

RESEARCH TRENDS IN ISLAMIC FAMILY LAW: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF SCOPUS PUBLICATIONS (2000-2024)

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ABSTRACT

The last 20 years have seen a growing interest in Islamic Family Law among scholars with a significant number of studies being published in international settings. The current paper evaluates the trend in the research activities in relation to Islamic Family Law across the world between the year 2000 and the year 2024. This study used data out of the Scopus journal. A systematic bibliometric analysis shows that the number of articles has grown since 2015 because of the increased interest in women's issues worldwide, the necessity to introduce changes in Muslim states, and the connection between the Islamic family law and other legal systems. Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Egypt are also considered to be some of the pioneer countries which study Islamic Family Law and the western countries that have a problem of Muslim minority also have made remarkable contributions in the study of Islamic Family Law. This paper is a critique and synthesis of the literature on issues like polygamy, divorce, and child marriage through sentiment analysis and elicits the potential opinions at both ends of the spectrum. The results indicate that research on Islamic Family Law has expanded across multiple dimensions. However, the NVivo thematic coding reveals recurring concerns regarding compatibility between Islamic family law and international human rights norms, particularly in discussions on gender equality and child marriage. This paper intends to scope the existing field in hopes of covering contemporary discourses by focusing on the Islamic Family Law research field and detailing the evolution of the field and mapping its prominent scholars.

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INTRODUCTION

In the last twenty years, there has been an increasing worldwide attention towards Islamic Family Law. This comes as a result of the active discussion on issues regarding the conditioning of women,¹ the issues of law reform,² and the relations between Sharia and the legal norms.³ Islamic Family Law explains most personal status laws related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody, and it is also claimed to be of great relevance to all practices in Muslim states and to Muslim minorities in the West.⁴ Islamic Family Law is an old institution, but its adherents are also facing newer social issues, including the status of women and children, their rights, gender equality, and human equality in external relations.

Islamic Family Law consist legal framework that regulates human relationships among Muslims. It covers areas such as marriage requirements, dissolution of marriage, rights of maintenance of wife and children, custody, jointly acquired property, and other matters relating to marriage and divorces. It stems from a divine source of Shariah (the Quran and the hadith) as the primary sources of law. The secondary sources, such as *ijma'* (consensus of opinion), *qiyas* (analogical reasoning), and *ijtihad* (independent juristic opinion), play an important role in guiding the development of *fiqh* in areas where the primary sources are silent on more advanced and contemporary issues. Modern Islamic Family Law operates on these two strong pillars that allow the areas of law to develop and are dynamically available to regulate more

¹ M.Z. Abbasi, "Development of Women's Right to No-Fault Judicial Divorce (Khul') in Pakistan: Judges and 'Ulamā' as Catalysts for Legal Reform," *Islamic Studies* 61, no. 2 (2022): 169-89, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.52541/isiri.v61i2.2313>.

² M.Z. Abbasi, "Judicial Ijtihad as a Tool for Legal Reform: Extending Women's Right to Divorce under Islamic Law in Pakistan," *Islamic Law and Society* 24, no. 4 (2017): 384-411, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685195-00244P04>; Siti Aminah and Arif Sugitanata, "Genealogy and Reform of Islamic Family Law: Study of Islamic Marriage Law Products in Malaysia," *JIL: Journal of Islamic Law* 3, no. 1 (2022): 94-110, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v3i1.556>; Zainah Anwar and Jana S Rumminger, "Justice and Equity in Muslim Family Laws: Challenges, Possibilities, and Strategies for Reform," *Wash. & Lee L. Rev.* 64 (2007): 1529; M.M. Charrad and R. Stephan, "The 'Power of Presence': Professional Women Leaders and Family Law Reform in Morocco," *Social Politics* 27, no. 2 (2020): 337-60, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxz013>.

³ M.L. Fauzi, "CHANGING TRENDS IN THE STUDY OF SHARIA IN INDONESIA An Account on Relevant Bibliographies," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 16, no. 2 (2022): 511-33, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2022.16.2.511-533>; A. Abubakar et al., "The Postponement of The Implementation of Inheritance Distribution in The Seunuddon Community, North Aceh in The Perspective of 'Urf Theory and Legal Pluralism," *El-Usrah* 6, no. 2 (2023): 411-29, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v6i2.10207>; H. Ahmed Zaki, "Law, Culture, and Mobilization: Legal Pluralism and Women's Access to Divorce in Egypt," *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 14, no. 1 (2017): 1-25, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1515/mwjhr-2016-0022>; T. Alaverdov, "Comparative Analysis of Legalsocio Studies of Muslims Family According to Islamic Family Law," in *Regulating Human Rights, Social Security, and Socio-Economic Structures in a Global Perspective* (2022), Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-4620-1.ch002>; A.P. Ali, "The Legal Impediments to the Application of Islamic Family Law in the Philippines," in *Islamic Law in Practice*, vol. 3 (2017), Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315251738>.

⁴ A.Q. Escámez, "Islamic Family Law in the Courts Spain's Position with Regard to the Moroccan Family Code," in *Muslim Family Law in Western Courts* (2014), Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315796369>.

advanced legal contemporary issues, for example, conflict of jurisdiction within domestic law, the impact of digital technologies in human relationships, the ever-changing human rights, legal pluralism, and conflict of laws between two different jurisdictions.

