitical phenomenon that must be analyzed through an interdisciplinary approach.

The Relevance of Comparing Islamic and Western Eschatological Paradigms

A comparison of eschatological paradigms between Islam and the West reveals fundamental differences in understanding the concept of the end times, particularly regarding the narratives of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra and Armageddon. In the Islamic tradition, eschatology is more deeply rooted in normative sources such as the Qur'an and hadith, with an emphasis on moral, spiritual, and individual responsibility in facing the end of time. Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra is not only understood as a major conflict but also as part of a series of signs guiding humanity toward self-reflection and spiritual preparedness. Conversely, in Western tradition, particularly in Christian theology, Armageddon has developed as an apocalyptic narrative depicting a cosmic battle between the forces of good and evil, often understood within both symbolic and literal frameworks depending on the evolution of theological interpretations (Esposito, 2010; McGinn, 1998). In examining these two paradigms, it appears that Islamic eschatology tends to be normative-transformative, while Western eschatology is more narrative-dramatic. This difference is not merely a theological variation but reflects how each tradition interprets the relationship between humanity, history, and destiny.

The relevance of this comparison becomes even more pronounced in the modern global context, where narratives about the end times often intersect with geopolitical issues and international conflicts. When the concept of Armageddon enters global political discourse, it is often used as a symbolic framework for understanding major conflicts, even influencing foreign policy in certain contexts. Meanwhile, in Muslim societies, the concept of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra is sometimes interpreted directly as a representation of contemporary global conflicts, including discourse on World War III. This indicates a tendency to link eschatological texts directly to empirical reality, without undergoing an adequate interpretive process (Boyer, 1992; Juergensmeyer, 2003). Upon further examination, this tendency reveals that eschatology functions not only as a religious doctrine but also as a lens through which to interpret reality. When this lens is applied without critical scrutiny, what emerges is not clarity but a distorted picture that can mislead one's understanding.

From the perspective of building a progressive societal paradigm, this comparison offers an important lesson regarding the need for a critical and contextual approach to understanding religious texts. A progressive society is called upon not only to understand religious teachings textually but also to relate them to social realities in a balanced manner. In this regard, eschatology should serve as a source of ethics and reflection, not a source of fear that hinders rationality. An interdisciplinary approach integrating theology, the social sciences, and global analysis is key to building a more comprehensive and adaptive understanding (Berger, 2014; Susanto, 2020). At this point, it is evident that the future of religious understanding can no longer rely solely on a single discipline. It must move, engage in dialogue, and adapt, like water finding its own path among the rocks of time.

Thus, the relevance of comparing Islamic and Western eschatological paradigms does not lie in an attempt to equate the two, but rather in the ability to understand their differences as a foundation for constructing a richer and more in-depth analysis. This comparison opens the door to intellectual dialogue that not only enriches academic study but also contributes to the formation of a more critical, rational, and progress-oriented society. In this context, eschatology is no longer understood as the end of everything, but as a starting point for understanding the meaning of life more broadly (Nye, 2011; Esposito, 2010). Ultimately, what is at stake is not merely how humans understand the end of time, but how they live through the present age with clear reasoning and faith that does not lose its way.

Implications for the Development of a Progressive Societal Paradigm

Discussions of a Third World War linked to eschatological narratives such as Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra and Armageddon have significant implications for the formation of societal paradigms. Research findings indicate that these narratives can influence how society views the future, particularly in responding to global uncertainty. In some cases, a literal interpretation of religious texts tends to foster fatalistic and apocalyptic attitudes, which can ultimately hinder the emergence of progressive and rational thinking. In fact, a progressive society is characterized by the ability to manage uncertainty through scientific and reflective approaches (Berger, 2014; Juergensmeyer, 2003). Upon closer examination, the narrative of “the coming great war” often moves like a long shadow, it is not always real, but it is powerful enough to influence action. When that shadow is allowed to grow unchecked, it gradually shifts society’s orientation from efforts to build the future toward merely waiting for destruction.

The research findings also indicate that this discourse can serve as a point of reflection for fostering a more mature collective consciousness. When understood contextually, the concept of eschatology in Islam does not merely address destruction, but also moral responsibility, justice, and spiritual preparedness. Thus, the paradigm of a progressive society need not reject religious narratives but rather integrate them into a constructive framework oriented toward social improvement (Esposito, 2010; Susanto,

2020). There is a kind of message pulsing quietly beneath those texts, that the future is not merely something to be awaited, but something that must be prepared for. And that preparation does not stem from fear, but from awareness. In the context of social development, another implication that emerges is the importance of critical literacy in understanding global issues. Societies lacking the ability to distinguish between facts and interpretations are more easily trapped in misleading narratives. Therefore, strengthening education, particularly in the fields of Islamic studies and the social sciences is key to building a society that is not only religious but also rational and adaptable to change (Nye, 2011; Schwab, 2016). At this point, it is clear that knowledge is not merely a tool, but a compass. Without a compass, society may move quickly, but without direction, and ultimately get lost amid the deluge of information. From an economic and technological perspective, the paradigm of a progressive society demands readiness to face rapid and unpredictable global changes. Dependence on global systems means that society must be able to adapt to various possibilities, including potential conflicts that impact economic stability and digital security. Thus, the development of a societal paradigm is not only related to ideological aspects but also to structural readiness in facing the challenges of the times (Stiglitz, 2010; Rodrik, 2011).

