

GLOBAL RESEARCH TRENDS IN ASSET RECOVERY AND ANTI-CORRUPTION LAW: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS (1971–2025)

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Abstract

The literature on asset recovery, illicit enrichment, and reverse burden of proof continues to grow rapidly in line with the increasing need for more effective and legally adaptive anti-corruption approaches. However, there is no comprehensive scholarly mapping of the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and dominant actors in this discourse. This study aims to analyze the development of global literature in the field of asset recovery and economic law approaches to anti-corruption policies through a bibliometric approach. Data was obtained from the Scopus base with a time span of 1971-2025, and analyzed using VOSviewer and bibliometrix (R) software. The selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 approach, resulting in 1,289 documents that were analyzed quantitatively and visually. The results showed that the number of publications increased sharply post-UNCAC 2003, with the dominance of law and economics and institutional governance approaches. Central figures such as Posner, Sunstein, and Rose-Ackerman form the main intellectual structure, while recent thematic trends point to issues of digital forensics, confiscation without criminal conviction, and reverse evidentiary policies. The findings confirm that an asset-oriented justice approach based on legal efficiency is now mainstream in global anti-corruption policy. This research contributes to strengthening academic understanding and publication strategies in the field of economic law and anti-corruption governance, especially for developing countries. This is the first longitudinal bibliometric analysis to integrate legal efficiency, reverse burden of proof, and asset-based justice in the global anti-corruption discourse.

Keywords : Asset Recovery; Illicit Enrichment; Reverse Burden of Proof; Economic Law; Bibliometrics; Global Anticorruption.

1. Introduction

Corruption is a systemic threat that visibly impedes economic development and undermines social justice in many parts of the world. It not only creates significant financial losses for countries - estimated at more than 5% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - but also exacerbates social inequality, reduces people's access to basic services, and undermines public trust in government institutions (Bozhenko et al., 2023; Kerasauskaite, 2018). Furthermore, corruption hinders the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 16 which focuses on peace, justice and resilient institutions (Monaco, 2024). In the era of globalization, corruption is evolving into a complex transnational phenomenon and is often connected to transnational crime networks, making it difficult to address through conventional legal approaches (Galang Windi Pratama et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2024). This is exacerbated by the weak evidentiary system in corruption cases, which is often unable to reach the root of the problem - namely the acquisition of unlawful wealth by the perpetrators (Prorokov & Fonina, 2020). In this context, corruption eradication can no longer rely solely on repressive approaches based on punishment, but must transform into a proactive, efficient and adaptive asset recovery system to global challenges. Therefore, it is important to understand how global research directions and patterns related to asset recovery and economic law approaches have developed in the last few decades as a basis for developing more responsive and evidence-based anti-corruption policies.

Along with the increasing complexity of corrupt practices and the weak effectiveness of conventional punishment approaches, there has been a paradigm shift in combating corruption towards an asset-oriented justice approach. This approach is considered more efficient and functional within the *Economic Analysis of Law* (EAL) framework because it directly targets the economic incentives that drive corruption, namely illegally obtained financial benefits (Trinchera,

2020). One of the most prominent instruments in this trend is *non-conviction based forfeiture* (NCB), which is an asset confiscation mechanism that does not depend on criminal convictions. NCB is considered particularly important in politically unstable contexts or when conventional legal barriers make criminal proceedings ineffective (Ratchyk & Turytska, 2024; Zou et al., 2023). In addition, the criminalization of *illicit enrichment* or unexplained wealth has developed as an alternative strategy in overcoming the evidentiary gap in corruption cases. Such legal instruments have been adopted and strengthened by a number of jurisdictions, including the European Union, which proposed a new confiscation scheme for unlawful wealth of politically exposed individuals (Ochnio, 2024). Complementing that, the use of the *reverse burden of proof* principle strengthens the state's position by shifting the burden of proof to asset owners to demonstrate the legality of their wealth, as long as its application remains mindful of the principles of constitutionality and proportionality (Trinchera, 2020). Within the EAL framework, this approach has proven to be more efficient as it not only reduces incentives for corruption, but also accelerates the recovery of state losses, overcomes technical legal barriers, and promotes stronger international cooperation through initiatives such as UNCAC and StAR (Arifin et al., 2023; Brun & Sotiropoulou, 2024; Wang, 2020). Thus, the current corruption eradication paradigm is moving towards a model that is more preventive, compensatory, and based on legal efficiency rather than solely repressive.

