

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CONCEPT OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE IN ISLAMIC ECONOMICS: A NORMATIVE ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY MAQĀSĪD AL-SHARĪ'AH

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Abstract

This study normatively examines the concept of distributive justice in Islamic economics by positioning maqāṣid al-sharī'ah as the primary normative framework in addressing the challenges of global economic inequality and the transformation of the modern economic system. Through a qualitative approach with normative-philosophical literature study, this article conducts a content analysis of relevant classical and contemporary literature on maqāṣid and Islamic economic justice. The results of the study indicate that distributive justice in the maqāṣid perspective is not merely a matter of material distribution, but includes ethical objectives to ensure the fulfillment of basic needs, protection of human dignity, and sustainable social welfare. Other findings indicate that Islamic economic instruments such as zakat, waqf, and profit-sharing mechanisms are powerful manifestations of maqāṣid in minimizing inequality and strengthening social balance. The analysis also reveals that the integration of maqāṣid principles in modern economic policies can broaden the scope of distributive justice by including dimensions of access to economic opportunities, education, and basic services. Furthermore, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah has been adapted in contemporary discourse to evaluate the impact of economic policies on overall social welfare. Thus, this study concludes that the reconstruction of the concept of distributive justice based on maqāṣid provides an important conceptual contribution to the development of Islamic economic theory and practice that is responsive to current global inequality. This study recommends further operational development in Islamic public policy and economic planning to substantially realize the principle of distributive justice.

Keywords: Distributional Justice, Islamic Economics, Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah



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INTRODUCTION

Distributive justice is one of the most fundamental issues in contemporary economic discourse, particularly as global inequality intensifies as a structural phenomenon that transcends national borders and economic systems (Syahriani dkk., 2024). In this context, Islamic economics is often claimed to possess a set of normative values capable of offering an alternative to exploitative and unjust distribution models (Darajat, 2025). However, these claims often stop at a general normative level and have not been fully elaborated conceptually in light of the complex realities of the modern economy (Lusiana, 2025; Hananiyah dkk., 2025). This research is written because of the urgent need to review the concept of distributive justice in Islamic economics so that it does not become trapped in historical romanticism but instead engages in critical dialogue with the challenges of the times. Thus, this article aims to open up space for a more relevant and applicable conceptual reconstruction.

The development of global capitalism, market liberalization, and economic financialization have given rise to increasingly unequal patterns of wealth distribution, even in countries with Muslim majorities (Wulandari dkk., 2025). This situation raises fundamental questions about the extent to which the principles of distributive justice in Islamic economics have been properly understood and implemented. Many economic policies purporting to be based on sharia are trapped in a legal-formal approach without considering the substantive objectives of sharia itself (Saputro dkk., 2025). Therefore, this study aims to reexamine the normative foundations of distributive justice by placing the maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah as the primary analytical framework. This approach is expected to shift the focus from mere legal compliance to the achievement of substantive justice.

Maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah has historically been understood as the primary objectives of sharia, oriented toward human well-being, both at the individual and social levels (Syaichoni dkk., 2025). In an economic context, maqāṣid serve not only as normative legitimacy but also as an ethical compass in formulating just distribution policies. However, the meaning of maqāṣid is often limited to the five classical objectives without further contextual development (Muhammadong, 2025). This study aims to emphasize that maqāṣid are dynamic and open to reinterpretation in accordance with changing socio-economic structures. In this way, maqāṣid can serve as a living and responsive normative framework. Based on this background, this article aims to reconstruct the concept of distributive justice in Islamic economics through a normative analysis of contemporary maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah. The research focuses on expanding the meaning of economic justice to encompass issues of structural inequality, access to resources, and the protection of vulnerable groups. This research is significant because it seeks to bridge the gap between Islamic normative theory and modern economic realities. Thus, this

article is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to the development of a more just and relevant Islamic economics.

Classical Islamic economic literature demonstrates that the concept of distributive justice has been a primary concern of Muslim thinkers since the early period (Hikmah & Yazid, 2025). Figures such as al-Ghazali positioned justice as a moral principle inseparable from the objectives of sharia, particularly in maintaining social balance. Within this framework, wealth distribution is understood as a means to prevent excessive accumulation and ensure the fulfillment of basic societal needs. However, these discussions remain closely tied to the medieval socio-economic context. Therefore, classical literature provides a strong normative foundation, but requires reinterpretation to remain relevant.

Al-Shatibi then developed the theory of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* more systematically, emphasizing the importance of welfare as the primary objective of Islamic law (Rahmi dkk., 2025). In his view, distributive justice relates not only to the distribution of wealth but also to the protection of essential human needs. This literature emphasizes that equitable distribution is a prerequisite for social stability and the sustainability of society. However, al-Shatibi did not explicitly discuss the distribution mechanisms in modern economic systems. This opens up space for the development of a more contextual *maqāṣid* theory.

