



MAPPING SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ISLAMIC ECONOMICS: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS AND ASWAJA-INFORMED INTERPRETATION

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini memetakan struktur tematik kajian keadilan sosial dalam ekonomi Islam dan menafsirkannya melalui nilai-nilai Aswaja. Analisis menggunakan peta VOSviewer dan tabel frekuensi kata kunci yang tersedia dalam naskah sumber, yang dinyatakan berasal dari Google Scholar melalui Publish or Perish. Berkas ekspor bibliografis, tanggal penelusuran, jumlah dokumen akhir, dan log penyaringan tidak tersimpan dalam bahan yang diunggah; oleh karena itu, informasi tersebut tidak direkonstruksi secara spekulatif dan dinyatakan sebagai keterbatasan reproduktibilitas. Analisis difokuskan pada pemetaan ko-kemunculan kata kunci, visualisasi kepadatan, dan visualisasi overlay yang dapat diaudit. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa Islamic economics dan epistemology menjadi pusat jaringan, sedangkan social justice, Islamic finance, Islamic ethics, development, SDGs, religion, dan social responsibility membentuk tema penghubung. Lima gugus interpretatif teridentifikasi, yaitu fondasi epistemologis, keadilan dan dekolonialitas, institusi keuangan Islam, pembangunan dan kesejahteraan, serta landasan religius-normatif. Secara substantif, pola tersebut sejalan dengan i'tidal, tawazun, tawassut, tasamuh, dan ta'awun, meskipun istilah Aswaja tidak selalu muncul secara eksplisit dalam metadata. Studi ini membedakan temuan bibliometrik dari interpretasi normatif dan menawarkan agenda riset yang menghubungkan maqasid al-shariah, redistribusi, keuangan sosial Islam, literasi digital, dan evaluasi dampak.

Abstract

This study maps the thematic structure of research on social justice in Islamic economics and interprets the resulting patterns through an Aswaja-informed framework. The analysis draws on VOSviewer maps and a keyword-frequency table preserved in the source manuscript, which reports that the data were retrieved from Google Scholar using Publish or Perish. Neither the bibliographic export nor the retrieval date, final document count, or screening log was included in the materials available for analysis; these details were therefore not reconstructed speculatively and are reported as limitations to reproducibility. Accordingly, the auditable analysis is limited to keyword co-occurrence mapping, density visualisation, and temporal overlay analysis. Islamic economics and epistemology occupy the centre of the network, whereas social justice, Islamic finance, Islamic ethics, development, the Sustainable Development Goals, religion, and social responsibility function as bridging themes. Five interpretative clusters were identified: epistemological foundations; justice and decoloniality; Islamic financial institutions; development and welfare; and religious-normative foundations. Substantively, these patterns resonate with i'tidal, tawazun, tawassut, tasamuh, and ta'awun, although Aswaja terminology does not appear consistently in the metadata. The study distinguishes bibliometric evidence from normative interpretation and proposes a research agenda linking maqasid al-shariah, redistribution, Islamic social finance, digital literacy, and impact evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

Social justice is not a peripheral concern in Islamic economics; it is integral to its moral purpose. Classical and contemporary formulations link economic activity to human dignity, equitable access to resources, distributive responsibility, and the protection of vulnerable groups. Chapra (1992) situates socio-economic justice within an integrated moral and institutional order, while Naqvi (1981) treats equilibrium, freedom, and responsibility as mutually reinforcing ethical axioms. More recent scholarship similarly argues that Islamic economics should be assessed not only in terms of formal compliance with Sharia principles but also according to its contribution to poverty reduction, equitable distribution, and social welfare (Azid & Sunar, 2019; Rahim & Mohd Yusop, 2023; Utami & Santosa, 2024).