Although the number of scholarly publications on corruption continues to increase significantly, bibliometric studies that systematically map the evolution of key concepts such as *asset recovery*, *law and economics* approaches, and networks of collaboration between countries and institutions are still very limited. Most studies on asset recovery so far have been practical or case study-based, focusing on legal challenges, political obstacles, or the success of specific strategies in developing countries (Balashov et al., 2023; Herman & Rajagukguk, 2025; Mahmud et al., 2021). Meanwhile, longitudinal analysis that bibliometrically traces how the concept of *asset recovery* develops, transforms, and interacts with other legal concepts across decades has not been widely conducted (Helfer et al., 2023). On the other hand, the development of theoretical approaches in *law and economics* that integrate economic perspectives in anti-corruption policies has also not been mapped quantitatively and thematically through a bibliometric approach. In fact, the interdisciplinary literature in this field has produced various theoretical models on the relationship between corruption, economic growth and governance (Kargin-Akkoc & Durusu-Ciftci, 2024; Meyer et al., 2024; Weiss & Forstmann, 2025). In addition, research collaboration across countries and institutions in corruption studies - especially involving ASEAN countries - still shows a limited trend, with a research network structure that is not yet strongly organized (Bahoo et al., 2020; Quoc Bui et al., 2021). Mapping research interconnections, thematically, geographically and institutionally, is needed to build a more comprehensive understanding of global dynamics in corruption studies and to strengthen the scientific basis for the formulation of more effective legal and anti-corruption policies.

Based on this background, this article aims to analyze global trends in research on *asset recovery* and *economic legal approaches* in the framework of anti-corruption policy. Using a bibliometric approach to publications in the Scopus database over the period 1971 to 2025, the study identifies the main thematic clusters, the most influential authors and countries, and the dynamics of the evolution of the topic in the international literature. Through the resulting intellectual map, this article not only charts the development of the discourse and knowledge structure on asset recovery and legal reform, but also offers an empirical foundation for more evidence-based policy making, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia. Scientifically, this study contributes to enriching global anti-corruption studies by providing an interdisciplinary, quantitative evidence-based conceptual framework that can be used to promote legal reforms that are more strategic, efficient, and adaptive to the complexities of transnational corruption. In addition, the results of this study are expected to strengthen Indonesia's position in adopting *non-conviction based* asset recovery policies that are in line with international best

practices, as well as opening up space for research collaboration and policy harmonization between countries in a more holistic corruption eradication framework.

Despite the growing volume of literature on anti-corruption, asset recovery, and legal-economic analysis, existing studies remain largely fragmented. Many focus on normative legal frameworks, isolated case studies, or country-specific challenges without offering a comprehensive, global mapping of the scholarly discourse. Moreover, there is a lack of integrated bibliometric research that systematically traces how key legal concepts—such as *non-conviction based for forfeiture*, *reverse burden of proof*, and *illicit enrichment*—have evolved and interacted across jurisdictions over time. No previous study has quantitatively analyzed the intellectual structure and thematic development of these concepts within the broader economic law framework.

Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by conducting a longitudinal bibliometric analysis of global literature on asset recovery and economic legal approaches to anti-corruption policy, using data from 1971 to 2025. Specifically, the study seeks to (1) identify the most influential authors, institutions, and journals in the field, (2) map thematic clusters and conceptual trends using co-citation and keyword analysis, and (3) examine patterns of international collaboration in knowledge production. By doing so, this research contributes not only to academic understanding of the field, but also offers empirical insights to support evidence-based legal and policy reforms, particularly in developing countries like Indonesia.

2. Research Methodology

A. Research Design

This study uses a quantitative bibliometric approach that aims to map the intellectual structure, thematic trends, and collaborative networks in the global literature on asset recovery, illicit enrichment, reverse burden of proof, and economic analysis of law approach in anti-corruption policy. The bibliometric approach was chosen for its ability to analyze scientific publications systematically and objectively through bibliographic data, thus enabling the identification of scientific developments, dominance of research areas, and collaboration between academic actors (Donthu et al., 2021). This research is exploratory-descriptive with longitudinal coverage from 1971 to 2025, providing a comprehensive picture of research evolution from a quantitative and visual perspective.

B. Data Sources and Search Process

Data were obtained from the Scopus database managed by Elsevier, given the broad and authoritative coverage of the index in the fields of law, economics, and public policy. Data was retrieved in June 2025 using the following search string: "asset recovery" OR "non conviction based forfeiture" OR "illicit enrichment" OR "economic analysis of law" OR "anti-corruption policy" OR "reverse burden of proof". The search was conducted in the TITLE, ABSTRACT, and KEYWORDS columns. The inclusion criteria used include: (1) documents in the form of articles and reviews, (2) written in English, and (3) published between 1971 and 2025. After a screening process and elimination of duplicates, 1,289 documents were found eligible for bibliometric analysis.

To ensure transparency and accountability of the selection process, this study adopted the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach that is tailored to the characteristics of bibliometric studies. The selection steps included initial identification from the Scopus database, removal of duplicates, screening based on inclusion-exclusion criteria, and assessment of study eligibility for further analysis. As this approach is metadata-driven, the entire selection is done without full-text reading, but rather through a structured evaluation of title, abstract, document type, and completeness of bibliographic information. This process flow is visualized systematically in the following PRISMA diagram.

