



Does History Matter for Islamic Economics? Ottoman Economic and Business History as a Historically Grounded Analytical Resource

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Abstract: This article argues that Ottoman economic and business history can serve Islamic economics not merely as a source of illustration or normative affirmation, but as a historically grounded analytical setting capable of informing theory-building, mechanism specification, and research design. Although Ottoman practices are frequently referenced in Islamic economics, they are typically invoked episodically and at illustrative or thematic levels, rather than being mobilized to sharpen concepts, explain institutional mechanisms, or guide empirical inquiry. Building on thematic and institutional approaches in Ottoman economic historiography, the article synthesizes seven core domains, markets and regulation, state-market relations, entrepreneurship and commercial networks, guild organization, finance and credit practices, waqf-based provisioning, and legal-institutional pluralism, and demonstrates how each can be translated into analytically usable components for Islamic economics. Rather than attributing economic outcomes to religious doctrine, the article adopts a non-essentialist institutional perspective in which historical trajectories emerge from contingent interactions among legal forms, enforcement arenas, political authority, and organizational complements. This study presents a proposed methodological research framework for systematically classifying 38 publications (n=38) related to the Ottoman period in the literature on Islamic economics. The article develops testable hypotheses to examine the practical application of Islamic norms and demonstrates how historical sources such as Sharia court records and waqf deeds can be used in this process. By rethinking the Ottoman experience as a robust empirical context, the study aims to deepen the field's analytical depth and institutional foundations.

Keywords: Ottoman Economic History, Islamic Economics, Institutions, Legal Pluralism, Business History, Entrepreneurship, Waqf, Moral Economy.

JEL Classification: B15, B25, N01



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Serdaroğlu, Ü. S. (2026). Does History Matter for Islamic Economics? Ottoman Economic and Business History as a Historically Grounded Analytical Resource. Turkish Journal of Islamic Economics, 13(1), 218-252.



DOI: 10.26414/A795
TUJISE, 13(1), 2026, 218-252.
tujise.org



Received: 15.10.2025
Revised: 25.01.2026
Accepted: 20.02.2026
Online First: 21.02.2026



Introduction

Integrating Ottoman Economic and Business History into Islamic Economics

Islamic economics has traditionally prioritized normative foundations and contemporary policy concerns, focusing on ethical principles such as justice and social welfare alongside the analysis of modern financial instruments (Chapra, 2000; Siddiqi, 2004; Islahi, 2014). While this orientation has defined the field's ethical identity, it has also restricted the role of historical inquiry. Rather than serving as an active source for theoretical development or research design, historical references often function as passive moral anchors intended to validate normative claims.

Ottoman economic practices and institutions exemplify this challenge. Despite frequent citations of Ottoman waqfs and market ethics in the literature, these references are rarely used to formulate testable hypotheses or to inform empirical strategies. Consequently, a persistent gap has emerged between the rich historical experience of Islamic societies and the analytical core of Islamic economics (Hasan, 2016; Zaman, 2012). This disconnect does not stem from a lack of historical data, but rather from the “analytical thinning” of history within the discipline.

Paradoxically, this gap persists despite the maturity and empirical depth of Ottoman economic and business history. These studies, based on rigorous archival and institutional analysis, offer deep insights into guilds, merchant networks, legal-economic enforcement, and fiscal-financial practices (İnalçık, 1994; Pamuk, 2004; Pamuk, 2012; Karaman & Pamuk, 2010; Coşgel, 2005; Coşgel & Miceli, 2005; Quataert, 2005; Faroqhi, 2009). Nevertheless, Ottoman historiography and Islamic economics continue to evolve as parallel discourses with limited analytical dialogue. This article substantiates this claim through a systematic mapping of core Islamic economics literature (n=38). As documented in Appendices A.1–A.2 and illustrated in Figure A.1, Ottoman references tend to cluster within a narrow set of domains and are predominantly used at the illustrative or descriptive level rather than for analytical purposes. Building on this mapping, the study utilizes a ‘domain × depth’ coding framework and an evidence inventory (Table 3; Appendix Table A.3) to clarify how Ottoman institutions have been integrated into the field and, more importantly, how they can be utilized more analytically. The ultimate objective here is not bibliometric exhaustiveness, but rather an analytical diagnosis of the current scholarly landscape and a reduction of the risk that a limited subset of institutions is inadvertently treated as representative of Ottoman practice as a whole.

Against this background, the article advances a central argument: Ottoman economic and business history can serve Islamic economics not merely as a normative template or a civilizational reference point, but as a historically grounded analytical setting. Rather than attributing economic outcomes directly to religious doctrine, the article adopts a non-essentialist institutional reading in which outcomes emerge from historically contingent interactions among legal norms, enforcement arenas, political authority, and organizational complements (Hodgson, 1974; North, 1990; Greif, 2006). Even critical institutional accounts locate economic trajectories in specific historical equilibria rather than in Islam as a belief system *per se* (Kuran, 2011; 2018).

While this article critiques normative readings that treat Ottoman history mainly as moral validation, a parallel caution also applies, under certain conditions, to analytical readings. Even mechanism-oriented institutional accounts may slip into anachronism (projecting modern categories onto pre-modern arrangements), selective institutional sampling (privileging a narrow subset of cases as representative), or reducing historical complexity to a single explanatory lens (e.g., “law,” “religion,” or “the state”). To limit these risks, the article adopts a deliberately programmatic and transparent strategy: it treats the Ottoman case as a comparative analytical setting defined by observable arenas (contracts, enforcement, networks, provisioning) and maps existing Islamic economics work via an explicit domain × depth coding (Appendix A.1–A.2), complemented by an evidence inventory that links mechanisms to identifiable source bases (Table 3; Appendix A.3). The aim is not to close historical debate, but to make claims replicable, scope-aware, and open to refinement as additional cases and sources are incorporated. Accordingly, the paper treats “historical grounding” as a methodological discipline: concepts travel only insofar as they can be traced to identifiable arenas, comparable units, and falsifiable implications.

The contribution of the article is therefore programmatic rather than evidentiary. It does not introduce new archival data or claim causal identification. Instead, it synthesizes key domains of Ottoman economic history: markets and regulation, state–market relations, entrepreneurship and networks, guild organization, finance and credit practices, waqf-based provisioning, and legal-institutional pluralism, and translates them into analytically usable components for Islamic economics. On this basis, the article proposes a compact research agenda that specifies hypotheses, candidate mechanisms, and feasible data sources (e.g., court registers, waqf deeds, probate inventories) through which Ottoman experience can inform future conceptual and empirical work.

The study is structured as follows: The next section clarifies the conceptual distance between Islamic economics and Ottoman economic history by identifying recurring assumptions and analytical shortcuts. This is followed by a thematic synthesis of core institutional domains in Ottoman economic life and their significance for Islamic economics. The article then presents an explicit proposed research framework that operationalizes the Ottoman case as an analytical setting. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the study’s contributions to the literature, acknowledges its primary limitations, and suggests priorities for future research.