This normative orientation has generated a broad and increasingly interdisciplinary body of literature. Islamic economic methodology examines the relationship between revelation, reason, positive analysis, and normative judgement (Choudhury, 1990; Sadr, 2019). In applied finance, *maqasid al-shariah* provides a framework for assessing whether products and institutions advance substantive welfare rather than merely reproducing conventional arrangements through Islamic contractual forms (Ahmed, 2011; Laldin & Furqani, 2013). Indonesian scholarship has also linked *rahmatan lil 'alamin* to economic inclusion, social solidarity, and the reduction of inequality (Ahyani et al., 2021).

An Aswaja-informed reading adds a distinctive interpretative layer. Within the *Nahdlatul Ulama* intellectual tradition, *tawassut* denotes principled moderation, *tawazun* requires balance, *tasamuh* supports tolerance and openness, and *i'tidal* demands justice and proportionality. These values neither substitute for economic analysis nor serve as labels to be imposed on every publication in Islamic economics. Rather, they provide a culturally grounded framework for interpreting whether research themes balance market considerations with welfare, recognise methodological plurality, and retain justice as an evaluative criterion (Burhani, 2012; Hilmy, 2013).

Bibliometric research has expanded rapidly within Islamic economics and finance. Existing reviews have mapped the growth of Islamic finance, mathematical modelling, sustainability, social finance, and journal-level knowledge structures (Hassan et al., 2021; Ismail & Aisyah, 2022; Lada et al., 2023; Rusydiana et al., 2021; Tijjani et al., 2021). Recent syntheses show that bibliometric studies increasingly focus on social finance, sustainability, ethics, and methodological renewal (Akhter et al., 2025; Ben Jedidia & Ghroubi, 2025; Maulina et al., 2023; Mi'raj & Ulev, 2024). Nevertheless, the thematic relationship between social justice, epistemology, and Islamic economics remains insufficiently clarified, and previous reviews rarely relate the mapped themes to an Aswaja-informed moral economy.

The present study therefore narrows its scope to the thematic structure visible in the available keyword data. Social justice is defined as the fair distribution of economic opportunities, burdens, and resources, together with adequate social protection; Islamic economics refers to scholarship that explicitly grounds economic reasoning or institutions in Islamic sources and ethical objectives; and epistemology refers to debates concerning the sources, validation, and organisation of economic knowledge. The study addresses three questions: (1) Which keywords and thematic clusters structure the literature? (2) How have these themes shifted over time? and (3) How may the mapped patterns be interpreted through Aswaja values without conflating bibliometric evidence with normative inference? Its original contribution lies in combining transparent keyword mapping with a clearly delimited Aswaja-informed interpretation.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research design and analytical scope

The study adopts a bibliometric design that combines descriptive performance reporting with science mapping. Bibliometric analysis is appropriate for identifying the conceptual architecture and temporal development of a research field, provided that the database, unit of analysis, thresholds, and interpretative procedures are made explicit (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). This study deliberately limits its claims to analyses that can be audited using the available corpus and VOSviewer outputs. Unsupported claims concerning author productivity, country rankings, journal influence, and citation impact have therefore been excluded.

Data source, search strategy and screening

The source manuscript reports that its bibliographic data were retrieved from Google Scholar using Publish or Perish. The VOSviewer network, density, and overlay maps, together with the keyword-frequency table, were available for analysis; however, the underlying CSV or RIS export was not included. The intended search strategy was reconstructed from the manuscript as follows: ("Islamic economics" OR "Islamic economy" OR "Islamic finance") AND ("social justice" OR "economic justice" OR equity OR redistribution) AND (ethics OR epistemology OR *maqasid* OR *zakat* OR *waqf*). Eligible sources comprised

journal articles, reviews, books, and book chapters whose titles, abstracts, or keywords directly addressed Islamic economics or finance together with justice, ethics, welfare, redistribution, or epistemological foundations.

The exact retrieval date, publication-period limits, raw hit count, final document count, language filters, document-type filters, duplicate-removal log, and record-level relevance decisions could not be recovered from the available files. Accordingly, this article does not invent these values. It reports only the results visible in the preserved outputs and explicitly identifies the missing metadata as a limitation to reproducibility. Before journal submission, the authors should provide the original export and thesaurus file or repeat the search using a fully archived protocol.