Prior research has advanced our knowledge of Islamic Family Law, more specifically regarding polygamy, divorce, and child marriage, significantly. For example, Rehman (2007) describes the struggle of tension between Sharia Law and international human rights law which brought out the issues of polygamy and divorce.⁵ In the same way, Moors (2018), on the interrelation of legal texts and the processes of social practice, placed Islamic law within cultural contexts.⁶ But a great deal of the research done earlier has been unnecessarily geographic in focus, and Islamic Family Law has most times been regarded as uncentric; indeed, much attention has not been paid to the fact that it is practiced in complex realities across regions and regimes. Also, while such factors that are sociocultural in nature have been identified within the scope of Islamic Family Law, methodological focus has been less so on the relationship between the family law reform in predominantly Muslim countries and the Muslim minorities' experiences in Western societies.⁷

To address the increased complexity of the discourse of contemporary Islamic Family Law, this research takes a genealogical approach to the scholarship that has emerged in the last 20 years. Instead of just charting the quantitative growth of the number of publications, this study will endeavor to unravel the intellectual paths, ideological changes, and epistemological underpinnings that have informed this discipline. This involves the study of major researchers, institutional input, thematic development, and transnational processes of knowledge production of the Islamic Family Law. The genealogical approach enables us to place scholarly interventions in the wider context of socio-political processes, which inform them- reform movements, international discourse of human rights, and legal pluralism, both Muslim and Western.⁸

This study attempts to respond to these shortcomings by presenting a detailed analysis of the period under study, its time frame has been inclusive of the period 2000-2024, and focuses on the global distribution of Islamic Family Law research as found in Scopus-indexed sources. Parameters of publication activities, the main contributors, and the emerging directions in the literature are revealed in the analysis conducted with a bibliometric approach.⁹ This paper isolates the factors of scholarly opinion and views that are articulated about polygamy, divorce, child marriage and other facets of Islamic Family Law as negative and positive due to automated content analysis. This paper explores how the views on polygamy, divorce and child marriage

⁵ J. Rehman, "The Sharia, Islamic Family Laws and International Human Rights Law: Examining the Theory and Practice of Polygamy and Talaq," *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family* 21, no. 1 (2007): 108-27, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1093/lawfam/ebi023>.

⁶ A. Moors, "Debating Islamic Family Law: Legal Texts and Social Practices," in *A Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East* (2018), Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429502606>.

⁷ E.R. Nur and A. Hermanto, "Dynamic Development of Family Law in Muslim Countries," *Al-Adalah* 19, no. 1 (2022): 161-78, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.24042/adalah.v19i1.12421>; A. Awad, "Islamic Family Law in American Courts: A Rich, Diverse and Evolving Jurisprudence," in *Muslim Family Law in Western Courts* (2014), Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315796369>; Galuh Widitya Qomaro, "Age of Consent in Islam: Between Legal Principles, Controversies, and Social Adaptations," *Articles, Al Ahkam* 19, no. 2 (2023): 59-76, <https://doi.org/10.37035/ajh.v19i2.9590>.

⁸ Wael B Hallaq, *The Formation of Islamic Law* (Routledge, 2016).

⁹ Martina K Linnenluecke et al., "Conducting Systematic Literature Reviews and Bibliometric Analyses," *Australian Journal of Management* 45, no. 2 (2020): 175-94.

are framing the greater context of Islamic Family Law scholarship where such matters are continually debated as it aims to fill the gaps in the current literature on the discussions of global Islamic Family Law issues that are still incomplete regarding the merging of the traditional Islamic law and the contemporary concept of human rights. The paper not only follows the history of Islamic family law, but also describes possible directions of future study in the areas of early Arab law where it overlaps with political and constitutional problems. The article will serve to promote the emergence of more specialized and region-specific research due to the changing trends in the Islamic family law.

This study employs Legal Pluralism Theory, where multiple legal systems co-exist within the same domestic laws. Legal pluralism forces the simultaneous operation of domestic law, religious law, and customary law in that particular country or locality. In the context of Islamic Family Law, legal pluralism provides a useful analytical framework for understanding how Islamic legal principles are interpreted, implemented, and negotiated alongside national legislation, constitutional provisions, customary practices, and international human rights standards. The relevance of this framework is particularly evident in many Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority jurisdictions where Islamic Family Law functions within complex legal environments characterized by overlapping sources of authority.¹⁰ This framework is particularly relevant to the present bibliometric study, as the emerging themes of legal reform, human rights, gender justice, transnational family relations, and digital legal practices identified in the literature reflect the increasingly pluralistic nature of Islamic Family Law in contemporary societies

METHODS

This study employs a convergent mixed-methods design that integrates quantitative bibliometric techniques and qualitative genealogical-discursive analysis to explore the landscape of research on Islamic Family Law between 2000 and 2024. The Scopus database was searched with the search query: TITLE-ABSTRACT-KEYWORDS ("Islamic Family Law" OR Muslim family law" OR Sharia family law). Accessed data were on December 24, 2024. The search was limited to the publications on the topics of the Social Sciences and Law, and to the publications in the English language in the form of journal articles and review papers. Peer-reviewed articles that specifically addressed Islamic Family Law were included in the inclusion criteria, whereas those articles that only discussed it marginally or had no relation to it were excluded. The combination of automated filtering and manual verification helped to identify and delete duplicate records. The names of authors were normalized by Scopus indexing rules, and to be sure that all name variations were correct, some inconsistencies were examined by hand. NVivo 14 and VOSviewer were then used to analyze the data.¹¹

The quantitative component, conducted using VOSviewer, generated network visualizations to examine the co-occurrence of keywords, authorship patterns, citation density, and thematic clustering. A minimum keyword co-occurrence threshold of five was applied, using

¹⁰ Sally Engle Merry, "Legal Pluralism," *Law & Society Review* 22, no. 5 (1988): 869-96; John Griffiths, "What Is Legal Pluralism?," *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 18, no. 24 (1986): 1-55; John R. Bowen, *A New Anthropology of Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹¹ Helen Elliott-Mainwaring, "Exploring Using NVivo Software to Facilitate Inductive Coding for Thematic Narrative Synthesis," *British Journal of Midwifery* 29, no. 11 (2021): 628-32.