Table 1

Ottoman Economic Institutions¹ as Analytical Resources for Islamic Economics

Ottoman Economic Domain	Key Institutions / Practices	Dominant Analytical Interpretation	Contribution to Islamic Economics
Markets & Trade	Markets, price regulation, merchant networks	Moral regulation + decentralized exchange	Shows the coexistence of ethics and market rationality
Entrepreneurship	Family firms, partnerships, networks	Risk-sharing, flexible organization	Broadens entrepreneurship beyond capitalist archetypes
Guilds & Artisanship	Guilds, apprenticeship, and quality control	Embedded coordination and trust	Institutionalizes morality without suppressing efficiency
Finance	Partnerships, credit instruments, cash waqfs	Hybrid financial intermediation	Offers a historically grounded for Islamic finance debates

1 *Institutions* (North, Coase) are understood as sets of formal rules (laws, contracts) and informal constraints (norms, traditions, moral codes) that shape human interaction. The institutional approach used in this article focuses on understanding how religious doctrines have historically been related to concrete institutions (guilds, waqfs, courts), rather than directly linking economic outcomes (market success, trade volume) to religious doctrine. Thus, institutions can be described as dynamic mechanisms that adapt, evolve, and compete within their historical contexts.

Ottoman Economic Domain	Key Institutions / Practices	Dominant Analytical Interpretation	Contribution to Islamic Economics
Social Provision	Waqfs, imarets, hospitals, schools	Institutionalized welfare mechanisms	Demonstrates non-state social policy under Islamic law
Legal Framework	Islamic courts, contracts, and legal pluralism ²	Enabling and adaptive legal order	Challenges the rigidity of assumptions in Islamic law
State–Market Relations	Regulation, provisioning, taxation	Layered institutional governance	Counters state-vs-market dichotomy

Note: This table was prepared by the author to illustrate the conceptual distinctions within the article’s theoretical framework.

Rather than providing a new econometric analysis based on original archival findings, this study offers a thematic synthesis that analytically reinterprets existing themes in Ottoman economic history. The article integrates fragmented historical research regarding market operations, entrepreneurship, and legal institutions to show how the Ottoman experience can serve as a robust, historically grounded framework for Islamic economics.

The Conceptual Distance between Islamic Economics and Ottoman Economic History

Analytical Framing, Methodological Selectivity, and Research Design Gaps

Although the number of studies in both Islamic economics and Ottoman economic history has increased significantly, a clear distance still remains between the two fields. This gap is not caused by a lack of historical records or a shortage of empirical depth in Ottoman studies. Instead, it stems from the specific way Isla-

2 Legal pluralism refers to the existence and interaction of multiple, simultaneous, and overlapping legal systems under a single political authority. In the Ottoman context, this structure manifested through the dynamic interaction of Shari’a courts (qadi registers), Sultanic law (imperial decrees), guild regulations, and the internal legal systems of non-Muslim communities (the Millet system). This article argues that such pluralism offered economic actors strategic legal recourse and flexibility in contract design. Furthermore, this institutional diversity constituted a critical mechanism that expanded the scale of trade and facilitated risk management, thereby directly enhancing economic efficiency.

mic economics defines its analytical scope. As a result, there is limited effort to integrate the real-world historical institutions of Islamic societies into theoretical frameworks or research designs.

The main cause of this gap is the tendency to interpret economic outcomes through religious doctrine rather than through historical institutional analysis. Key debates on Islamic law and economic development, especially those linked to Kuran's *The Long Divergence*, stress organizational and legal constraints. These studies explicitly reject arguments that reduce economic trends solely to religious doctrine (Kuran, 2011; 2018; Pamuk, 2012). In this view, even critical institutional explanations show that outcomes result from specific legal balances, political contexts, and organizational connections. Ottoman economic history, on the other hand, supports a non-essentialist approach by documenting how Islamic legal norms actually worked through courts and contracts. It shows how these norms enabled adaptation, substitution, and institutional layering, focusing on the historical and social context (İnalçık, 1994; Pamuk, 2004).

The second source of conceptual distance is directly related to state-market relations. Islamic economics has generally inherited a binary framework that assumes strong state intervention excludes private enterprise. However, studies of Ottoman economic history seriously challenge this view. While state regulation and fiscal authority were significant, economic coordination rested on a layered regulatory system that integrated public authority, private enterprise, guild organizations, and social institutions. Tax collection, procurement systems, and regulated markets fostered a hybrid sphere of governance rather than rigid central planning structures (Salzmann, 1993; Quataert, 2005; Genç, 2014). Treating state presence and market activity as mutually exclusive elements marginalizes these institutional complementarities. Consequently, the potential contribution that Ottoman practice could offer to the literature on Islamic economics remains obscured. Mechanism-centered fiscal studies also reinforce this point: variations in tax assignment, intermediation, and collection costs shaped state capacity and the effective reach of regulation, producing layered governance outcomes rather than a simple state–market dichotomy (Karaman & Pamuk, 2010; Coşgel, 2005; Coşgel & Miceli, 2005).

Entrepreneurship represents the third point of the aforementioned analytical mismatch. Narratives regarding the weak entrepreneurial dynamism in Islamic societies are typically grounded in frameworks derived from modern corporate capitalism. Ottoman economic history, however, reveals a distinct organizational sys-

tem. Within this system, which could be evaluated on its own terms, family firms, partnerships, guild-based production, and network-oriented trade flourished. This structure facilitated risk-taking, capital accumulation, and long-term continuity without relying on impersonal or institutional forms (Pamuk, 2018). Rather than stagnation, these arrangements clearly demonstrate an adaptive capacity.

Finally, it must be noted that within the aforementioned economic structure, Ottoman legal practice demonstrates that Islamic law did not function as a constraint on economic innovation. Legal pluralism, contractual diversity, and pragmatic adjudication enabled economic actors to navigate multiple normative frameworks and readily select the instruments most suitable for specific transactions (İnalçık, 1994; Ergene, 2003). Rather than being a static or rigid template, Islamic law functioned as a flexible framework through which economic coordination was negotiated and implemented.

To clarify the source of the analytical distance discussed above, Table 2 presents a neutral typology of the main analytical approaches within Islamic economics, situating the Ottoman-informed historical-institutional perspective alongside, rather than against, normative and formal approaches.

Table 2

Analytical Approaches in Islamic Economics: A Neutral Typology

Analytical Approach	Core Analytical Question	Typical Methods	Primary Data / Sources	Main Analytical Strength	Typical Blind Spot
Normative-Ethical Approach	What should economic behavior and outcomes look like under Islamic principles?	Normative analysis, fiqh-based reasoning, ethical evaluation	Qur'an, Sunnah, classical jurisprudence, ethical texts	Clarifies moral objectives, justice criteria, and normative benchmarks	Limited engagement with historically realized institutions and variation
Formal / Technical Modeling Approach	How do Islamic economic rules operate within abstract economic models?	Formal modeling, financial theory, applied economics	Stylized data, contemporary financial instruments, simulations	Analytical precision and internal consistency	Detachment from historical and institutional context

Analytical Approach	Core Analytical Question	Typical Methods	Primary Data / Sources	Main Analytical Strength	Typical Blind Spot
Historical-Institutional Approach	How did Islamic norms operate through institutions in specific historical settings?	Archival analysis, institutional economics, comparative history	Court records, waqf deeds, firm records, archival sources	Explains mechanisms, institutional adaptation, and historical variation	Limited normative generalization; context-specific findings

Note: This table presents a schematic typology intended to clarify analytical emphases rather than to rank approaches. The categories are not mutually exclusive and may overlap in practice.