Table 1. Auditability of the bibliometric materials available for analysis

Component	Status in the available materials	Treatment in this article
Database and retrieval tool	Google Scholar via Publish or Perish, as stated in the manuscript	Reported consistently throughout
Search concepts	Islamic economics or finance, social justice, ethics, epistemology, maqasid, zakat and waqf	Reconstructed as a reproducible Boolean search string
Raw export and retrieval date	Not supplied	Not inferred or fabricated
Raw and final document counts	Not supplied	Not reported as known values
Screening and duplicate log	Not supplied	Declared to be unavailable
Analytical outputs	Three VOSviewer maps and a keyword-frequency table supplied	Used as the auditable evidence base

Data processing and visualisation

Metadata were standardised in Microsoft Excel by harmonising spelling variants, singular and plural forms, abbreviations, and transliterations. For example, Islamic economy and Islamic economics were consolidated, while closely related forms of maqasid al-shariah were normalised. VOSviewer was used in the original analysis to generate co-occurrence, density, and overlay maps. The available materials did not retain the software version, counting method, or minimum-occurrence threshold; these parameters should be retrieved from the original project file and reported before submission. Node size represents keyword frequency, link thickness represents co-occurrence strength, spatial proximity indicates relatedness, and colour denotes either cluster membership or average publication year, depending on the visualisation (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The analytical workflow was informed by the bibliometrix software and established science-mapping procedures (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

A PRISMA-style reporting framework was used to document the available corpus and the limitations of the archived search record, although this study presents bibliometric mapping rather than a systematic review of intervention effects (Page et al., 2021). Interpretation proceeded in two stages. First, the maps and frequency table were described as bibliometric evidence. Second, the resulting themes were interpreted in relation to the literature on Islamic economics and Aswaja. This second stage is explicitly presented as an interpretative synthesis, not as evidence that all sampled authors used Aswaja terminology.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Keyword co-occurrence structure

The network map places Islamic economics at the centre of the thematic structure, with epistemology forming the strongest adjacent conceptual pole. Social justice occupies a bridging position between foundational debates and applied themes such as Islamic finance, Islamic ethics, development, and social responsibility. This configuration indicates that justice is discussed simultaneously as a normative objective, an epistemological question, and an institutional concern.



Table 2. Ten most frequent keywords in the archived corpus

	KONTAKT	ENGAGEMENT	
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Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Interpretation
1	Islamic economics	72	Core disciplinary field
2	Epistemology	51	Sources and validation of Islamic economic knowledge
3	Islamic finance	43	Institutional and applied dimension
4	Islamic ethics	38	Normative criteria for economic conduct
5	Social justice	35	Central distributive and moral objective
6	Islamic business ethics	28	Ethical decision-making in organisations
7	Development	26	Socio-economic and welfare orientation
8	SDGs	22	Connection with global development goals
9	Religion	19	Ontological and spiritual foundation
10	Social responsibility	17	Institutional obligation towards society

Thematic clusters

Table 3. Interpretative thematic clusters

Cluster	Theme	Indicative keywords	Analytical emphasis
1	Epistemological foundations	epistemology; methodology; ontology; Islamic epistemology	How Islamic economic knowledge is justified and distinguished
2	Justice and critical renewal	social justice; equality; decolonisation; racial capitalism	Critiques of structural inequality and inherited knowledge hierarchies
3	Islamic financial institutions	Islamic finance; Islamic business ethics; social responsibility	Translation of ethical principles into organisational practice
4	Development and welfare	development; SDGs; financial inclusion; social welfare	Poverty reduction, inclusion and distributive mechanisms
5	Religious-normative foundations	Islam; religion; Islamic spirituality; Islamic education	Moral formation and religious sources of economic conduct

The first cluster indicates that Islamic economics continues to negotiate its epistemic identity. This matters because conceptions of justice depend on the criteria through which evidence, human welfare, and moral obligation are recognised. The second cluster foregrounds critical and decolonial concerns, suggesting that social justice is increasingly connected to questions of power and knowledge production. The third and fourth clusters move from theory to instruments and outcomes: finance, business ethics, inclusion, welfare, and development. The fifth cluster reconnects these applied discussions to religious foundations and moral education.