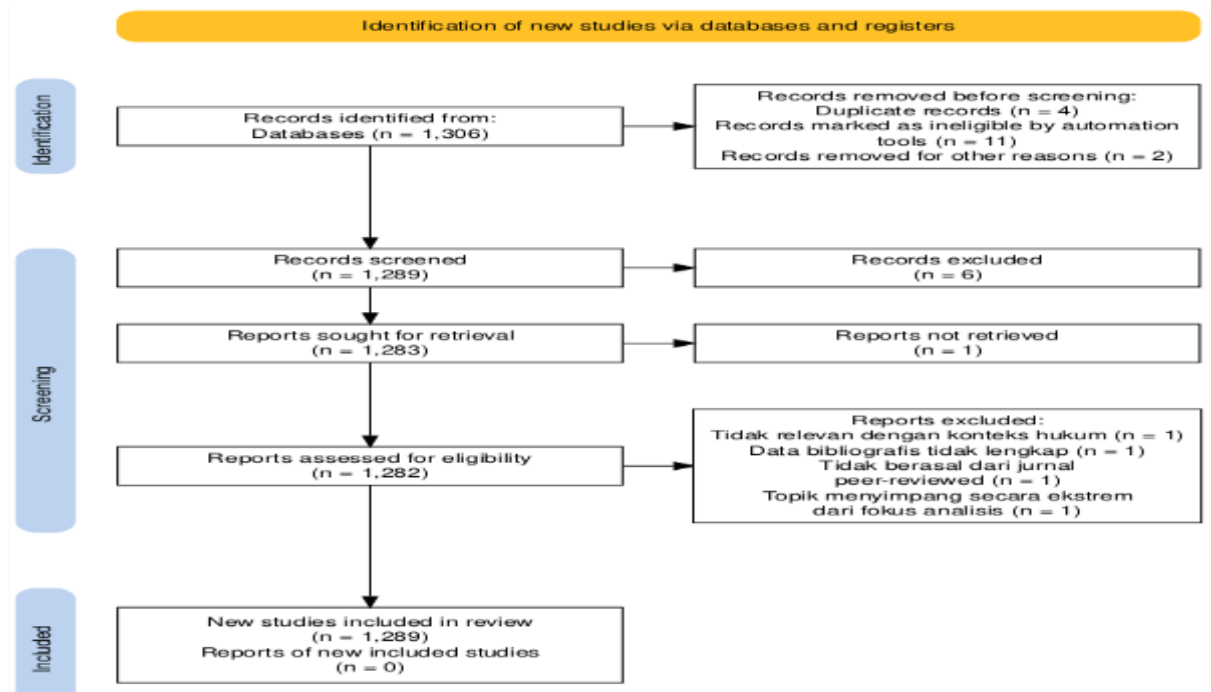


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flowchart illustrating the document identification, screening and selection process in a Scopus-based bibliometric study.

Figure 1 shows that the initial identification process resulted in 1,306 documents taken directly from the Scopus database. After automatic removal of duplicates ($n = 4$) and documents that did not meet technical eligibility criteria such as non-article document types and incomplete metadata ($n = 13$), 1,289 documents proceeded to the screening stage. At this stage, 6 documents were excluded as they were deemed irrelevant based on abstract reading. A total of 1,283 reports were searched for download and assessed, with 1 report being inaccessible. Of the 1,282 reports evaluated for eligibility, 4 were excluded for not meeting the content criteria - i.e. irrelevant to the legal context ($n=1$), incomplete data ($n=1$), not from a peer-reviewed journal ($n=1$), and deviating from the thematic focus ($n=1$). Thus, a total of 1,289 documents were included in the final analysis. This visualization reinforces the transparency and replicability of the methodological process, which is an important part of scientific integrity in bibliometric studies. PRISMA's diagrammatic structure also demonstrates that document selection was systematic and documented according to international standards.

C. Bibliometric Analysis Tools and Procedures

The data analysis process was carried out by utilizing two main software tools, namely VOSviewer (version 1.6.19) and Bibliometrix R-package through the Biblioshiny interface. The analysis was conducted through two main stages, namely performance analysis and science mapping. Performance analysis was used to measure the productivity of authors, institutions, countries, and journals. Meanwhile, science mapping is done to map bibliographic networks that include co-authorship between countries, keyword co-occurrence, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation analysis. In VOSviewer, visualizations were made based on the "association strength" normalization method and the LinLog layout algorithm. Minimum parameters are determined based on: at least 5 occurrences for keywords and at least 3 documents for authors or institutions. In addition, cluster analysis was conducted to identify thematic clusters based on the frequency and relatedness of keywords and citations.

D. Data Validity and Methodological Limitations

Methodological validity was maintained through data curation procedures, term normalization (synonym cleaning), and removal of duplication and noise from irrelevant metadata. Nonetheless, this study has a number of limitations. Firstly, because it only relies on the Scopus database, there is a possibility of not covering publications from local or national journals that are not indexed. Second, only English-language documents were analyzed, so the potential for linguistic bias towards Anglo-Saxon dominance remains. Third, collaboration analysis is based on the author's institutional affiliation recorded in the metadata, so it does not necessarily represent the nationality of the author concerned. Fourth, the use of specific keywords may make other synonymous or conceptually relevant terms unreachable (e.g. "stolen asset" or "unjust enrichment").