To complement this conceptual typology with empirical orientation, Appendix A.2 provides a schematic coding of representative Islamic economics publications (Table A.2; n = 38) by analytical domain and depth of Ottoman usage. The table demonstrates that while Ottoman references are present across several domains, they are overwhelmingly concentrated at illustrative or thematic levels (D1–D2), with no cases reaching mechanism-bearing analytical depth (D3). This pattern clarifies why a historically informed research design, rather than further normative exposition, is required to translate Ottoman experience into an analytical resource for Islamic economics. The distribution of domains and analytical depth is visualized in Figure 1. The figure clearly shows the domain × depth distribution. References to the Ottoman case cluster in T1–T3, and it is evident that most remain at the D1–D2 level. By contrast, the D3 level, where mechanisms are explicitly specified, does not appear in any domain. This imbalance provides the main rationale for the research design proposed in the next section.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the distance between Islamic economics and Ottoman economic history stems less from any “natural incompatibility” than from a preferred mode of engagement. In the literature, Ottoman institutions are often mentioned briefly and in a fragmented way, typically to support normative claims, almost as if to say, “this exists in practice too.” As a result, they are brought in far more rarely as inputs for specifying mechanisms, generating hypotheses, or shaping research design. Table 2, along with Appendix A.2 and Figure 1, clearly demonstrates this aforementioned analytical imbalance.

When this is recognized, the discussion naturally shifts. For example, it is no longer a doctrinal debate about “conformity”, but rather a concrete examination of how norms operate in practice through institutions. The research design proposed in the next chapter is directly based on this reframing. From this perspective, Ottoman economic history is treated as an analytically usable research plane characterized by observable mechanisms, accessible data sources, and testable propositions.

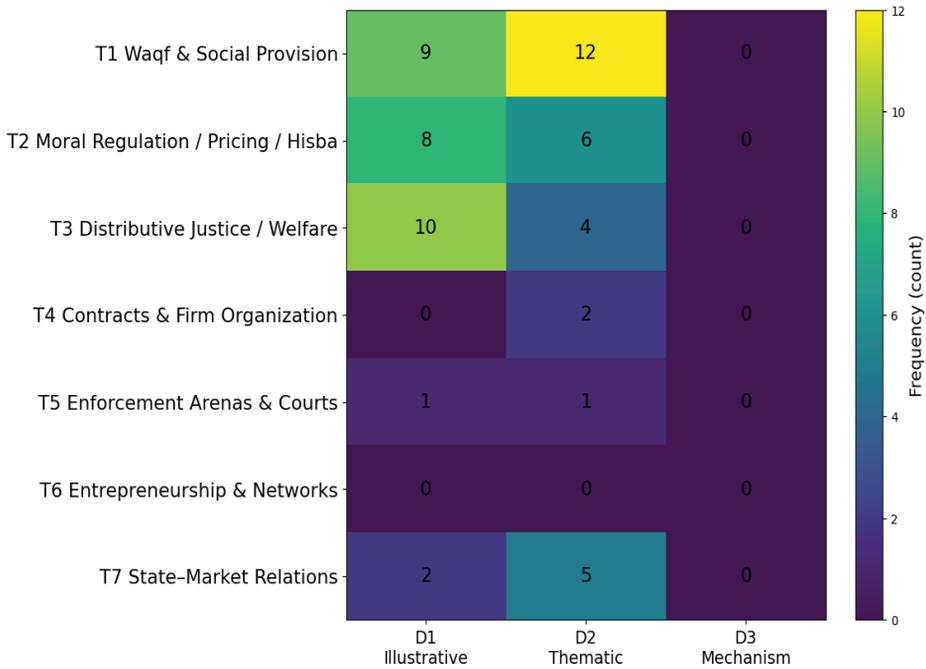


Figure 1: Ottoman References in Islamic Economics: Domain × Depth Heat Map (Illustrative Sample, n = 38)

Note: Figure 1 visualizes the distribution of Ottoman references across analytical domains and depths of usage in an illustrative sample of core Islamic economics literature (n = 38). Despite increased coverage and the inclusion of recent quantitative and cliometric studies, references continue to cluster in waqf, moral regulation, and distributive justice (T1–T3) at illustrative or thematic depth (D1–D2). Across all domains, mechanism-bearing or research-design-relevant usage (D3) remains absent, while domains central to institutional analysis, such as contracts, enforcement arenas, and networks, are sparsely represented. This figure was visualized using the Python matplotlib library after the relevant data was entered.

Core Domains through Which Ottoman Economic History Contributes to Islamic Economics

The analytical contribution of Ottoman economic and business history to Islamic economics can be articulated through a limited number of interrelated institutional domains in which Islamic norms were historically operationalized. These domains capture the arenas where legal principles, economic coordination, and organizational forms interacted in observable and recurrent ways, generating outcomes that cannot be inferred directly from doctrine alone. Rather than treating Ottoman experience as a diffuse historical background, the following analysis organizes it around core domains, markets and regulation; state-market relations; entrepreneurship and commercial networks; guild-based production; finance and credit practices; waqf-based provisioning; and legal pluralism and enforcement, that together structure the institutional mechanisms through which Islamic norms shaped economic life over time.

From Thematic Richness to Mechanism-Based Analysis

Ottoman economic and business history offers Islamic economics a set of analytically relevant domains through which Islamic norms can be examined as historically operative institutions rather than abstract moral principles. The contribution of these domains lies not in their descriptive richness alone, but in the observable mechanisms through which legal norms, economic coordination, and organizational forms interacted over time.

A first core domain is markets and regulation. Ottoman markets combined local and dispersed exchange with a legally embedded framework of oversight. Price regulation (*narh*), market supervision (*hisba*), guild rules, and court-based enforcement shaped market behavior without eliminating competition or profit-seeking. Studies in the literature drawing on court records show how disputes over prices, quality, and contracts were resolved in practice. This enables Islamic economics to move beyond “moral exhortation” and engage analytically with enforcement, compliance, and transaction costs (İnalçık, 1994). In this respect, the Ottoman case provides a historical setting in which ethical constraints were not merely proclaimed but institutionalized.

A second area concerns state-market relations. The management of the Ottoman economy cannot be defined either as a free-market economy or as an example of central planning. It can be described as a layered management structure where supply regimes, tax collection, financial regulation and market control, state aut-

hority, private enterprise, and social institutions complement each other (Genç, 2014; Pamuk, 2004; Quataert, 2005; Salzman, 1993). This particular experience weakens binary oppositions such as state intervention versus market efficiency. Therefore, it invites us to consider state capacity as an outcome shaped through institutions (Pamuk, 2012; Pamuk, 2004; Quataert, 2005; Al & Çetin, 2025). Early modern monetary governance provides a clear example: central monetary measures frequently had uneven local traction, since outcomes were filtered through local enforcement, market institutions, and compliance capacity (Al & Çetin, 2025: 79-84). This framing is also consistent with mechanism-centered accounts that locate Ottoman economic trajectories in shifting institutional equilibria and comparative political-economy constraints rather than in a simple state-versus-market dichotomy (Pamuk, 2012; Pamuk, 2014).