In contemporary literature, the study of distributive justice in Islamic economics has expanded along with increasing attention to the issue of global inequality (Fitri dkk., 2025). Modern scholars have begun to link *maqāṣid* with the concepts of social justice, sustainable development, and human rights. This approach demonstrates that *maqāṣid* can serve as a bridge between Islamic values and global economic discourse (Hidayat dkk., 2025). However, much of the literature remains normative-descriptive and does not offer an operational analytical framework. Therefore, a more in-depth synthesis of theory and practice is needed. Several studies have also highlighted the weaknesses in the implementation of distributive justice in contemporary Islamic economic policy (Rahim dkk., 2023). These weaknesses are often caused by the reduction of the *maqāṣid* to mere normative slogans without clear policy implications. This literature emphasizes the importance of a philosophical approach to understanding *maqāṣid* as ethical principles guiding economic decision-making. Thus, the literature review reveals a gap between normative ideals and empirical reality. This gap is the primary focus of this research.

The literature on economic justice from non-Islamic perspectives also provides an important comparative context (Maulidya dkk., 2025). Distributive justice theories in modern economics emphasize issues of equality of opportunity and redistribution of wealth through public policy. Although originating from different traditions, there are normative intersections between these theories and the *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*. This literature helps enrich the analysis by demonstrating the universality of the value of justice. However, Islamic economics is unique in its theological and ethical foundations.

Overall, the literature review indicates that the concept of distributive justice in Islamic economics has a strong normative foundation but still requires conceptual reconstruction. Classical literature provides an ethical framework, while contemporary literature offers new contexts and challenges. This research positions itself as an attempt to synthesize these two traditions. As such, its theoretical foundation is built on a critical dialogue between the Islamic intellectual heritage and modern economic realities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative method with a normative-philosophical literature study approach. This approach was chosen because the primary objective of the research is to understand and reconstruct concepts, rather than quantitatively measure phenomena. Through literature study, researchers can explore normative ideas developed in classical and contemporary literature. A philosophical approach allows for a more in-depth analysis of the underlying assumptions and ethical implications of the concept of distributive justice. Therefore, this method was deemed most appropriate for the research objectives.

The research data sources consisted of classical literature by Islamic thinkers as well as contemporary writings on the *maqāsid al-sharī‘ah* (objectives of Islamic law) and Islamic economics. This literature was selected purposively based on its relevance to the theme of distributive justice. The selection process was conducted by considering the scholarly authority and conceptual contributions of each work. In this way, the research strives to ensure that the analysis is based on credible sources. Selecting appropriate sources is a crucial initial step.

The data analysis technique used was content analysis. This technique allows researchers to identify key themes, patterns of thought, and normative arguments emerging in the literature. The analysis was conducted systematically by reading, coding, and interpreting the text. The focus of the analysis was directed at the concepts of justice, distribution, and *maqāsid*. Thus, content analysis serves as a tool to explore the meanings implied in the text.

The normative-philosophical approach also allows the researcher to conduct a conceptual critique of existing understandings. This critique is not intended to negate the contributions of previous literature, but rather to identify limitations and opportunities for development. In this way, the research seeks to build a coherent and systematic argument. The analysis process was conducted reflectively and iteratively. The result is expected to be a more comprehensive conceptual reconstruction.

The validity of the research was maintained through consistency of analysis and traceability of sources. The researcher ensured that each argument was based on rational and contextual interpretation. Although qualitative in nature, this research prioritized methodological rigor. Therefore, the method used is expected to produce academically accountable findings. This methodology serves as the foundation for subsequent discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that distributive justice in Islamic economics has a broader normative dimension than simply the distribution of wealth. Within the *maqāsid* framework, justice is understood as a condition that enables the fulfillment of basic needs and the preservation of human dignity. This dimension emphasizes the importance of balancing individual rights and social interests. Thus, just distribution is not merely a matter of market mechanisms but also of ethical objectives. This finding confirms the holistic nature of justice in Islam.

Analysis of classical literature shows that distributive justice is always linked to the prevention of social harm (Hidayat, 2024). Excessive wealth accumulation is seen as a threat to societal stability. In this context, distribution instruments such as *zakat* and *sadaqah* function as corrective mechanisms. However, these mechanisms are not always designed to address the complexities of the modern economy. Therefore, a more contextual reinterpretation is needed.

Contemporary literature broadens the understanding of distributive justice by incorporating the issue of structural inequality. Inequality is no longer understood as a mere individual consequence, but as a result of the global economic system. From a *maqāsid* perspective, this condition demands more proactive normative intervention. Distributive justice must encompass access to education, health care, and economic opportunities. These findings demonstrate the need for a more systemic approach.