E. Research Ethics

This study fully utilizes secondary data in the form of scientific publication metadata that is openly available in the Scopus database, so it does not involve human subjects, personal data, or direct intervention processes with participants. Thus, this study does not require ethical clearance because it does not contain any ethical risks to individuals or institutions. The entire analysis process was carried out in accordance with the principles of good scientific practice and followed the terms of use of the data from the database provider used.

F. Validation and Credibility Strategy

To ensure the methodological quality of this study, the researchers applied a number of validation strategies. First, *peer debriefing* was conducted with experts in public management, institutional policy and police studies to validate thematic interpretations. Second, an *audit trail* was developed to record each step of the article selection and analysis process, so that it could be traced and repeated by other researchers. Third, *content triangulation* was conducted by matching the themes generated from the analysis with the original content of the article (title, abstract, and discussion section). This approach ensures that each thematic category truly represents the scientific substance of the article and is not the result of a one-sided interpretation.

3. Results

A. Descriptive Statistics and General Characteristics of the Literature

A bibliometric analysis of 1,289 publications retrieved from the Scopus database over the period 1971 to 2025 provides an initial overview of the dynamics and growth of global research on *asset recovery*, *illicit enrichment*, *non-conviction based forfeiture*, and *economic legal approaches* in anti-corruption policy. The following descriptive statistics reflect the general characteristics of the data corpus, including the number of documents, authors, institutions, as well as their growth rate and impact based on the *h-index*. This information is important for understanding the significance and strategic position of these topics in international academic discourse.

Table 1. Overview of Descriptive Statistics of the Scopus Dataset

No.	Description	Value
1	Total documents	1,289
2	Publication years	1971 - 2025
3	Unique authors	2,245
4	Unique institutions (publishers)	353
5	Average number of authors per document	1.99
6	Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of publications	12%
7	Dataset h-index	46

Table 1 shows that there are 1,289 documents relevant to the topic of this study, covering a broad time span of more than five decades (1971-2025). A total of 2,245 unique authors contributed to

the corpus, reflecting the wide involvement of the academic community across disciplines and regions. The average number of authors per document was 1.99, indicating a predominance of individual work or small collaborations on this topic, in contrast to the collaborative trend in science and technology.

A total of 353 unique institutions or publishers were identified, signaling the diversity of institutional origins involved in anti-corruption, law and public policy publications. The Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 12% indicates a significant increase in interest and relevance of this topic over time. Finally, the *h-index* value of 46 indicates that the 46 documents in this dataset have been cited at least 46 times, reflecting a fairly strong scholarly influence in the academic community.

B. Temporal Dynamics: Publication Trends from 1971 to 2025

To understand the dynamics of scholarly evolution in the study of asset recovery and economic law approaches, it is important to trace the temporal trends of publications addressing this topic longitudinally. Figure 1 presents the distribution of the number of scientific publications per year from 1971 to 2025, based on data from Scopus. This visualization not only reflects quantitative growth, but also reflects important historical moments that contributed to increased academic interest, such as the passage of UNCAC in 2003. Through this analysis, it is possible to trace the phases of initial stagnation, the transition after international regulation, and the acceleration of global discourse towards asset-oriented justice and legal efficiency in combating corruption.



Figure 2. Temporal Trend of Publications Related to Asset Recovery and Economic Law (1971-2025)

Figure 2 shows that the literature on asset recovery and the economic law approach to corruption has experienced exponential growth since the beginning of the 21st century. After a period of stagnation from 1971-1995, a surge in publications began after the passage of the UNCAC in 2003, marking a phase of global transformation in anti-corruption approaches. The peak number of publications occurs in 2022, indicating an increase in academic interest that parallels the global push towards non-conventional asset recovery strategies, such as non-conviction based forfeiture and reversal of the burden of proof. This trend shows that economic law-based approaches are no longer peripheral, but have become a central framework in anti-corruption discourse. This growth also opens up opportunities for developing countries, including Indonesia, to strengthen their research and policy positions through the adoption of legal efficiency-based models and transnational collaboration.

C. Key Publication Channels: Most Productive Journals in Anticorruption Studies

To understand the dynamics of knowledge dissemination in asset recovery studies and economic law approaches, it is important to identify the journals that are the main channels of publication. An analysis of the most prolific publication sources not only provides an overview of the direction of thematic dominance in a field, but also assists academics in determining the appropriate platforms for the dissemination of their scholarly work. Figure 2 presents the top ten journals that most actively published articles related to asset recovery, illicit enrichment, non-conviction based forfeiture, and economic analysis of law during the period 1971-2025. Thus, this visualization serves as a strategic academic channel map in the development of cross-disciplinary anti-corruption discourse.