A third area is entrepreneurship and commercial networks. Actors in the Ottoman economy relied on family businesses, partnerships, and network-based organizational forms to manage risk, mobilize capital, and maintain business continuity. In a context where impersonal institutional forms in the modern sense are limited, these arrangements have functioned by embedding trust, knowledge, and enforcement within social and legal bonds. For Islamic economics, this area enables thinking about entrepreneurship beyond modern capitalist templates and highlights the observable mechanisms linking legal form, organizational structure, and firm survival.

The fourth area concerns guilds, craftsmanship, and production. Without severing their ties to market exchange, Ottoman guilds functioned as “established coordination” institutions regulating entry, quality, apprenticeship, and production standards. Instead of economic rationality, this structure facilitated long-term coordination under conditions of uncertainty by institutionalizing reputation and trust (Faroqhi, 2009; Quataert, 1997). The guilds’ responses to market pressures and technological change demonstrate that moral norms and productive efficiency can be sustained together through institutional design.

Finally, legal pluralism and enforcement can be seen as a general framework connecting all these areas. Ottoman actors operated within a layered legal environment encompassing Islamic courts, traditional practices, and (especially in the late Ottoman period) commercial regulations. This pluralism broadened contractual and implementation options, strengthening coordination by favoring the preferred method over doctrinal rigidity. Recent quantitative-historical work on Ottoman adjudication further supports treating courts as observable enforcement

arenas with measurable patterns in dispute resolution rather than as purely doctrinal sites (Coşgel & Ergene, 2014). From this perspective, Islamic law appears as a framework providing opportunities whose economic effects depend on the areas of application, complementary institutions, and historical context.

In light of these areas, the contribution of Ottoman economic history to the Islamic economy can be formulated not as offering abstract “examples,” but rather as providing historically grounded mechanisms.

Ottoman Economic History as an Analytical Setting: Research Design

To respond to concerns about the evidentiary basis of a non-empirical article, this section presents a short, illustrative research design. The aim is not to introduce new archival findings or to test causal claims; rather, it is to show concretely how historically grounded mechanisms derived from Ottoman economic and business history can be translated into researchable propositions, traceable data sources, and workable analytical steps.

Table 3 offers an “evidence inventory” that matches the core institutional mechanisms discussed throughout the article with the main types of empirical materials commonly used in Ottoman economic historiography. Appendix Table A.3 then specifies the relevant source bases in greater detail, such as court registers, waqf deeds, and probate inventories, thereby clarifying how these mechanisms have been historically observed and interpreted. When Tables 3 and A.3 are considered together, it becomes clear that thematic synthesis is linked to methodological transparency. Table 3 presents the general framework, while Table A.3 details the mechanism-source mapping.

In this article, “mechanisms” are understood as economic functions through which institutions shape coordination outcomes. For instance, risk-sharing addresses limited liability and capital mobilization constraints by reallocating uncertainty across partners; trust formation lowers transaction costs by stabilizing expectations and reducing monitoring needs; and enforcement flexibility affects contract choice by altering the credible threat of sanctions and the expected cost of dispute resolution. Likewise, waqf-based finance can be read as an intermediation function that channels surplus into credit and service continuity under rule-bound governance. Table 3 summarizes how these functions are supported by identifiable Ottoman source bases.

Table 3

Evidence Inventory: Ottoman Economic Institutions and Supporting Empirical Bases

Analytical Domain	Core Mechanism Highlighted	Primary Evidence Type	Representative Sources	What This Evidence Shows
Markets & Pricing	Moral regulation with decentralized exchange	Court registers; market dispute records	Gerber (1988); İnalçık (1994); Özmutur & Pamuk (2002)	How pricing, quality, and contract disputes were resolved in practice
Legal Pluralism & Contracts	Contract choice and enforcement flexibility	Kadı Sicilleri; probate inventories	Ergene (2003); İnalçık (1994); Coşğel & Ergene (2014)	Islamic law as an enabling choice set rather than a fixed constraint
Entrepreneurship & Networks	Network-based risk sharing and firm continuity	Probate inventories; merchant records	Aslanian (2011); Pamuk (2018)	Survival and adaptability without corporate forms
Guilds & Artisanship	Embedded coordination and production stability	Guild regulations; urban court cases	Faroqhi (2009); Quataert (2005)	Institutionalized trust without suppressing market activity
Finance & Credit	Partnership finance and cash waqfs	Waqf deeds; lending records	Çizakça (1995; 2011)	Credit circulation and financial intermediation outside modern banking
Social Provision	Waqf-based long-term service provision	Vakfiye texts; expenditure records	Singer (2002; 2008)	Sustainability of welfare services via institutional rules

Analytical Domain	Core Mechanism Highlighted	Primary Evidence Type	Representative Sources	What This Evidence Shows
State–Market Relations	Layered governance and fiscal mediation	Tax-farming contracts; fiscal records	Salzmann (1993); Pamuk (2004); Coşgel (2005); Coşgel & Miceli (2005); Karaman & Pamuk (2010)	Coexistence of state authority and private initiative

Note: This table does not present any new primary evidence. Instead, it aims to clarify how specific institutional mechanisms are supported by identifiable historical evidence by inventorying the types of empirical materials used in Ottoman economic historiography referenced throughout the article. The goal can be summarized as increasing transparency and combining thematic synthesis with an empirically based research design.

Analytical Premise

This proposed research design follows a non-essentialist institutional approach. Economic outcomes are considered not as direct reflections of religious doctrine, but as the result of historically conditioned interactions between legal norms, areas of application, organizational forms, and political authority. The Ottoman example is suitable for this approach due to its long-term scope, meaningful institutional diversity across regions and periods, and extremely rich archival material. These characteristics enable moving from broad normative claims to mechanism-based questions without imposing anachronistic assumptions. Moreover, Ottoman administrative sources such as tax registers (*tahrir defterleri*) can be treated as structured inputs for operationalization, while remaining attentive to their purposes and coverage limits (Coşgel, 2004).

Proposition 1: Legal Pluralism, Contract Choice, and Economic Coordination

The first proposition focuses on how legal pluralism shaped economic coordination. Economic actors in the Ottoman world operated within a layered legal environment that combined Islamic courts, customary practices, and, especially in later periods, commercial regulations. This pluralism allowed actors to choose the legal instruments appropriate to specific transactions, thereby expanding the range of applicable contracts and dispute-resolution methods.

Analytically, this demonstrates that contractual flexibility and the choice of the most appropriate method can reduce coordination costs and support trade and business continuity. Court records, inheritance inventories, and commercial regulations provide ample space to examine differences in contract usage, partnership duration, and dispute outcomes across regions and periods. The key for Islamic economics is to treat Islamic law and its practices not as a constraint, but as a set of options whose effects depend on institutional complements.

Proposition 2: Waqf-Based Finance, Credit Access, and Investment Stability

The second proposition addresses foundation-based financial mechanisms. Ottoman Waqfs, particularly cash waqfs and income-generating endowments, transformed personal wealth into semi-public financial resources linking lending, investment, and long-term service provision. The Ottoman Waqf System, which established rules regarding income sources, credit conditions, and spending priorities, grounded financial activity in enduring organizational forms.