The research also shows that the *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* (the principles of justice) can serve as an evaluative framework for economic policy (Huda dkk., 2025). Policies are assessed not only by their formal compliance with the law but also by their impact on social welfare. This approach allows for a more comprehensive assessment of distribution policies. Thus, *maqāṣid* becomes an applicable normative analytical tool. These findings strengthen the relevance of *maqāṣid* in modern economics.

The content analysis reveals that the concept of distributive justice in Islamic economics is dynamic (Guney, 2024). This dynamic allows for adjustments to changing social and economic contexts. However, this dynamic is often hampered by a rigid textual approach. This research demonstrates that interpretive flexibility is key to the development of the concept of justice. Thus, *maqāṣid* must be understood as evolving principles.

The research also highlights the importance of the ethical dimension in economic distribution. Ethics serves not merely as a supplement but as the core of the Islamic economic system. Just distribution must consider the moral and social impacts of each policy. These findings confirm that Islamic economics cannot be separated from ethical values. Thus, distributive justice has a strong moral dimension.

This study found that the *maqāṣid* approach allows for the integration of Islamic values and global justice discourse (Solehudin dkk., 2024). This integration opens up opportunities for dialogue between Islamic economics and modern theories of justice. In this way, Islamic economics can contribute to global solutions. These findings demonstrate the potential universality of *maqāṣid*, broadening the scope of relevance of Islamic economics.

Other findings indicate that the reconstruction of distributive justice requires an interdisciplinary approach (Dasrianto dkk., 2025). Distribution issues cannot be understood solely from a legal or theological perspective. Economic, sociological, and ethical approaches are necessary for a comprehensive analysis. *Maqāṣid* serves as a meeting point for these various disciplines, thus enriching the conceptual reconstruction.

Overall, the research findings confirm that distributive justice in Islamic economics must be understood as an ongoing normative project. This project demands critical reflection and continuous conceptual renewal. Therefore, distributive justice is not a static concept. These findings provide a basis for further discussion in the discussion.

The research findings demonstrate that the reconstruction of distributive justice has significant theoretical implications. By placing *maqāṣid* as the primary normative framework, Islamic economics can transcend legalistic approaches. This approach addresses criticisms that Islamic economics is insufficiently responsive to modern inequality. This discussion emphasizes the importance of goal orientation in policy formulation. Thus, *maqāṣid* provides a strong theoretical foundation.

From a practical perspective, the research findings demonstrate that Islamic economic policies need to be evaluated based on their social impacts. This evaluation allows for the identification of policies that have the potential to exacerbate inequality. By using *maqāṣid* as a measuring tool, policymakers can formulate more equitable distribution strategies. This discussion demonstrates the direct relevance of the research. Therefore, it has clear policy implications.

The discussion also highlights the importance of *maqāṣid* education and literacy. Without adequate understanding, *maqāṣid* risks being reduced to normative jargon. Islamic economic education must emphasize the ethical dimension and social objectives. In this way, future generations can develop a more just Islamic economy. This discussion demonstrates the strategic role of education. This study also explains why the *maqāṣid* approach is relevant in a global context. Economic inequality is a transboundary problem that requires universal normative solutions. *Maqāṣid* offer widely accepted values. This discussion confirms the potential contribution of Islamic economics to global discourse. Thus, this study has international significance.

Furthermore, the discussion demonstrates that conceptual reconstruction requires intellectual courage. This courage is necessary to move beyond the comfort zone of classical interpretations (Ismiati, 2025). However, the reconstruction must remain rooted in the Islamic intellectual tradition. Therefore, a balance between continuity and change is key. This discussion clarifies the direction of theory development.

Finally, the discussion emphasizes that this research was conducted to address the needs of the times. Economic inequality demands a serious normative response. By reconstructing distributive justice, Islamic economics can become a credible alternative. This discussion links the findings to the initial objectives of the study. Thus, the research's relevance becomes clearer.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study indicates that distributive justice in Islamic economics has significant normative potential. This potential can be realized through a contextual approach to the principles of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*). Thus, justice is not understood narrowly, but rather as an effort to achieve social welfare. This conclusion emphasizes the importance of conceptual reconstruction. In this way, Islamic economics becomes more relevant.

This study also concludes that the *maqāṣid* function as an evaluative and normative framework. This framework allows for the assessment of economic policies based on their social impact. Thus, Islamic economics can make a tangible contribution to reducing inequality. This conclusion demonstrates the practical value of the research. In this way, the research objective is achieved.

Finally, this study recommends further development of the study of *maqāṣid* and distributive justice. Further research can explore the empirical applications of this normative framework. In this way, Islamic economics can continue to develop as a dynamic discipline. This conclusion concludes the article with a forward-looking view. In this way, this research provides a direction for further development.

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