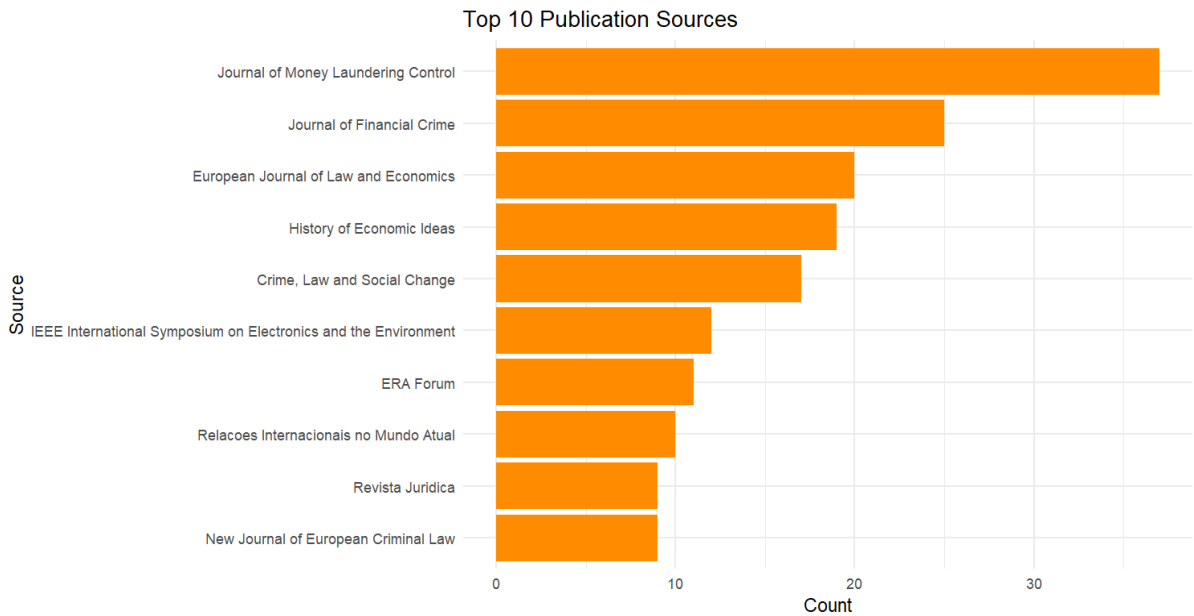


Figure 3. Ten Most Productive Journals in Asset Recovery and Economic Law Studies

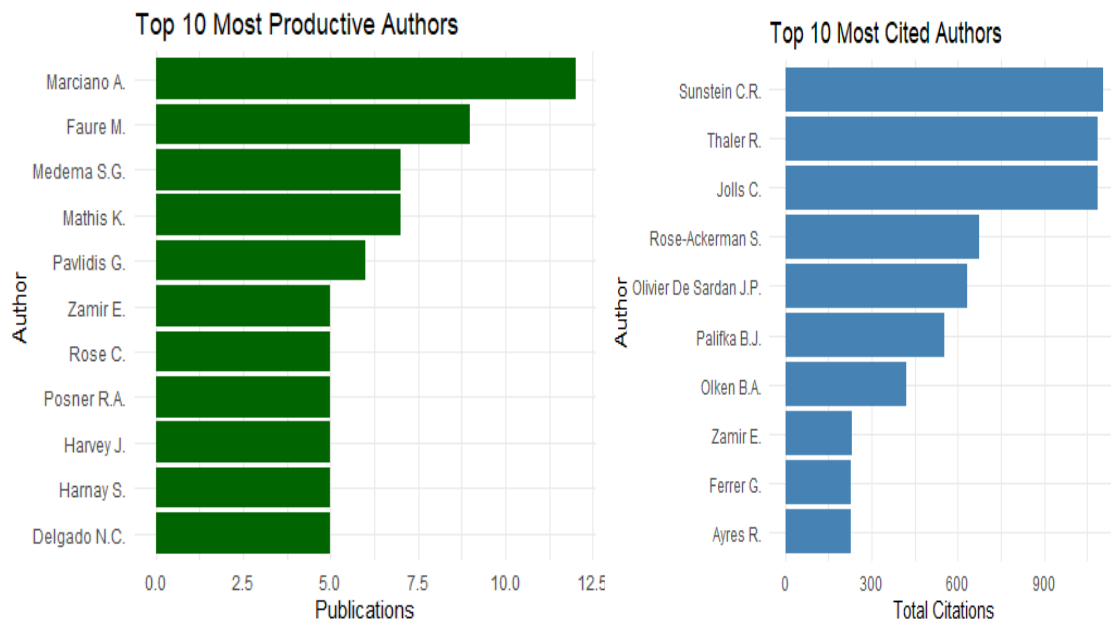
Figure 3 shows that the *Journal of Money Laundering Control* occupies the top position as the most productive publication channel in the literature discussing asset recovery, illicit enrichment, and economic law approaches to corruption. The dominance of this journal confirms that the issue of asset recovery is not only understood as a matter of criminal law, but is also closely related to the mechanisms of illicit finance and the regulation of the international financial system. Followed by the *Journal of Financial Crime* and the *European Journal of Law and Economics*, this pattern reflects an interdisciplinary trend that combines law, economics and public governance as the main axis of contemporary anti-corruption studies.