This systematic approach treats waqfs not merely as charitable or redistributive institutions, but as financial intermediaries that also cater to individual financing needs. Waqfs deeds, court records, and urban financial documents can be used to examine whether variation in waqf density, lending practices, or sectoral allocation shaped access to credit, investment stability, and the continuity of urban services. The aim is to avoid anachronism by focusing on institutional resilience and adequacy rather than on modern welfare-state metrics.

Proposition 3: Entrepreneurial Networks and Organizational Adaptation

The third proposition concerns entrepreneurship and its organizational form. In the absence of modern institutional structures, Ottoman economic actors relied on family businesses, partnerships, and network-based organizations to manage risk, mobilize capital, and ensure continuity. These networks established trust, information flow, and enforcement within social and legal relationships, developing a self-regulating system.

Merchant records, inheritance inventories, court cases, and guild records provide opportunities to examine the survival of firms, the continuity of partnerships, and their responses to market shocks. For Islamic economics, this perspective extends entrepreneurship beyond capitalist archetypes and grounds it in historically observable forms compatible with Islamic legal and ethical frameworks.

Comparative Scope and Limitations

A comparative lens helps prevent Ottoman exceptionalism. The Ottoman case matters not because it represents an “ideal-type” Islamic economic order, but because it combines (i) documented variation within the empire (across regions, cities, and periods) with (ii) exposure to governance and commercial environments comparable to other early modern settings. Ottoman institutions can therefore be read alongside other Islamic polities (e.g., Mamluk/Egyptian or Safavid/Qajar contexts) and early modern European cases, where differences in legal pluralism, organizational forms, and enforcement arenas generated distinct coordination outcomes. The goal is mechanism-focused comparison, not civilizational claims.

This design supports internal comparisons within the Ottoman world and external comparisons with other polities. Such contrasts help separate features specific to Ottoman configurations from broader patterns of Islamic economic organization. At the same time, the design remains illustrative: this article neither tests the propositions nor introduces new archival data. Limits related to data availability, regional bias in surviving sources, and measurement problems remain real. Still, by specifying mechanisms, source bases, and analytical pathways, the Ottoman case becomes a researchable analytical setting rather than a rhetorical reference.

Contribution of the Research Design

This chapter responds to criticisms regarding the weak analytical integration of history and historical analysis in Islamic economics by explicitly outlining applicable research methods through various mechanisms. It demonstrates how Ottoman economic and trade history can be used not as a normative model but as a structured empirical framework to clarify concepts of Islamic economics, identify appropriate mechanisms, and engage more effectively with institutional theory.

Theoretical Implications for Islamic Economics

The Ottoman case offers a clear direction for the development of Islamic economic theory. The most important aspect of this is shifting the focus from abstract normative claims to historically observable institutional mechanisms. Economic outcomes should be read not as direct products of doctrine, but as consequences of how norms operate through institutions, fields of application, and organizational complements (North, 1990; Greif, 2006; Hodgson, 1974). This does not weaken the normative essence of Islamic economics; rather, it makes this essence more analytically usable and more open to historical testing (Hasan, 2016; Zaman, 2012).

Reframing State-Market Relations as Institutional Complementarity

A central conclusion concerns the state-market relationship. Islamic economics is caught between idealized descriptions of morally guided markets and concerns about excessive state intervention (Chapra, 2000; Islahi, 2014). The Ottoman experience complicates this duality. It should be noted that, in the Ottoman example, regulation, financial authority, and change operated through layered and complementary arrangements rather than through pure planning or free-market management (Pamuk, 2004; Quataert, 2005; Salzmänn, 1993). The theoretical framework here treats state capacity, market coordination, and moral regulation as interdependent variables embedded in specific institutional structures (North, 1990; Greif, 2006).

Rethinking Entrepreneurship Beyond Capitalist Criteria

A second conclusion concerns entrepreneurship. Standard theories generally define entrepreneurship in terms of modern capitalist forms, large corporations, impersonal capital markets, and management hierarchies (Casson, 1997). Ottoman history, however, highlights a different organizational ecology where family businesses, partnerships, and network-based commerce supported risk-taking and continuity without modern corporate structures (Pamuk, 2018; Aslanian, 2011). This actually weakens narratives based on a “lack or absence” perspective. The absence of corporate forms in the Ottoman example does not automatically imply weak entrepreneurship. As generally accepted in the literature, it points to alternative, institutionally established solutions shaped by law, networks, and practice (Greif, 2006). Therefore, Islamic economics can construct a more pluralistic theory of entrepreneurship that recognizes historically valid forms compatible with Islamic law and ethical contexts (Islahi, 2014; Pamuk, 2018).

Islamic Law as an Institutional Framework

The most important conclusion concerns Islamic law. Arguments that Islamic law inherently restricts development are often based on static readings detached from practice. The Ottoman legal experience, however, suggests that Islamic law frequently functioned as a facilitating framework, providing normative legitimacy for contractual diversity, legal certainty, and coordination (İnalçık, 1994; Ergene, 2003). This is consistent with institutional approaches that emphasize historically conditional balances rather than doctrinal determinism (Kuran, 2011; Kuran, 2018). Partnership agreements and waqf-based forms of practice provided adaptable legal instruments in the Ottoman context (Çizakça, 1995; Çizakça, 1996;

Singer, 2002). Where boundaries emerged, they were historically conditional. Ultimately, this depended on the institutional system, contractual accumulation, areas of application, and complementary institutions that shaped scale and continuity (North, 1990; Greif, 2006; Kuran, 2011).

Institutions, Morality, and Economic Rationality

Ottoman history also contains information and examples of how morality relates to rational economic behavior. In the Ottoman system, economic life was intertwined with moral norms and social obligations, but this did not eliminate calculation, the pursuit of profit, or investment (İnalçık, 1994; Faroqhi, 2009). Institutions such as guilds and foundations demonstrated how moral evaluations could be institutionalized rather than left as ethical advice by mediating between incentives and social responsibility (Quataert, 2005; Singer, 2008). This means avoiding framing Islamic economics as either pure moral discourse or a doctrinal constraint on rationality. Indeed, institutional systems and designs can produce outcomes in which moral economics and rational behavior coexist (Asutay, 2013; Hasan, 2016).

Towards a Historically Informed and Institutionally Based Islamic Economy

In general, these points support a historically informed, institutionally based Islamic economy. The Ottoman example is one of the most striking in the history of Islamic societies of a commitment to institutional pluralism, legal flexibility, and organizational conformity rather than doctrinal rigidity (Pamuk, 2004; İnalçık, 1994). Transitional periods, especially in the field of finance, demonstrate how Islamic norms can accommodate stratification and gradual change, suggesting a rich period for researchers (Çizakça, 2011; Kuran, 2018). In conclusion, it can be argued that all the mechanisms, application structures, and organizational diversity mentioned above can form a testable theory when incorporated into the theoretical framework. This means that Islamic economics is building a stronger theoretical foundation by moving beyond illustrative historical examples (Hasan, 2016; Zaman, 2012; North, 1990; Greif, 2006).

Conclusion

This article aims to answer a simple yet methodologically challenging question: Is history important for Islamic economics? The argument is that, yes, it is important; however, history becomes important not as a “moral example” or “civilizational validation,” but as an analytical ground for establishing institutions, mechanisms, and research designs.