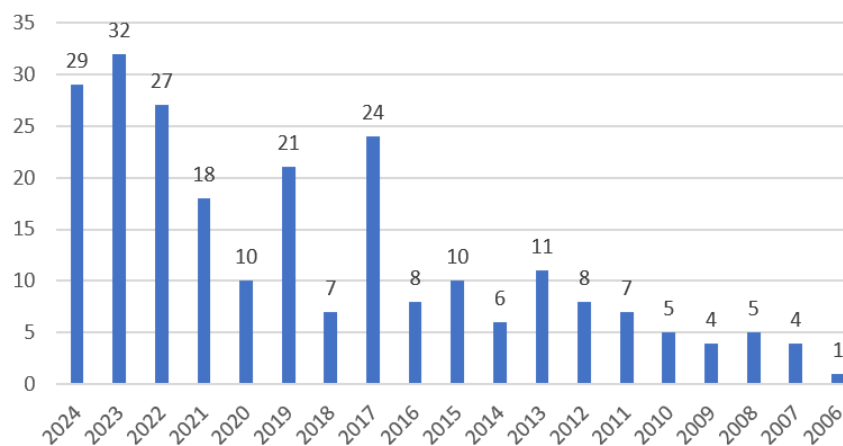
full counting and normalization of association strength.¹² This bibliometric analysis identified the most prolific contributors, institutional affiliations, and emerging thematic concentrations in Islamic Family Law research.¹³ The qualitative aspect was based on NVivo 14 and genealogical and discursive analysis of the selected influential publications. This included thematic coding to determine the common themes that included gender, legal reform, and family structure, and to trace the epistemic lineages by intertextual reference and theoretical change in the area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Genealogies of Thought in Islamic Family Law Scholarship

In the last 20 years, there has been a tremendous rise in research interest on Islamic Family Law. Data provided by Scopus says that the publications are on the constant increase, especially over the past decade. At the beginning of the 2000s, there was a comparatively small number of publications, which was indicative of a limited international interest in Islamic Family Law. In the mid-2010s, however, the number of studies has soared, probably due to an increasing interest in the issue of women's rights, legal reform in Muslim nations, and the interface of Islamic Family Law and civil law regimes. The dataset, which the analysis was based on, refers to Scopus-indexed publications received through a structured search query based on Islamic Family Law and the keywords. The information will be limited to peer-reviewed articles in the social sciences and law, published in English, and published between 2000 and 2024. Duplicates were removed manually and author names were standardised to deal with inconsistent indexing. This guarantees that the trends in publication observed are an edited collection of data which has methodological consistency.

Figure 1. The Distribution of Publications on Islamic Family Law



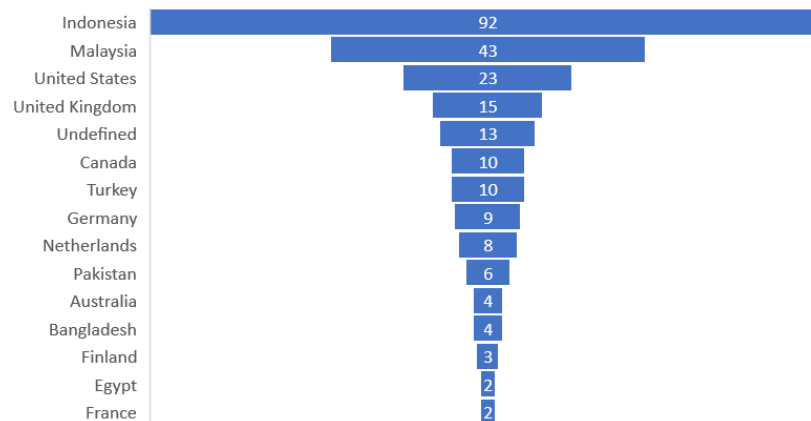
From 2015 onward, there has been a significant increase in the volume of publications, indicating a surge in scholarly attention. This trend is aligned with ongoing debates and reforms

¹² Nees Van Eck and Ludo Waltman, "Software Survey: VOSviewer, a Computer Program for Bibliometric Mapping," *Scientometrics* 84, no. 2 (2010): 523-38.

¹³ Anton Klarin, "How to Conduct a Bibliometric Content Analysis: Guidelines and Contributions of Content Co-occurrence or Co-word Literature Reviews," *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 48, no. 2 (2024): e13031.

in various Muslim-majority countries, such as Tunisia,¹⁴ Indonesia,¹⁵ and Egypt,¹⁶ where issues related to marriage, divorce, and child custody have been at the forefront of legal and social discussions. The research contributions on Islamic Family Law are distributed globally, with significant output from countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Egypt. These countries represent major Islamic jurisdictions where Shariah law plays a pivotal role in family matters.¹⁷ Additionally, Western countries like the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada have contributed to the discourse, particularly in addressing the legal challenges faced by Muslim minorities.¹⁸

Figure 2. The Top Fifteen Geographical Distribution of Publications



Southeast Asia, especially Malaysia and Indonesia are the top region of scholarly production, portraying the ongoing debate on scholarly and legal viewpoints in Islamic Family Law in the countries. These nations are struggling to strike a balance between the old Islamic laws and the new civil laws, especially in issues like polygamy, child marriage, and inheritance

¹⁴ R. Khedher, "Tracing the Development of the Tunisian 1956 Code of Personal Status," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 18, no. 4 (2017): 30-37, Scopus; M. Muhajir, "ISLAMIC FAMILY LAW REFORM IN THE POST-ARAB SPRING TUNISIA: Between Liberalism and Conservatism," *Al-Ahwal* 14, no. 1 (2021): 26-39, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2021.14103>.