The existence of journals such as *Crime, Law and Social Change* and *History of Economic Ideas* enriches perspectives with historical, criminological, and sociological approaches. Meanwhile, the appearance of the *IEEE International Symposium on Electronics and the Environment* in this list indicates that the asset recovery discourse is starting to reach the realm of technology and sustainability, opening up space for intersections with issues of digital governance and electronic asset forensics.

The distribution of this journal shows that the discourse on asset recovery and legal efficiency has expanded across sectors and disciplines, from traditional criminal law to governance, economic criminology, and global regulatory systems. This finding emphasizes the importance of a holistic and cross-disciplinary approach in designing anti-corruption strategies that are more adaptive to transnational dynamics.

D. Intellectual Actors: Most Productive and Most Cited Authors

In bibliometric studies, identifying the most prolific and most cited authors is crucial to understanding the structure of intellectual actors in a field. The most prolific authors contribute to the volume of literature, while the most cited authors reflect the theoretical influence and conceptual quality of their work. The following visualization presents these two dimensions in the context of the global literature on asset recovery, illicit enrichment, and economic law approaches to anti-corruption policy. Figure 3a shows the ten authors with the highest number of publications, while Figure 3b displays the authors whose work is most cited in the analyzed data corpus.



**Figure 4. (a) Most prolific Authors in Asset Recovery and Economic Law Studies;
(b) Most Cited Authors in the Global Anti-Corruption Literature**

Figure 4a shows that Marciano A. is the most prolific author with more than 11 publications in the corpus, followed by Faure M. and Medema S.G. These authors generally come from the *law and economics* tradition, and contribute to issues of legal efficiency, asset recovery and economic regulation. The presence of names such as Pavlidis G. and Rose C. indicates the strengthening of the international criminal law dimension and the European perspective in this discourse. Their dominance reflects the high focus on economic analysis-based approaches in contemporary anti-corruption policy.

Meanwhile, Figure 3b reveals Sunstein C.R., Thaler R., and Jolls C. as the most cited authors, each with more than 900 citations. The three are known as pioneers of *behavioral law and economics*, which encourages a change in approach in anti-corruption regulation from repressive to incentive and nudge-based. Authors such as Rose-Ackerman S. and Olivier de Sardan J.P. also have a central position, with contributions to institutional theory and anthropological approaches to corruption in developing countries. A comparison between Figures 4a and 4b shows that productivity is not always directly proportional to academic influence, and that interdisciplinary approaches-especially those combining law, economics, and behavioral sciences-have high resonance in the global anti-corruption discourse.

E. Centers of Knowledge Production: The Most Active Publishing Institutions

Beyond authors and journals, publishers or publishing institutions play a central role in the

dissemination of scientific knowledge. Identifying the most productive publishing institutions helps reveal the discourse production networks and main channels of dissemination of literature related to asset recovery, illicit enrichment, economic analysis of law, and anti-corruption policy. The following graph presents the top ten publishing institutions that are most active in publishing documents in the corpus of this study, based on publications indexed in Scopus during 1971-2025.

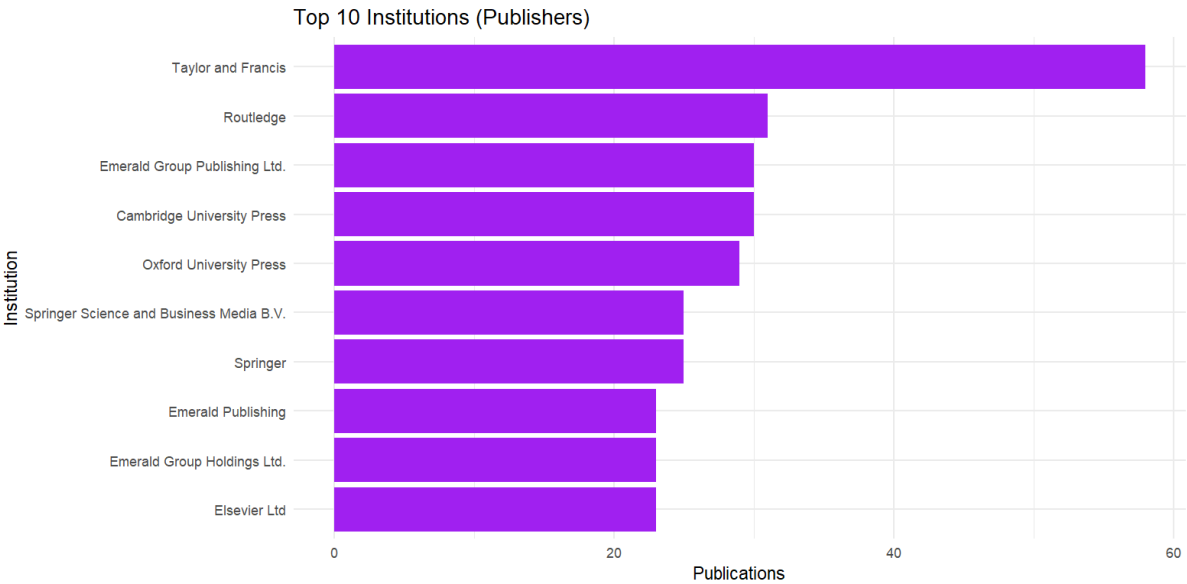


Figure 5: Most Productive Publishing Institutions in Global Anti-Corruption Studies