The clusters should not be understood as mutually exclusive categories. Islamic social-finance instruments, for example, connect normative, institutional, and developmental concerns. Jouti (2019) advocates sustainable Islamic social-finance ecosystems rather than isolated charitable instruments, while Kuanova et al. (2021) show that zakat, waqf, and related mechanisms require stronger theoretical integration and impact evaluation. Empirical research further indicates that ethical orientation can shape the poverty-alleviation potential of Islamic social finance (Umar et al., 2022).

Density and emerging research fronts

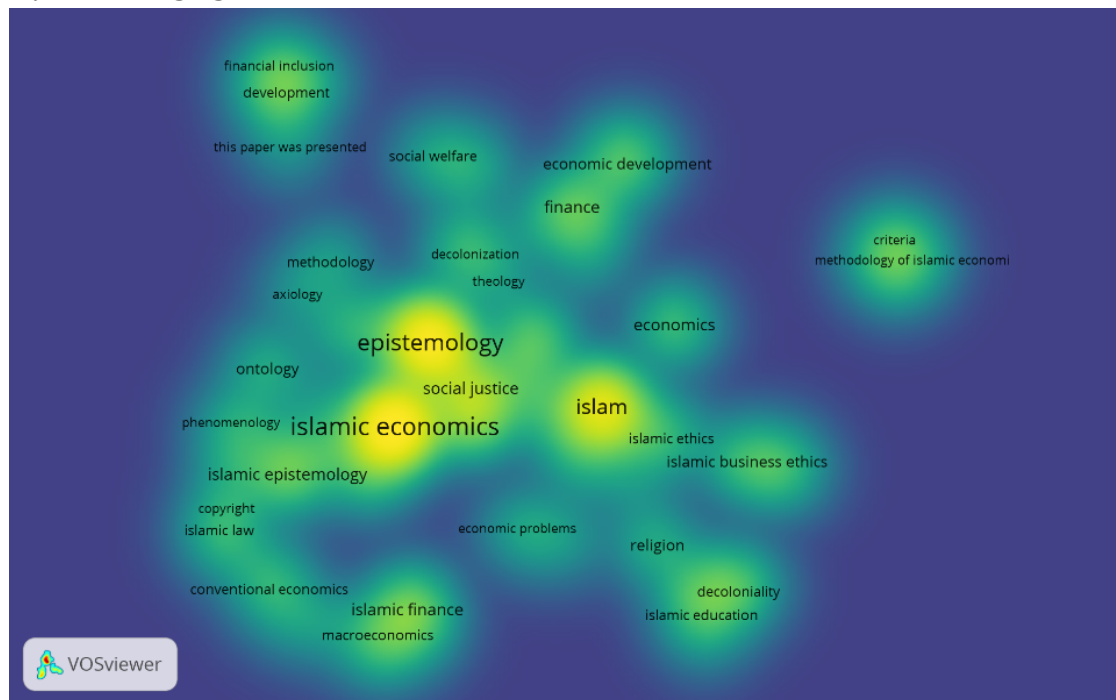


Figure 2. Density visualisation of keyword concentration.

The density map confirms that Islamic economics, epistemology, and Islam constitute the most concentrated areas of the literature. Social justice, Islamic finance, ethics, economic development, and welfare form medium-density zones linking the principal hotspots. Lower-density terms—including decoloniality, Islamic education, ontology, and phenomenology—should be interpreted as emerging or

specialised research fronts rather than dominant topics. This interpretation avoids equating visual prominence with causal importance.