Like waves that come without warning, global changes cannot always be resisted. However, a progressive society is not one that can stop the waves, but one that can learn to balance itself upon them. Thus, it can be concluded that the implications of the discourse on World War III for the development of a progressive societal paradigm depend heavily on how that society understands and responds to the evolving narrative. A critical, contextual, and interdisciplinary approach is key to avoiding fatalism while fostering a society that is reflective, adaptive, and forward-looking. Within this framework, eschatological narratives are no longer a source of fear, but rather a space for reflection aimed at building a wiser and more sustainable civilization.

Integration of Theological, Social, Economic, and Technological Perspectives

The study's findings indicate that understanding the discourse on the Third World War cannot be approached in isolation but must be addressed through an integrative approach that connects theological, social, economic, and technological perspectives. From an Islamic theological perspective, concepts such as Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra provide a normative framework emphasizing moral, spiritual, and eschatological dimensions in confronting major conflicts. However, these religious texts are not intended as empirical predictions that can be directly projected onto modern geopolitical realities, but rather as ethical guidelines for responding to the dynamics of human life (Esposito, 2010; Ibn Kathir, 2005). Taken further, a theological approach without dialogue with contemporary reality tends to produce a rigid understanding. Conversely, when a text is read in the light of its context, it becomes like a compass not showing the details of the path, but providing direction so one does not get lost amid the complexities of the times.

The discourse on World War III, from a social perspective, shapes the collective consciousness that influences people's ways of thinking and behavior. Grand narratives of global destruction can trigger social anxiety, reinforce group identities, and even foster exclusive and radical attitudes if not critically managed. Therefore, integration with the social sciences is essential to understanding how eschatological narratives are translated into real life and their impact on social cohesion (Berger, 2014; Juergensmeyer, 2003). Within this framework, society is like soil that absorbs every narrative that falls upon it. If the narratives received are not processed with critical reasoning, what grows is not understanding, but fear that runs deep.

From an economic perspective, the potential for global conflict demonstrates that modern warfare has far-reaching implications for the stability of the global economic system. Interdependence among nations in global trade means that every conflict has a domino effect that is difficult to control. Energy crises, global inflation, and supply chain disruptions serve as evidence that war is no longer confined to the battlefield but has also encroached upon the economic structures that underpin society (Stiglitz, 2010; Rodrik, 2011). Thus, the economy can be viewed as a "silent battlefield" that operates without fanfare yet is capable of drastically altering a nation's policy direction and well-being. Integrating an economic perspective into this study helps broaden the understanding that global conflicts do not always manifest in visible, physical forms. Meanwhile, technological advancements have fundamentally altered the nature of warfare in the modern era. Innovations in artificial intelligence, autonomous weapon systems, and cyber technology have made conflicts increasingly complex and difficult to predict. Technology functions not only as a tool but also as a determining factor in conflict strategies and outcomes. In this context, cyber warfare and disinformation have emerged as new threats capable of weakening a nation without requiring direct physical confrontation (Schwab, 2016; Singer, 2009). At this point, technology appears to be a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it paves the way for progress; on the other, it harbors the potential for destruction. When not balanced by ethical values, technology can actually accelerate the pace of a crisis that is difficult to control.

The integration of these four perspectives yields a more comprehensive understanding of the discourse surrounding World War III. Theology provides a foundation of values, sociology explains the impact on society, economics highlights systemic implications, and technology reveals new dimensions in modern conflict. This interdisciplinary approach not only enriches analysis but also fosters the emergence of a societal paradigm that is more critical, adaptive, and progress-oriented (Nye, 2011; Susanto, 2020). With this approach, understanding of global conflict is no longer trapped in the dichotomy between belief and reality, but moves toward a more balanced synthesis an effort to view the world with clear eyes, without losing one's moral compass.