Figure 5 shows that Taylor and Francis tops the list as the most productive publishing institution in the global literature on asset recovery, illicit enrichment and economic law approaches to anti-corruption policy, with close to 60 publications. This position is not surprising given Taylor and Francis' reputation as home to leading journals in law, political economy and public policy. The presence of Routledge - an imprint of Taylor and Francis - in the second position further strengthens the dominance of this publishing group in disseminating interdisciplinary literature related to governance and asset recovery.

Emerald Group Publishing, under its various entities (Emerald Group Publishing Ltd., Emerald Publishing, and Emerald Group Holdings Ltd.), also shows high thematic consistency in supporting publications in the fields of public management, organizational integrity, and legal ethics. The aggregation of contributions from these three entities reflects Emerald's strategic position in supporting anti-corruption narratives based on institutional sector transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, the presence of renowned academic publishers such as Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press not only marks the involvement of higher education institutions in the development of this discourse, but also provides strong scientific legitimacy to the discipline of economic law. Meanwhile, science and technology publishers such as Springer and Elsevier show that the discourse of economic law and asset recovery has attracted attention from cross-disciplinary scientific communities, including the fields of technology, digital forensics, and legal information systems.

Overall, the distribution of publishing institutions in Figure 5 reflects a discourse field that is global, interdisciplinary, and consolidated by major publishing actors with strong academic ecosystem networks. These findings not only illustrate the direction of literature development, but also provide strategic guidance for academics and researchers who wish to publish their work in internationally reputable journals, by considering publishing channels that have thematic relevance and broad academic reach.

F. Intellectual Structure: Co-Citation Map Between Authors

Co-citation analysis is one of the important approaches in bibliometrics to understand the intellectual structure in a scientific field. Co-citation author map shows the relationship between authors who are often cited together in the same publication. The more frequently two authors are co-cited, the stronger the intellectual association between them in the discourse structure. The following visualization was created using VOSviewer and displays the network of authors that form the main theoretical and conceptual foundations in the study of asset recovery, illicit enrichment, and economic law approaches to anti-corruption policies.

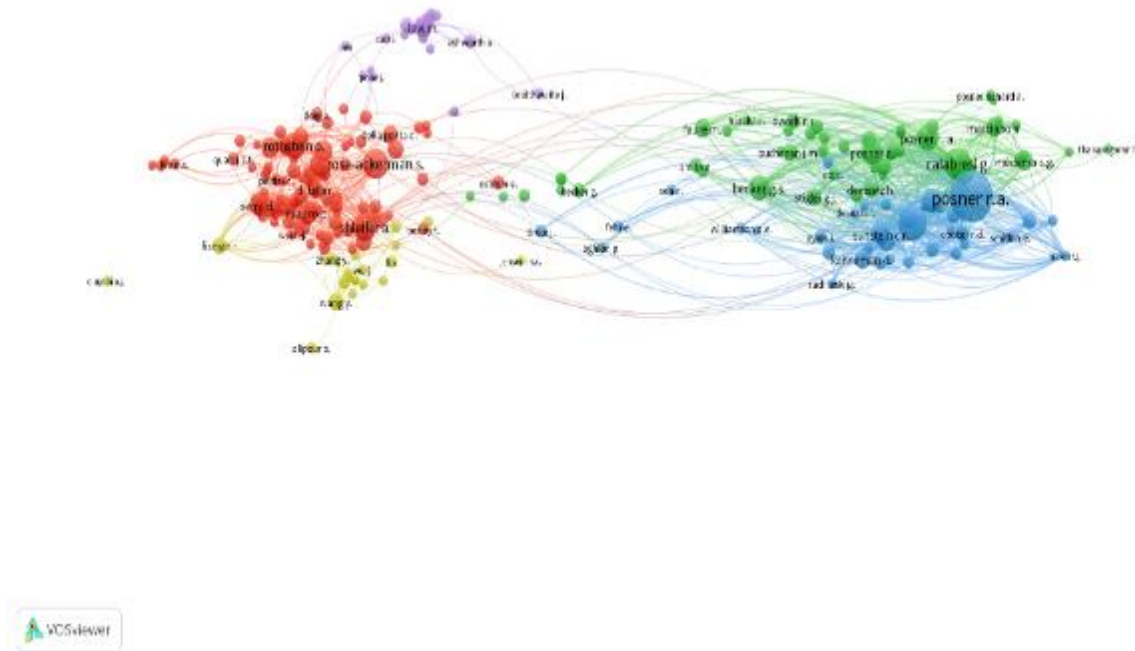


Figure 6. Co-Citation Map between Authors: Intellectual Structure of Asset Recovery and Economic Law Studies