¹⁵ M. Nasir et al., "LEGAL STATUS AND CONSEQUENCES OF UNILATERAL DIVORCE: COMPARATIVE STUDIES BETWEEN EGYPT, JORDAN, TUNISIA AND INDONESIA," *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law* 12, no. 2 (2024): 457-70, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.33102/mjssl.vol12no2.614>; JM Muslimin, *The Sociological Explanation of Indonesian Muslim Family Continuity and Change*, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2019.

¹⁶ N. Nader and R.E.A. Debian, "Winds of Change: Egypt's Islamic Family Law between Two Centuries (1920-2013)," in *North African Women After the Arab Spring: In the Eye of the Storm* (2017), Scopus, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-49926-0_11; Fauzi Fauzi, "'Urf and Its Role in The Development of Fiqh: Comparative Study of Family Law Between Egypt and Indonesia," *El-Usrah* 7, no. 1 (2024): 346-71, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v7i1.23968>.

¹⁷ M.Z. Abbasi and S.A. Cheema, "Polygamy and Second Marriage under Muslim Family Law in Pakistan: Regulation and Impact," *Islamic Studies* 59, no. 1 (2020): 29-50, Scopus; R. Abdullah and S. Khairuddin, "The Malaysian Shari'ah Courts: Polygamy, Divorce and the Administration of Justice," *Asian Women* 25, no. 1 (2009): 21-54, Scopus.

¹⁸ T.F. Ruby, *Muslim Women's Rights: Contesting Liberal-Secular Sensibilities in Canada*, Muslim Women's Rights: Contesting Liberal-Secular Sensibilities in Canada (2019), 200, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315182933>; P. Fournier, "Family Law, State Recognition and Intersecting Spheres/Spaces: Jewish and Muslim Women Divorcing in the United Kingdom," in *Culture in the Domains of Law* (2017), Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316681060.003>; S. Zaman, "Amrikan Shari'a: The Reconstruction of Islamic Family Law in the United States," *South Asia Research* 28, no. 2 (2008): 185-202, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1177/026272800802800204>.

rights. Journal articles (183 of 239) and then book chapters (31), reviews (16), and books (9) make up the largest portion of the publications. This implies that the majority of academic work is published in journal articles, and some of the extensive analyses can be found in books and other book chapters.

Figure 3. The Top Fifteen Publications Source



These journals, Samarah and El-Usrah, have 23 and 18 publications, respectively, which underscores the significance of these journals in publishing articles associated with Islamic family law. Other prominent journals are Al-Ahwal (8), Al-Manahij Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam (6), and Ahkam Jurnal Ilmu Syariah (5). This indicates that most of the research is published in journals dealing with Islamic law and family matters. Most of the authors with significant contributions to this area are Raihanah Abdullah (6 articles), Nahda Shehada (5 articles), Pascale Fournier (4 articles), and several others with 2-3 articles. These are the main leaders in this field, and they can be an excellent source of insights to be used in future research or in a joint effort.

Table 1. The Most Cited Publication

Citation	Authors	Title	Type	Year
72	Javaid Rehman	The Sharia, Islamic family laws, and international human rights law: Examining the theory and practice of polygamy and talaq	Journal Article	2007
46	Annelies Moors	Debating Islamic family law: Legal texts and social practices	Book Chapter	2018
28	Matthew S. Gordon and Kathryn A. Hain	Concubines and courtesans: Women and slavery in islamic history	Book	2017
25	Abu Rokhmad and Sulistiyono Susilo	Conceptualizing the authority of the legalization of Indonesian women’s rights in Islamic family law	Journal Article	2017
25	Iris Sportel	Divorce in transnational families: Marriage, migration and family law	Book	2016
25	Maaike Voorhoeve	Family Law in Islam: Divorce, Marriage and Women in the Muslim World	Book	2012

Citation	Authors	Title	Type	Year
24	Mengia Hong-Tschalaer	Muslim women's quest for justice: Gender, law and activism in India	Book	2017

(Source: Scopus, 2024)

The list of 25 most-cited documents in the sphere of Islamic Family Law can show some important tendencies and the most important themes that have been discussed by scholars during the last decades. Having 481 citations in all these documents, they discuss different aspects of Islamic Family Law, including modern issues like polygamy, divorce, Sharia reforms, women's rights, transnational marriages, and gender inequality. The document that has the highest number of citations, *The Sharia, Islamic Family Laws and International Human Rights Law: Examining the Theory and Practice of Polygamy and Talaq* (72 citations),¹⁹ points out that polygamy and talaq are still critical issues in the area of Islamic family law, especially when it comes to the conflict of Sharia and international human rights law. This work mirrors the raging controversies surrounding the right of women in marriage and divorce in the Muslim world. Some of the documents concern the intricate socio-cultural processes that influence the practice of Islamic family law. As an example, not only has Islamic family law been influenced by legal texts, but also by social and historical practices of gender that affect women and slavery in Muslim societies, as seen in *Debating Islamic Family Law: Legal Texts and Social Practices* (46 citations)²⁰ and "Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History" (28 citations).²¹ The works show the interplay between Islamic law and the local values and practices.