The pattern also reveals a persistent tension within the field. Islamic economics is normatively committed to justice, yet much of the applied literature remains organised around financial institutions. The growing visibility of social finance and welfare themes suggests an attempt to rebalance this orientation. Studies of Islamic finance in Indonesia similarly demonstrate that institutional growth interacts with broader processes of social change rather than operating as a purely technical financial development (Pepinsky, 2013).

Temporal overlay and thematic evolution

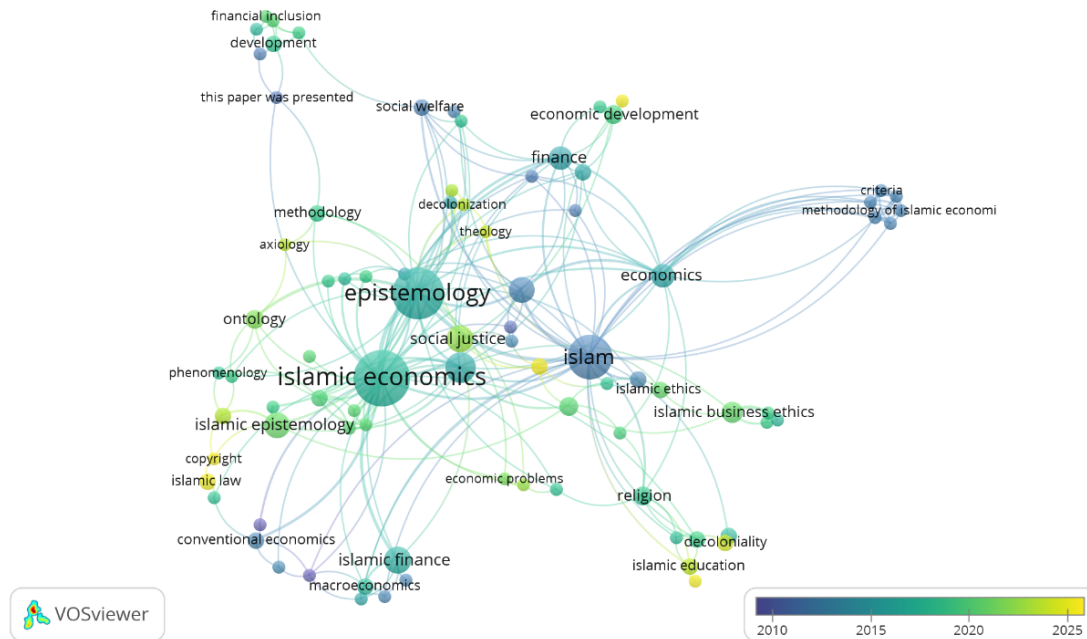


Figure 3. Overlay visualisation showing the relative temporal position of keywords.

The overlay map suggests a movement from established themes in Islamic finance and general economic discourse towards epistemological, methodological, educational, and decolonial questions. Social justice lies near the transition between established and emerging areas, indicating that it increasingly functions as a bridge between institutional analysis and critical reconstruction. This should be understood as a relative temporal pattern within the corpus, rather than as evidence that earlier scholarship neglected justice.

This development is consistent with broader bibliometric assessments. Research on Islamic finance has gradually expanded from product and market studies towards ethics, social finance, sustainability, and intellectual self-critique (Akhter et al., 2025; Hassan et al., 2021; Mi'raj & Ulev, 2024; Tijjani et al., 2021). The integration of social and commercial finance likewise reflects an attempt to align institutional innovation with measurable social outcomes (Maulina et al., 2023).