The article does not propose a “historical template” nor present new empirical findings. Its aim is to offer a methodological perspective. It demonstrates how Ottoman economic and business history can be systematically integrated into the analytical core of Islamic economics by focusing on historically conditioned institutional configurations rather than deductively deriving from doctrine. From this perspective, economic outcomes are read as the product of interactions among legal norms, areas of enforcement, forms of organization, and political authority, rather than as a direct reflection of religious doctrine.

The same discipline that is required to avoid normative romanticization is also required to avoid over-confident analytical simplification. Ottoman institutions varied across regions, sectors, and periods, and any institutional reading, however non-essentialist, can still become vulnerable to anachronistic labels, cherry-picked institutional exemplars, or mono-causal narratives. For this reason, the contribution here is framed as a scope-aware research agenda: it specifies candidate mechanisms, indicates where variation can be observed, and clarifies which source bases can adjudicate competing interpretations, rather than offering a single definitive institutional explanation.

The article’s initial contribution is at the conceptual level. From a non-essentialist institutional perspective, Islamic economics is placed in a closer analytical relationship with institutional economics and the history of economic thought, while normative concerns are preserved; explanation is not reduced to the level of “belief.” This framework directly addresses criticisms of the field’s limited relationship with historically realized institutions and diversity.

Secondly, the article reorganizes the fragmented Ottoman economic historiography around analytical areas: markets and regulation; entrepreneurship and networks; guild organization; finance and credit practices; waqf-based allocation; and legal-institutional pluralism. This thematic perspective shows that Ottoman history offers a mechanism-driven understanding of Islamic economics, but that these are often used only at a descriptive/exemplary level. The mapping in Appendices A.1–A.2 (Table A.2; $n = 38$) and Figure A.1 make this analytical imbalance visible.

Third, and most importantly, the article proposes a compact research-design agenda. By specifying candidate mechanisms, stating testable propositions, and pointing to feasible source bases (court registers, waqf deeds, probate inventories), it shows how Ottoman experience can be treated as a researchable analytical setting rather than a rhetorical reference. Table 3 and Appendix A.3 increase transpa-

rency by showing what types of evidence support each institutional claim, without presenting new causal results.

The limitations are also clear. The analysis is non-empirical: the propositions are not tested, and no new archival material is introduced. Ottoman institutions varied across regions, sectors, and periods, so uniform generalization should be avoided. But these limits strengthen the case for the kind of historically grounded, mechanism-oriented agenda outlined here.

In general, the marginal position of Ottoman economic history within Islamic economics should be considered a consequence of analytical framing preferences rather than any inherent inconsistency. When approached through institutional analysis, explicit coding, and design of the research framework, the Ottoman example offers a rich empirical context for examining how Islamic norms have operated through economic institutions over time. In this sense, history is significant for Islamic economics not as a pool of ideals, but as a vital source of variation, mechanisms, and analytically usable evidence. This perspective, which can be formulated as “a more systematic interaction with historical data, practice, and material”, can strengthen Islamic economics as a normatively grounded, yet analytically rigorous and historically informed discipline.

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Appendices

Appendix A.1. Illustrative Mapping of Ottoman References in Core Islamic Economics Literature

Purpose

This appendix supports the article's main claim: Ottoman economic history is referenced in Islamic economics but is rarely used analytically. The objective is not exhaustive coverage, but the identification of a systematic and recurrent pattern: Ottoman references are concentrated in a limited set of thematic domains, most notably waqf, moral regulation, and distributive concerns, and are typically mobilized at illustrative (D1) or thematic-descriptive (D2) depth. Across the mapped literature, Ottoman material is rarely employed as a mechanism-bearing input for hypothesis formation, variable construction, or research design.

Corpus and Scope

The illustrative sample comprises 38 works (see Table A.2), selected to reflect how Ottoman references actually circulate within core Islamic economics discourse rather than to represent the full universe of Ottoman economic historiography. The corpus draws from:

- *Flagship Islamic economics outlets*, with particular emphasis on *Journal of King Abdulaziz University: Islamic Economics (JKAU:IE)* and closely related journals;
- *Field-defining books and surveys* that are frequently cited as agenda-setting contributions in Islamic economics;
- *Recent quantitative and cliometric studies* that explicitly engage Ottoman data (e.g., waqf records, wage series, public debt) were included to test whether methodological sophistication alters patterns of analytical usage.

The resulting sample spans the period 1989–2025 and includes conceptual, historical, and empirical contributions.

Identification Protocol (Replicable)

Works were identified through systematic keyword searches, index scans, and reference tracking using the following terms and their variants:

Ottoman / Osmanlı; waqf/cash waqf; hisba; narh (pricing); guild / esnaf; court / kadi; legal pluralism; market ethics; public finance; provisioning.

Eligibility required an explicit reference to Ottoman institutions, practices, or empirical material. General discussions of Islamic history or ethics without identifiable Ottoman content were excluded. This protocol is designed to be replicable and transparent, rather than comprehensive.

Coding Scheme

Each work was coded along two dimensions:

Depth (D):

- **D1 – Illustrative:** passing reference or name-check, often used to anchor normative or rhetorical claims;
- **D2 – Thematic/Descriptive:** sustained historical discussion without explicit operationalization or transferable research design;
- **D3 – Mechanism-bearing/Design-relevant:** explicit articulation of mechanisms, testable propositions, or research designs derived from Ottoman evidence.

Domain (T):

- **T1** Waqf & social provision
- **T2** Moral regulation, pricing, and hisba
- **T3** Distributive justice and moral economy
- **T4** Contracts and firm organization
- **T5** Enforcement arenas and courts
- **T6** Entrepreneurship and networks
- **T7** State–market relations and public finance

Domain codes capture where Ottoman material is located analytically; depth codes capture how it is used.

Illustrative Records: Summary of Findings

The 38 coded records (Table A.2) include canonical waqf studies (e.g., Çizakça), discussions of narh and hisba, moral-economy-oriented texts, and a small but growing number of quantitative studies using Ottoman data. Despite this diversity, three consistent patterns emerge.

First, Ottoman references cluster heavily in domains T1 (waqf & social provision), T2 (moral regulation/pricing), and T3 (distributive justice). Domains central to institutional and organizational analysis, contracts, enforcement, networks, and firm behavior (T4–T6), remain comparatively underrepresented.

Second, across the entire sample, Ottoman material is overwhelmingly mobilized at D1 or D2 depth. Even works that draw on rich archival data or employ modern econometric techniques remain analytically self-contained, using Ottoman evidence to illuminate a specific historical question rather than to inform generalizable mechanisms or research designs within Islamic economics.

Third, and most importantly, no item in the sample reaches D3. The absence of D3-level engagement persists even in recent contributions (2023–2025) that analyze cash waqfs, wages, or public debt quantitatively. This suggests that Ottoman history is used more thinly because of how the discipline engages with it, not because of data, methods, or scholarship.

Interpretive Implication

Overall, the mapping shows that Islamic economics primarily draws on Ottoman economic history as background or illustration. Its value as a comparative analytical setting, useful for building theory, defining variables, and shaping research design, has not been fully used. This gap is the main motivation of the article.