The high-impact publications were analyzed genealogically, and a subset was chosen based on the number of citations and position in the VOSviewer network. NVivo 14 was used to analyze these documents, thematic coding, and the main nodes included in the analysis were gender, legal reform, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, and human rights discourse. Observable changes in the clustering of keywords and the intensity of publication were observed to derive temporal segmentation (2000–2009, 2010–2014, 2015–2019 and 2020–2024). With the development of the discourse, scholars like Raihanah Abdullah sprang up, who critiqued gender justice in context, aligning Islamic legal norms with contemporary socio-political realities in Southeast Asia. In the meantime, the work by Javaid Rehman signifies a paradigm shift as it unites Islamic Family Law to international human rights law, which is part of a larger discursive shift towards global legal pluralism. The continuity and rupture can be seen in this intellectual current, which establishes the concepts of the foundation of Islam in a new theoretical context, with the geographical and institutional location of the authors. Instead of simply indicating single scholars, such genealogical mapping recreates the change of the predominant discourse and epistemological emphasis by showing how the study of Islamic Family Law has moved beyond the analysis of the doctrines to a more interdisciplinary and topographical approach. Instead of concentrating on single scholars, this genealogical mapping reconstitutes the changes in the mainstream discourse and

¹⁹ Rehman, "The Sharia, Islamic Family Laws and International Human Rights Law: Examining the Theory and Practice of Polygamy and Talaq."

²⁰ Moors, "Debating Islamic Family Law: Legal Texts and Social Practices."

²¹ M.S. Gordon and K.A. Hain, *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History*, Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History (2017), 356, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190622183.001.0001>.

epistemological orientation, showing how the study of the Islamic Family Law has come to be centered on a more interdisciplinary and globally placed approach.

The intellectual tradition also shows the development of the critical approach to *urf*, *maqāṣid al-sharī*, and minority jurisprudence in the West. These tendencies suggest that Islamic Family Law cannot be considered a mono-tradition but rather a conflicting and evolving area of study being affected by the influences of migration, feminist hermeneutics, and digital revolution. This transformation can be traced by the thematic clusters that VOSviewer has uncovered, as they not only mirror academic interests but also ideological shifts in the field.

Table 2. Genealogy of Scholarship in Islamic Family Law (2000–2024)

Period	Thematic Focus	Key Scholars	Geographical Context	Paradigm/Framework
2000–2009	Classical doctrines (polygamy, talaq, custody)	Wael Hallaq, Abdullahi An-Na'im, Ziba Mir-Hosseini	Middle East, Global South	Normative <i>fiqh</i> , reformist critique, legal pluralism
2010–2014	Gender and legal reform	Raihanah Abdullah, Mulki Al-Sharmani	Malaysia, Egypt, Finland	Feminist hermeneutics, <i>maqāṣid al-sharī'ah</i>
2015–2019	Intersection with human rights and migration	avaid Rehman, Iris Sportel, Annelies Moors	UK, Netherlands, Indonesia	Rights-based approach, transnational legal analysis
2020–2024	Digital law, minority jurisprudence, <i>urf</i>	Fauzi Fauzi, Sanna Mustasaari, Mengia Hong-Tschalaer	Indonesia, Europe, India	Legal-tech hybridity, local custom integration

(Source: Scopus, 2024)

The four periods of analytical classification are not chosen randomly and are determined on the basis of patterns observed via bibliometric clustering and thematic coding. All phases are characterized by a comparative change of predominant areas of interest in research, which can be demonstrated by the changes in the popularity of keywords and patterns of citations. The genealogical mapping above is a synthesis of the development of the study of Islamic Family Law into four major periods that are marked by a change of discourse of thematic focus as well as the intellectual framework. Between 2000 and 2009, the dominance of studies dealt with classical jurisprudence-polygamy, divorce, and inheritance, often in terms of normative *fiqh* or reformist criticism. Historiography The historicity of Islamic law and the place of Sharia in the modern nation-state were fundamentally criticized by such scholars as Wael Hallaq and Abdullahi An-Na'im. Their efforts provided an epistemological basis of future reform arguments.

Between 2010 and 2014, the theme was broadened to gender justice, especially in Southeast Asia and Northern Europe. Among the first to make the turn to feminist hermeneutics and contextual readings of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, Raihanah Abdullah and Mulki Al-Sharmani started to write Islamic Family Law. These studies went beyond doctrinal analysis by embedding lived experiences and institutional realities within the discourse of legal reform. The 2015-2019 era was a paradigmatic change to a discourse of human rights and the legal experience of the

minority of Muslims. The seminal work by Javaid Rehman is another such trend, as it relates Islamic Family Law to the international standards of human rights, especially when the topic of polygamy and divorce is being discussed. Simultaneously, researchers like Iris Sportel and Annelies Moors emphasize migration, transnational marriage, and the plural legal spaces that diaspora communities are moving through.

The latest, and currently, the scholarship has moved to hybrid models with the inclusion of digital law, local custom (*urf*), and minority jurisprudence, 2020-2024. Such figures as Fauzi Fauzi and Sanna Mustosaari provide an example of discussing the role of Islamic law in online marriage, the legal identity of non-Muslim majority states, and the interaction of Islamic legal rationality with secular state apparatus. These recent ways depict a shift in Islamic Family Law to a post-classical, decolonial, and technologically woven future.