World War III from the Perspectives of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra and Armageddon

World War III is often associated with eschatological concepts such as Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra in Islam and Armageddon in Christian tradition; however, conceptually, the three fall within different realms and therefore cannot be directly equated. In the hadith, Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra is understood as a great war at the end of time that forms part of a series of signs of the apocalypse; it is theological in nature and lacks detailed empirical explanations regarding its timing or form, so it cannot be immediately identified with modern global conflicts. Meanwhile, Armageddon has developed within Western apocalyptic narratives as a symbol of the final battle between the forces of good and evil, which in contemporary interpretations is often understood metaphorically as a global crisis, rather than a specific historical event. As for World War III, it is a modern geopolitical construct based on the analysis of international relations, the potential for conflict between major powers, and developments in military technology and the global economy; thus, it is more empirical and rational in nature than theological.

Thus, although there is a tendency to link the phenomenon of global conflict with religious prophecies, an academic approach demands a clear distinction between normative-theological concepts and historical-empirical realities. Based on this analysis, it can be asserted that World War III cannot automatically be referred to as Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra or Armageddon; argumentatively, the stronger position is that it is **not**, because the three have different epistemological foundations, sources of authority, and conceptual frameworks, so equating them risks oversimplifying the complexity of both theological studies and international relations studies.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the discourse on World War III, which is often linked to the concept of Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra in Islamic tradition and Armageddon in Western tradition, cannot be simplistically understood as identical events or as directly representing one another. The research findings confirm that Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra has a normative foundation in eschatological hadith, whereas Armageddon developed within the framework of apocalyptic theology, which has a different historical and doctrinal context. From a modern societal perspective, these narratives have transformed into social discourses influenced by the media, global politics, and geopolitical tensions, thereby shaping collective perceptions that are sometimes prone to speculation. In terms of strengths, this study successfully integrates Islamic, social, economic, and technological perspectives into a single comprehensive analytical framework, thereby providing a more holistic understanding of this complex global phenomenon. Furthermore, a critical approach to classical and contemporary literature allows for conceptual clarification that prevents the reduction of meaning between religious texts and empirical reality. However, this study also has limitations, particularly regarding its reliance on literature reviews that are not yet fully supported by empirical field data, as well as limitations in concretely measuring the direct impact of such discourse on the behavior of the global community. Thus, it can be concluded that the relationship between eschatological narratives and the possibility of modern global conflict must be situated proportionally, not merely as a form of theological belief, but also as a dynamic social construction. Therefore, further empirical and interdisciplinary research is needed to enrich understanding and provide more practical contributions in responding to the ever-evolving global dynamics. World War III cannot be directly equated with Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra or Armageddon because the three originate from different conceptual frameworks. Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra and Armageddon are theological-eschatological in nature, whereas World War III is a modern, empirical geopolitical construct. Any attempt to link global conflicts to religious prophecies must be approached with caution to avoid oversimplifying their meanings. An academic approach requires a distinction between historical reality and theological beliefs when interpreting global phenomena. Thus, the most rational position is to state that World War III is neither Al-Malhamah Al-Kubra nor Armageddon.

Bibliography

- Allison, G., *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.
- Almond, G. A., Appleby, R. S., & Sivan, E., *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms Around the World*, University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Al-Nawawi, *Syarh Shahih Muslim*, Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1996.
- Berger, P. L., *The Many Altars of Modernity: Toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age*, De Gruyter, 2014.
- Boyer, P., *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*, Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Creswell, J. W., *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.)*, Sage Publications, 2014.
- Esposito, J. L., *The Future of Islam*, Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Gray, J., *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.
- Huda, M., *Islamic Eschatology and Contemporary Global Issues*, Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies, 2021.
- Huntington, S. P., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster, 1996.
- Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2005.
- Juergensmeyer, M., *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, University of California Press, 2003.
- Keddie, N. R., *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*, Yale University Press, 2017.
- Kermode, F., *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Krippendorff, K., *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology (4th ed.)*, Sage Publications, 2018.
- McGinn, B., *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Nye, J. S., *The Future of Power*, PublicAffairs, 2011.
- Rodrik, D., *The Globalization Paradox*, W. W. Norton & Company, 2011.
- Schwab, K., *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, World Economic Forum, 2016.
- Singer, P. W., *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century*, Penguin Press, 2009.
- Stiglitz, J. E., *Freefall: America, Free Markets, and the Sinking of the World Economy*, W. W. Norton & Company, 2010.
- Strozier, C. B., Terman, D. M., Jones, J. W., & Boyd, K. A., *The Fundamentalist Mindset: Psychological Perspectives on Religion, Violence, and History*, Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Susanto, N., *Eskatologi Islam dan Dinamika Global*, Studia Islamika, 2020.
- Weber, E., *Apocalypses: Prophecies, Cults, and Millennial Beliefs Through the Ages*, Harvard University Press, 2005.

Yin, R. K., *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods (6th ed.)*, Sage Publications, 2018.