Table A.1

Ottoman References in Islamic Economics: Domain × Depth (Schematic Coding Template)

Domain (T)	Typical Ottoman hook in Islamic economics	The most common depth observed	What is usually missing for D3 (design-relevance)
T1 Waqf & social provision	Cash waqf, waqf welfare	D1–D2	measurable finance/credit channels; variation across cities/periods; enforcement rules
T2 Moral regulation/pricing	Narh, market oversight, anti-monopoly	D1–D2	micro-level outcomes; dispute resolution channels; identification strategy
T3 Distributive justice	Welfare/justice rhetoric	D1–D2	institutional mechanisms and observable implications

Domain (T)	Typical Ottoman hook in Islamic economics	The most common depth observed	What is usually missing for D3 (design-relevance)
T4 Cont- tracts/ organization	Partnerships/ inheritance conti- nuity (rarely Ot- toman-specific in core IE venues)	D1-D2	systematic use of court/ probate sources; continuity measures
T5 Enforce- ment arenas	Courts, legal pra- ctice (sporadic)	D1-D2	comparative enforcement arenas; settlement rates; contract diversity measures
T6 Networks/ entrepre- neurship	Merchant networks (sporadic)	D1-D2	network metrics; survival/ entry-exit; repeated-link evidence
T7 State-market	Provisioning/ regulation (often general)	D1-D2	separating layers of gover- nance; internal variation ac- ross provinces

Note: Table A.1 presents the schematic coding template used to classify Ottoman references by analytical domain and depth of usage. It does not report exhaustive counts. Instead, it specifies the categories and thresholds applied in the illustrative mapping (Appendix A.1) and the extended coding matrix (Appendix A.2). The purpose is to ensure transparency and replicability, not to rank contributions or assess scholarly quality.

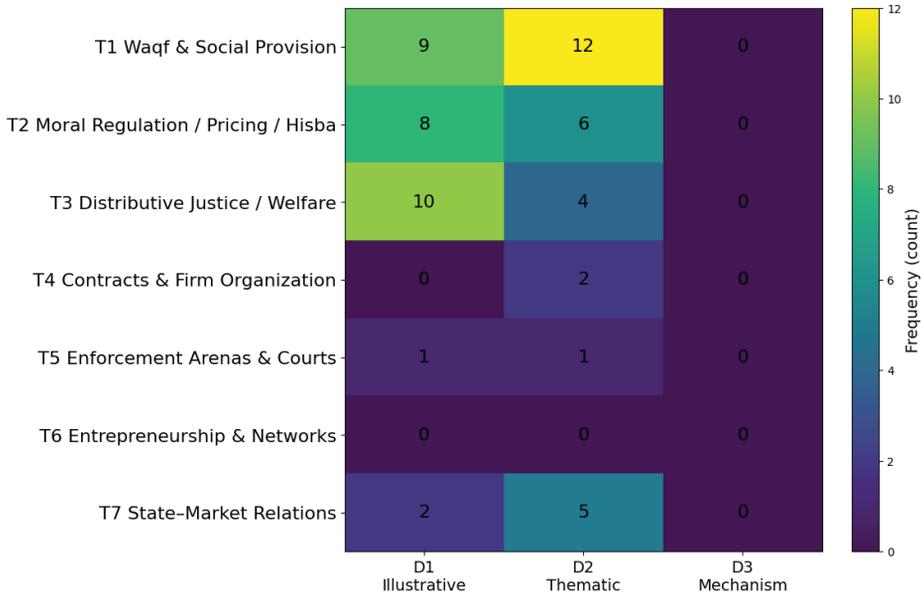


Figure A.1 Ottoman References in Islamic Economics - Domain × Depth Heat-Map (Illustrative Sample, n = 38)

Note: Figure A.1 is referred to as Figure 1 in the main text. Figure A.1 visualizes the distribution of Ottoman references across analytical domains and depths of usage in an illustrative sample of core Islamic economics literature (n = 38). Despite increased coverage and the inclusion of recent quantitative and cliometrics studies, references continue to cluster in waqf, moral regulation, and distributive justice (T1–T3) at illustrative or thematic depth (D1–D2). Across all domains, mechanism-bearing or research-design-relevant usage (D3) remains absent, while domains central to institutional analysis, such as contracts, enforcement arenas, and networks, are sparsely represented. This figure was visualized using the Python matplotlib library after the relevant data was entered.

Appendix A.2. Ottoman References in Islamic Economics Literature

(Domain × Depth Coding Matrix – Illustrative Mapping, n = 38)

Depth (D):

- **D1** = Illustrative / name-check
- **D2** = Thematic / descriptive
- **D3** = Mechanism-bearing / research-design-relevant

Domain (T):

- **T1** Waqf & social provision
- **T2** Moral regulation / pricing / hisba
- **T3** Distributive justice & moral economy
- **T4** Contracts & firm organization
- **T5** Enforcement arenas & courts
- **T6** Entrepreneurship & networks
- **T7** State-market relations & public finance

Table A.2

Coding of Ottoman References in Core Islamic Economics Outlets

No.	Reference	Outlet / Type	Ottoman Domain(s)	Depth (D)	Typical Use of Ottoman Material
1	Çizakça (1989)	Journal (JKAU:IE ³)	T7	D2	Ottoman fiscal practice used descriptively; no design variables
2	Oğuz & Tabakoğlu (1991)	Journal (JKAU:IE)	T2	D2	Ottoman narh/price fixation discussed descriptively; no operational metrics
3	Çizakça (1998)	Journal (Islamic Economic Studies)	T1	D2	The Ottoman waqf system used as a historical case; not translated into testable channels
4	Kahf (1999)	Journal (American Journal of Islam and Society)	T1	D2	Ottoman waqf cited as historical precedent

No.	Reference	Outlet / Type	Ottoman Domain(s)	Depth (D)	Typical Use of Ottoman Material
5	Chapra (2000)	Book	T1-T3	D1	Normative illustration via historical institutions
6	Çizakça (2000)	Book	T1	D2	Ottoman waqf institutions are analyzed as historically developed financial-social mechanisms, not translated into formal models or testable hypotheses.
7	Choudhury (2001)	Journal (Islamic Economic Studies)	T7	D1	Ottoman debt/empire references used as background/policy analogy
8	Obaidullah (2001)	Journal (International Journal of Islamic Financial Services)	T2, T3	D1	Historical Islamic market practices are referenced illustratively to support ethical and efficiency arguments; no Ottoman-specific analytical engagement.
9	Özmucur & Pamuk (2002)	Journal (Journal of Economic History)	T2	D2	Ottoman price and wage data analyzed empirically; findings not translated into Islamic economics theory or design frameworks.
10	Kahf (2003)	International Seminar Paper (International Seminar on Waqf as a Private Legal Body)	T1, T3	D2	Waqf as a welfare institution; no research design
11	Islahi (2004)	Book	T1, T2	D1	Ottoman-Mamluk power treated as a civilizational and geopolitical backdrop to mercantilist emergence; no analytical operationalization
12	Siddiqi (2004)	Book	T2	D1	Doctrinal discussion; Ottoman practice not analytically mobilized
13	Obaidullah (2005)	Book	T2, T3	D1	Ethical markets supported by historical anecdotes
14	Islahi (2006)	Journal (Quarterly Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society)	T2	D2	Hisba and market supervision are discussed descriptively (Ottoman hisba is discussed in intellectual-historical terms)