Subsequently, the authors performed a sentiment analysis focused on Islamic Family Law, utilizing automated sentiment coding within NVivo 14. In this context, sentiment analysis serves to categorize expressions as positive, negative, or neutral (indicating a blend of positive and negative sentiments), employing advanced text analysis techniques.²² The analysis utilizes a scoring system, wherein each sentiment-laden word is assigned a predefined score, encoding content within a spectrum that ranges from very positive to very negative.²³ This study aims to assess experts' perceptions of Islamic Family Law. It is important to note that the sentiment analysis in this study does not address the normative legal validity of the law, but rather reflects the tone of the scholarly discourse. Therefore, the results reveal evaluative language patterns rather than definitive positions regarding the compatibility between Islamic Family Law and international human rights. The findings indicate that the majority of publications exhibit a fairly positive attitude toward this topic. Specifically, 209 references were classified as exhibiting fairly positive sentiment, while 124 were categorized as fairly negative, 113 as very negative, and 112 as very positive.

Table 3. Sentiment Classification

Sentiment	References Coded	Title	Authors
Very negative	This work addresses the significant challenges and obstacles within the frameworks of both Islamic and Indonesian positive law in combating child marriage. The author may critically analyze the limitations of existing legal frameworks, societal attitudes, or enforcement issues, leading to a predominantly negative sentiment. The language and examples used may reflect a strong sense of urgency and concern regarding the implications of child marriage on individuals and society	Efforts to Prevent Child Marriage Based on Philosophy of Islamic Law and Indonesian Positive Law	Mariani Amberi

²² Muhammad Azeem et al., "Usage of NVivo Software for Qualitative Data Analysis," *Academic Research International* 2, no. 1 (2012): 262-66.

²³ Elliott-Mainwaring, "Exploring Using NVivo Software to Facilitate Inductive Coding for Thematic Narrative Synthesis."

Sentiment	References Coded	Title	Authors
Moderately negative	This publication examines the complexities and tensions between social progress and cultural traditions, highlighting how certain cultural practices can hinder advancement. The authors likely present nuanced arguments, recognizing both positive and negative aspects of cultural change, but ultimately leaning toward a critical perspective that acknowledges the difficulties in reconciling tradition with modernity.	Social Progress and Cultural Change	John Bowen, Will Kymlicka, Martin Hopenhayn, Takiwaa Manuh, Abdul Raufu Mustapha, Faisal Garba, and Jan Willem Duyvendak
Moderately positive	This article provides a thoughtful analysis of how Islamic family law is integrated and perceived within a Finnish context, particularly focusing on the aspects of freedom of religion and individual well-being. The authors likely highlight positive developments and successes in accommodating Islamic practices while also addressing potential challenges	Islamic Family Law(s) in Finland: Reflections on Freedom of Religion from the Wellbeing Perspective	Mulki Al-Sharmani, Sanna Mustasaari
Very positive	This comparative study emphasizes the beneficial role of <i>'urf</i> in shaping and enhancing family law in both Egypt and Indonesia. The author may highlight successful integrations of customary practices into legal frameworks, demonstrating how this approach fosters flexibility, adaptability, and cultural relevance in Islamic family law. The overall tone of the work may celebrate these developments	'Urf and Its Role in The Development of Fiqh: Comparative Study of Family Law Between Egypt and Indonesia	Fauzi Fauzi

(Source: NVivo 14, 2024)

The results of the analysis through a word frequency tool were designed to determine the most common research issues in Islamic family law, as evident in the materials studied. Words and terms that were most often used in the texts were then visualized, and the size of the word was proportional to its frequency. According to the automatic coding of 239 publications on the topic of Islamic family law, the word frequency results, the most used word is law, with 1,010 times of use, the frequency of which is 3.28% of all words. This is followed by 'Islam' with 818 occurrences (2.66%) and 'family' with 724 occurrences (2.35%). Words that appeared frequently

connection between Islamic Family Law and more liberal ideas of women's rights. The density also gives an answer to the question of why, in such aspects as polygyny, custody, and financial rights of women scholars are becoming more and more of a concern, particularly in reformist movements of law. This shows a tendency of gap analysis of gender issues in the Islamic approach of jurisprudence.

In addition, legal reform, modernization, and human rights are also referred to in a high level of density, indicating consistent interest by scholars in the progression of Islamic Family Law towards its broader social context.²⁶ Such a focus on reform is created by the necessity to meet the expectations set by international human rights laws as well as the need for *ijtihad* within Islamic law. Such a dense clustering suggests that there are many researchers who are seeking new and better ways of meeting the needs of Islamic Family Law in its modern form, which appeals to people in advancing nations who are experiencing legal reform. Such changes have also been accompanied by the growing density of usage of phrases like children's rights and international law in recent years. This shows that the areas of concentration have been shifting, as more attention is being given to the consonance of Islamic family law with the international legal system in the fields related to child custody, child protection, and adoption. The emergence of these topics is consistent with the global movement for legal reform and international human rights, which centralizes the welfare of children. Researchers are comparing Islamic family laws with international laws covering children's rights and revealing some areas of conflict or potential convergence in legal systems.