An Aswaja-informed interpretation

The bibliometric maps do not demonstrate that the sampled publications explicitly adopt Aswaja. An Aswaja-informed interpretation therefore represents an analytical comparison between the mapped themes and a recognised ethical vocabulary. Four principal correspondences can nevertheless be identified. First, i'tidal is reflected in the centrality of justice, equity, and social responsibility: economic arrangements are evaluated according to fairness rather than efficiency alone. Second, tawazun appears in the connections among epistemology, ethics, finance, and welfare, indicating the need to balance normative sources, institutional viability, and social outcomes. Third, tawassut can be discerned in efforts to develop alternatives that neither reject markets wholesale nor reduce Islamic economics to conventional finance with modified contracts. Fourth, tasamuh supports methodological plurality and dialogue across economics, law, ethics, development studies, and religious studies (Burhani, 2012; Hilmy, 2013).

A fifth value, ta'awun, is substantively reflected in research on zakat, waqf, financial inclusion, and social-finance ecosystems. It reframes justice from an abstract distributive principle into organised cooperation and the protection of vulnerable groups. This is compatible with the rahmatan lil 'alamin orientation in Indonesian Islamic-economic thought, which links religious normativity to inclusion and

public benefit (Ahyani et al., 2021). It also echoes the maqasid-based requirement that Islamic finance be assessed according to its actual welfare effects (Ahmed, 2011; Laldin & Furqani, 2013).

This interpretation yields a practical research agenda. Future studies should: (1) develop indicators that connect i'tidal and maqasid to measurable distributional outcomes; (2) compare the social impact of zakat, waqf, Islamic microfinance, and blended-finance models; (3) examine how digital platforms affect transparency, inclusion, and power asymmetries; (4) investigate whether decolonial critiques generate alternative methods rather than merely conceptual rhetoric; and (5) test how Aswaja values are translated into organisational governance, curricula, and community economic programmes. These priorities would move the field from thematic visibility towards cumulative evidence.

CONCLUSION

The available bibliometric evidence shows that research on social justice in Islamic economics is organised around the close relationship among epistemological foundations, ethical principles, financial institutions, and development objectives. Islamic economics and epistemology dominate the network, while social justice bridges ethics, finance, welfare, the Sustainable Development Goals, and social responsibility. The maps further indicate the emergence of decolonial, methodological, and educational concerns.

The study's principal contribution is twofold. Empirically, it reports the keyword structure visible in the available analytical outputs without extending the analysis to unsupported rankings of authors, countries, sources, or citations. At the interpretative level, it demonstrates how the thematic pattern may be read through i'tidal, tawazun, tawassut, tasamuh, and ta'awun. This Aswaja-informed layer is presented as a reasoned synthesis rather than as a claim that Aswaja terminology is explicit throughout the corpus.

The findings support a shift from an emphasis on formal compliance towards evidence of social impact. Future research should integrate bibliometric mapping with systematic content analysis and empirical evaluations of redistribution, poverty alleviation, inclusion, and institutional accountability. Such work would enable Islamic economics to demonstrate more clearly how its epistemology and ethics contribute to a just economic order.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is constrained by the absence of the raw Google Scholar data exported through Publish or Perish, the retrieval date, corpus size, screening log, and VOSviewer parameter file. Google Scholar offers broad coverage but may contain inconsistent metadata. The analysis is therefore limited to the auditable keyword frequencies and three available VOSviewer maps, and it does not report rankings of authors, countries, journals, or citations. Before submission, the authors should recover or repeat the search, archive the complete export and thesaurus file, report the software version, counting method, occurrence threshold, and total link strength, and deposit the cleaned dataset as supplementary material. Future research should also replicate the search in Scopus and Web of Science.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The visual maps and keyword-frequency table analysed in this study are reproduced in the article. The bibliographic export and VOSviewer project file underlying the analysis were not included in the materials available for revision and are not publicly archived. These files should be deposited with the journal or in an open repository before publication to permit independent replication.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

This study analysed bibliographic metadata and did not involve human participants, personal data, animals, or clinical materials. Formal ethical approval and informed consent were therefore not required. The authors remain responsible for accurate reporting, transparent interpretation, and proper acknowledgement of all sources.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no financial, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the design, analysis, or reporting of this study.

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