No.	Reference	Outlet / Type	Ottoman Domain(s)	Depth (D)	Typical Use of Ottoman Material
15	Sait & Lim (2006)	Book	T5	D1–D2	Ottoman legal practice referenced conceptually
16	El-Ashker & Wilson (2006)	Book	T1	D1–D2	Survey-level treatment of the Ottoman period
17	Çizakça (2007)	Journal (Review of Islamic Economics)	T3, T7	D1–D2	Ottoman experience invoked conceptually (political economy framing)
18	Wilson (2008)	Journal (World Economics)	T1, T2	D1	Episodic historical continuity
19	Islahi (2008)	Book	T2	D1–D2	Ottoman practice referenced via intellectual continuity
20	Islahi (2009)	Journal (JKAU:IE)	T2/T3	D2	Ottoman intellectual history is treated descriptively
21	Çizakça (2011)	Book	T1	D2	Ottoman waqf and financial institutions are presented as historical precedents for Islamic capitalism; no operationalization in the contemporary research design.
22	Kuran (2011)	Book	T4	D2	Ottoman legal-institutional structures are analyzed comparatively to explain long-run divergence; not mobilized within Islamic economics analytical frameworks.
23	Zaman (2012)	Journal (JKAU:IE)	T1, T3	D1	Rhetorical contrast between history and abstraction
24	Cassim Mahomedy (2013)	Journal (International Journal of Social Economics)	T3	D1	Pre-modern Islamic economic history is referenced rhetorically in critiques of Islamic economics methodology; the Ottoman case is not analytically specified.
25	Islahi (2013)	Journal (Islamic Economic Studies)	T2	D2	Uses Ottoman-era comparative historical context descriptively
26	Asutay (2013)	Journal (Humanomics)	T1, T3	D1	Symbolic moral–institutional anchoring
27	Shirazi (2014)	Journal (Islamic Economic Studies)	T1, T3	D1	Ottoman waqf scale cited illustratively (poverty/welfare argument)
28	Islahi (2014)	Book	T1, T2	D2	Descriptive intellectual history of Ottoman-era thought

No.	Reference	Outlet / Type	Ottoman Domain(s)	Depth (D)	Typical Use of Ottoman Material
29	Pamuk (2014)	Book	T7	D2	Ottoman state–market relations analyzed historically; insights not integrated into Islamic economics theory-building.
30	Asutay & Harningtyas (2015)	Journal (Uluslararası İslam Ekonomisi ve Finansı Araştırmaları Dergisi-International Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance Studies)	T3	D1	Moral economy anchored in pre-modern Islamic history
31	Hasan (2016)	Journal (ISRA ⁴ International Journal of Islamic Finance)	T1	D1	Historical Islamic institutions are mentioned as background context; the Ottoman experience is not analytically engaged.
32	Tabakoğlu (2016)	Book	T3	D2	The Ottoman economic mentality is discussed conceptually
33	Rashid (2018)	Journal (JKAU:IE)	T1	D1–D2	Waqf development/cash waqf discussed as historical and policy-relevant precedent; not operationalized into a transferable research design.
34	Komilov (2023)	Journal (JKAU:IE)	T1	D2	Ottoman waqf evolution discussed thematically; no design variables
35	Maraşlı & Kahf (2024), The Economic Contributions of Awqāf in Türkiye	Journal (JKAU:IE)	T1, T7	D2	Ottoman waqf invoked for policy lessons; not design-relevant
36	Altay & Bulut (2024)	Journal (ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance)	T1, T3	D2	Ottoman cash waqf evidence discussed; limited explicit identification/design

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No.	Reference	Outlet / Type	Ottoman Domain(s)	Depth (D)	Typical Use of Ottoman Material
37	Kazak & Has-san (2024)	Journal (Journal of Islamic Accounting & Business Research)	T7	D2	Ottoman debt used analytically; still short of D3 (design template not generalized)
38	Altay & Bulut (2025)	Journal (International Journal of Islamic & Middle Eastern Finance & Management)	T1, T4	D2	Ottoman cash waqf/finance framed empirically; not converted to the IE design framework

Note: The coding matrix reports an illustrative mapping of Ottoman references in core Islamic economics outlets. Several records span multiple analytical domains and are coded accordingly. Depth categories capture how Ottoman material is mobilized analytically (illustrative, thematic, or mechanism-bearing), not the methodological sophistication or scholarly quality of the contributions.

Appendix A.3. Proof Inventory and Design Potential of Ottoman Institutional History

This appendix complements the illustrative mapping presented in Appendices A.1 and A.2 by demonstrating that the analytical thinning of Ottoman economic history in Islamic economics does not stem from a lack of empirical material. Rather, Ottoman institutional history offers a rich and well-documented evidentiary base capable of supporting mechanism-bearing and research-design-relevant analysis.

Table A.3 links the main institutional mechanisms discussed in the article to the primary and secondary sources used in Ottoman economic historiography. By listing concrete source types, such as qadi registers, waqf deeds, probate inventories, and accounting ledgers, the appendix shows how mechanisms like credit provision, risk sharing, and contract enforcement can be turned into observable variables, comparative research designs, and testable hypotheses. In this way, the Ottoman case appears not only as a historical context but as a source-based analytical setting that can support theory-building and empirical work in Islamic economics.

Table A.3

Mapping Ottoman Institutional Evidence to Islamic Economics Research Agendas

Main Institutional Mechanism (Article Theme)	Type of Source	Specific Source / Data Type	Analytical Contribution to Islamic Economics
1. Markets and Guild Regulation	Primary / Secondary	Qadi Registers (narh disputes, hisba cases), Ihtisab regulations, guild ordinances	Institutions vs. Norms: This allows price regulation to be analyzed as an institutional practice shaped by enforcement, negotiation, and local variation, rather than as a purely normative moral-economy principle.
2. Finance and Credit Mechanisms	Primary (Micro-data)	Qadi Registers (debt, mortgage, partnership records), Cash Waqf deeds, Probate inventories (tereke)	Risk Sharing vs. Interest: Allows reconstruction of credit networks, portfolio structures, and repayment behavior, demonstrating how Islamic legal constraints generated adaptive financial mechanisms.

Main Institutional Mechanism (Article Theme)	Type of Source	Specific Source / Data Type	Analytical Contribution to Islamic Economics
3. Waqf-Based Service and Finance	Primary	Waqf deeds (objectives, governance rules), accounting ledgers, and court audit records	Waqf as an Economic Actor: This treats waqfs as institutions that provide long-term credit, investment, and urban finance, not only welfare, enabling us to analyze sustainability and capital accumulation.
4. Legal Pluralism and Contract Choice	Primary (Micro-data)	Qadi registers (forum choice, litigation outcomes), communal or consular court records	Contract Security and Choice: Permits analysis of how legal pluralism affected transaction costs, dispute resolution strategies, and trade intensity across institutional settings.
5. Entrepreneurship and Commercial Networks	Primary / Secondary	Probate inventories (partnerships, inheritance structures), customs records, trade diaspora studies	Networked Entrepreneurship: Supports investigation of firm continuity, partnership duration, and network embeddedness, linking moral norms with organizational resilience and market entry.