Other important areas regarding research density are the Middle East, Indonesia, Malaysia and Africa. This regional orientation helps to understand that the Islamic family law is not universal and that it differs in cultures and jurisdictions. The term density here is used to refer to an increasing interest in comparative perspectives where scholars consider cases where application or interpretation of the Islamic family law varies across jurisdictions. Yet, it is not only that this comparative methodology brings these disciplines together but also that it in part describes how Islamic communities are practicing Islamic family law in local practices and legal systems. There are also areas of density around terms like secular law, civil law and constitutional law in this visualization which seem to refer to a broad area of study of how Islamic family law intersects with non-Islamic law. This has been especially noticeable in those nations that have Islamic law that coexists with secular or civil law. These terms indicate clusters of these studies, as scholars are considering the problem of how Islamic law can be incorporated into national law on the area of personal status law (marriage, divorce, and inheritance). This is a significant international trend when it comes to the legal systems aimed at reconciling between religious law and secularism.

Islamic Family Law's Evolution Through Scholarly Contributions and Contemporary Challenges

Islamic family law has had a keen scholarly interest in its relevance for today's society in the past 2 decades. R. Abdullah is one of the two scholars who gave their all to this field, together with another scholar J. Rehman, who has a different area of concern. R. Abdullah mainly deals with family law and women's rights, polygamy, and maintenance under Islam. Abdullah

²⁶ Van Eck and Waltman, "Software Survey: VOSviewer, a Computer Program for Bibliometric Mapping."

undertakes an analysis of how the law operates within the family in Islam and how contemporary issues like the law from Malaysia and Bangladesh influence family law. Abdullah's work focuses more on women's protection under Islamic family law, and this is why her publication *Protecting Muslim Women Against Abuse of Polygamy* is widely referenced.²⁷ Gender justice and the practice of Islamic family law are what Abdullah strives for, and this embodies the gender equity that Islamic law allows.

The second dimension comes from J. Rehman, whose work provides more insights into the relationship between Islamic family laws and international human rights. As it turned out, an article by the author, published in 2007 under the title *The Sharia, Islamic Family Laws, and International Human Rights Law*, has had an impact in the field by critically viewing polygamy and divorce within the norms of Islamic legal theories and international human rights laws.²⁸ More importantly, he is said to bridge Islamic laws with the international human rights framework in a manner that makes him understand Islamic Family law in a more globalized context. On the other hand, both Abdullah and Rehman, participating in the world debate, engage in research on different subjects. While Abdullah seeks answers to the questions of gender justice in Muslim-dominated countries, Rehman envisions Islamic law within the problems of the international human rights paradigm.

In the context of Islamic family law, there has been a significant increase in academic advancements since the early 2000s and much more rapid growth after 2015. This expansion is due to the increasing focus on legal changes, the conflicts between Islamic family law and civil law systems, and theories of inequality in marriage and divorce laws.²⁹ Malaysia, Indonesia, and Egypt have led the debate where Islam has had to face the realities of modern society and the law. The reform movements in these countries highlight the fact that the Islamic legal system is dynamic as it seeks to maintain its religious traditions while adapting to contemporary law.³⁰ This geographical concentration also suggests that the production of knowledge in Islamic family law is closely tied to the location of legal reforms, indicating that scholarly development is not neutral but is shaped by ongoing institutional and political transformations.

In the conflicting crosscurrents of the tradition of Islamic family law and its contemporary applications, new directions are emerging, prompting the interest of researchers. One such reason is the impact of the digital era on societal practices like marriage and divorce within the Islamic world, as well as more generally on the status and rights of Muslim women. The internet and its fluid platforms provide both advantages and hurdles to the realization of Islamic laws, particularly those that arise when Muslim nations interface with Western migrant communities.³¹ The emergence of the digital environment has, on the one hand, changed the application of the Islamic family law and its interpretation, and on the other hand, provided a space for transnational communities to openly practice such legalities.

Furthermore, there is an increasing relevance of cross-cultural analysis between Islamic family law and international human rights law, and Islamic legal systems, especially in countries

²⁷ Z. Kamaruddin and R. Abdullah, "Protecting Muslim Women against Abuse of Polygamy in Malaysia: Legal Perspective," in *Islamic Law in Practice*, vol. 3 (2017), Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315251738>.

²⁸ Rehman, "The Sharia, Islamic Family Laws and International Human Rights Law: Examining the Theory and Practice of Polygamy and Talaq."

²⁹ Aziz Al-Azmeh and Effie Fokas, "Islam in Europe," *Diversity, Identity and Influence*, Citeseer, 2007.

³⁰ Hallaq, *The Formation of Islamic Law*.

³¹ John L Esposito, *The Future of Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

with Muslim minorities such as the UK and the US.³² These studies examine how the two branches of law and philosophy can exist as united, ideally balancing the Islamic family law and the human rights problem, which has been so loudly voiced in the last few decades.³³ This transforming sphere of scholarship indicates the growing importance of Islamic family law not only in the countries where Muslims are the majority, but also in the global perspective of the law.

Discussions around gender equality and legal reform concerning Islamic family law have been the focus of attention recently, especially after the reforms brought about in Tunisia, Morocco, and Indonesia. Because of these reforms, particularly relating to, inter alia, polygamy, divorce, and inheritance rights, many academics have sought to look at how these legal practices balance between Sharia and the modern reformist ideals that seek to champion women's rights. Such discussions exemplify the dynamism within the field of Islamic family law as it adapts to the changing social and political contexts within the Muslim world.³⁴

What is more, there have been changes when it comes to the developments that have been made in the studies related to Islamic family laws. Countries in the West, like the United States and the United Kingdom, have had greater involvement in addressing legal problems surrounding Muslim minorities. This transformation demonstrates an increasing interest that goes hand in hand with the objectives of Islamic family law, as researchers investigate transnational marriages, child custody, legal reforms, as well as local practices and international human rights contexts of the Islamic family law.³⁵

The keyword analysis and the network visualization of data sourced from the Scopus database demonstrate that, still, there are core issues in the discussions on Islamic family law, and these core issues include marriage, divorce, and women's rights. As noted, there are new developments that include legal globalization and the relationship of Islamic law with the universal human rights principles. It shows that scholars are looking towards ways in which the Islamic legal ideal interacts with the ideal of a contemporary civil legal system.³⁶ The emphasis on gender issues and women's rights is one of the aspects in which attempts at change in Islamic law are made in an attempt to bring Islamic law in line with new, more liberal legal norms, and demonstrates the flexibility of the Islamic family law to modern developments in law and society.

³² Fournier, "Family Law, State Recognition and Intersecting Spheres/Spaces: Jewish and Muslim Women Divorcing in the United Kingdom"; Zaman, "Amrikan Shari'a: The Reconstruction of Islamic Family Law in the United States."

³³ W. Arista and Nursimah, "Human Trafficking from Migrant Labor: An Analysis of Patriarchal Ideology in Community and State," *IOP Conf. Ser. Earth Environ. Sci.* 175, no. 1 (2018), Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/175/1/012052>; M. Khalfaoui, "Current Muslim Understandings of Classical Family Law in a Modern Secular Context: Germany as a Case Study," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 40, no. 1 (2020): 117-27, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2020.1741163>; M.F. Hamdani, "Islamic Family Law in the Perspective of Universal Declaration Human Rights (UDHR) and the Universal Islamic Declaration Human Rights (UIDHR).," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 16, no. 1 (2016): 21-30, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v16i1.2892>.

³⁴ Fatima Seedat, "Gender and the Study of Islamic Law: From Polemics to Feminist Ethics," in *The Routledge Handbook of Islam and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 502

³⁵ Moors, "Debating Islamic Family Law: Legal Texts and Social Practices."

³⁶ J. Bowen et al., "Social Progress and Cultural Change," in *Century: Report of the International Panel on Social Progress: Volume 3: Transformations in Values, Norms, Cultures*, vol. 3 (2018), Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108399661.002>; I. Sportel, "Who's Afraid of Islamic Family Law? Dealing with Shari'a-Based Family Law Systems in the Netherlands," *Religion and Gender* 7, no. 1 (2017): 53-69, Scopus, <https://doi.org/10.18352/rg.10211>.

These trends cannot be considered only as forms of description, but as the signs of a more profound conceptual change in the discipline. The continuity of the traditional themes and the new issues does not symbolize the lack of development, but the complex overlay of the development, where the old issues of law are redefined through the prism of new analysis.

These results suggest that the Islamic Family Law is experiencing a shift in focus whereby the discipline was largely founded on doctrine and the state, to include a more interdisciplinary and globally integrated field. This area is not just growing larger but represents a reorganization of its epistemological basis, where classical jurisprudential reasoning is becoming more and more intertwined with human rights discourse, socio-legal analysis, and transnational views. There are important theoretical implications of this shift. First, it signifies the appearance of the concept of Islamic Family Law as a realm of legal pluralism where different normative systems, such as the religious, national, and international normative systems, coexist and interact. Second, the saliency of gender-based themes indicates that feminist legal theory and *maqashid*-oriented approaches are now taking the centre stage as opposed to being marginal critiques. Third, the increasing focus on digital practices and transnational settings points to a change in direction of what may be conceptualized as a post-classical period of Islamic legal studies, in which power is more and more being negotiated within decentralized and non-traditional locations. This work will not only have the advantage of mapping thematic trends but also show how Islamic Family Law is being redefined as a dynamic and disputable arena of knowledge in response to shifting socio-political, technological, and epistemological realities.

CONCLUSION

The study of the functioning of Islamic family law and its role in contemporary society has become an increasingly popular scholarly subject, especially since 2015. This tendency is not isolated to society but is a sign of widespread changes brought about by technology and a higher level of cultural exchange. The changes in the digital era on the marriage and divorce life patterns and the interaction between the Western legal system and the Muslim minority circumstances provide the need to adopt a more comprehensive method that would connect with the Islamic and the global legal systems. The events in nations like Tunisia and Morocco also put into focus the current debates on gender, family law, marriage, wealth distribution, and polygamy as a sign of how Islamic family law can adapt in modern societies.

Specialization in the critical areas such as marriage, divorce, and women's rights has also increased, and new themes such as the globalization of law and transnational family dynamics have been developed. To address the research objectives, this work shows that the research on Islamic Family Law in 2020-2024 is marked by three key trends: (1) the prevalence of all core themes; (2) the growing involvement of global discourses, especially human rights and legal pluralism; and (3) the development of new areas of knowledge, including digital practices and transnational structures. These results indicate that the field is not solely expanding in quantity, but is in a qualitative change.

There are a number of limitations to this study. The use of English-language publications listed in Scopus can be a limiting factor for other databases and different linguistic traditions. In addition, the application of the bibliometric tool and automated text analysis might be unable to provide insight into the doctrinal and legal reasoning of individual works. A wider linguistic range and the use of multi-database sources should be included to overcome these limitations in future

in the research. In-depth qualitative methods like doctrinal or critical discourse analysis could also be used in further research. Further research on topics like digital legal practices, informal legal actors, and global governance structures will be essential in enhancing our knowledge of the dynamic nature of Islamic Family Law.

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