Figure 6 presents the inter-author co-citation map that forms the intellectual structure of the global literature on asset recovery, illicit enrichment, and economic law approaches to anti-corruption policy. The network reveals five main clusters that reflect overlapping theoretical orientations and conceptual contributions but differ in focus. The blue cluster, led by Posner R.A., Calabresi G., and Sunstein C.R., features the foundations of classical law and economics approaches, with an emphasis on legal efficiency, rational choice theory, and the integration of economic behavior in legal settings. This cluster also includes names such as Thaler R. and Becker G.S., who reinforce the influence of behavioral economics in anti-corruption studies and regulatory design.

On the other hand, the red cluster dominated by Rose-Ackerman S. and Rothstein B. represents institutionalist and governance approaches that emphasize public integrity, good governance, and institutional reform. Authors in this cluster generally focus on the role of the state and power structures in influencing the success of anti-corruption policies. Meanwhile, the green cluster connects figures such as Faure M. and Medema S.G., who contribute to the development of modern economic legal theory and cost-benefit-based policies, particularly in the context of cross-jurisdictional asset recovery.

The purple cluster reflects a global policy and international law approach, with figures such as Galtung F. and Delattre E., who highlight the importance of international cooperation, soft law and supranational frameworks in state asset recovery. The smaller yellow cluster shows the existence of transdisciplinary approaches that bridge legal, economic, and sociopolitical aspects, especially in developing regions.

Overall, this map shows that the academic discourse related to combating corruption through

asset-oriented justice and legal efficiency approaches develops across approaches, with the main axis between legal efficiency theory and institutional governance. The connectivity between clusters confirms that asset recovery and anti-corruption policies today cannot be separated from the multidisciplinary synergy between law, economics and governance.

G. Epistemic Channel: Inter-Journal Co-Citation in Anticorruption Discourse

To understand the scientific foundations and main channels of dissemination of discourse on asset recovery, illicit enrichment, and economic law approaches in anti-corruption policy, an analysis of co-citation between journals is essential. Co-citation between journals shows how often two journals are cited together in the same literature, reflecting thematic linkages and epistemological closeness between scientific communities. The following visualization displays the co-citation network of journals analyzed using VOSviewer software, with dots representing journals and connecting lines indicating the strength of citation associations between them. The color clusters depict scholarly communities with high interconnection intensity, and map the strategic position of key journals in shaping the global knowledge structure in this field. This map is an important instrument to assess the main publication channels, dominant theoretical orientations, and discourse shifts in anti-corruption studies based on legal efficiency and public policy.

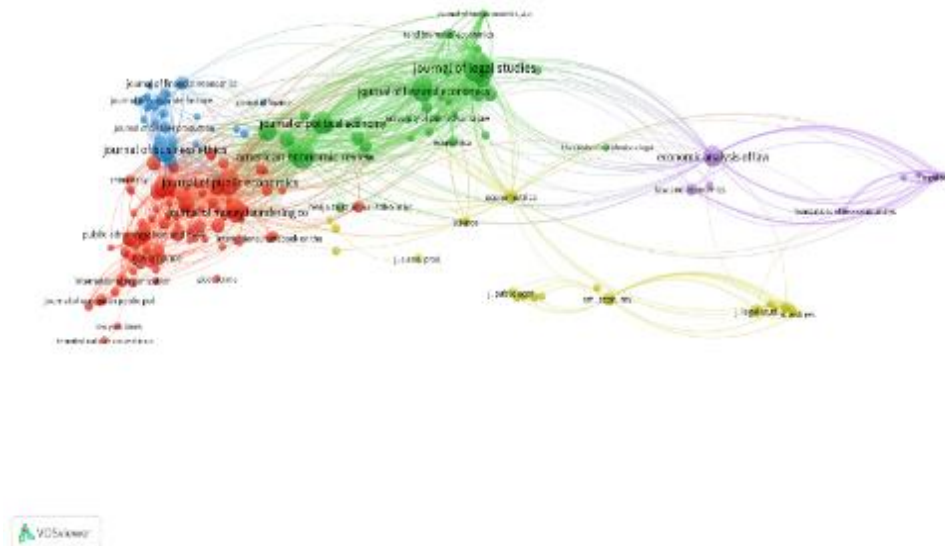


Figure 7. Co-citation map between journals: Epistemic Channels in Anticorruption and Asset Recovery Studies

Figure 7 displays a co-citation map between scholarly journals, which represents the scholarly structure and conceptual relationships in the global literature on asset recovery, illicit enrichment, and economic law approaches in anti-corruption policy. The visualization shows five main clusters with varying intensity of relationships, reflecting the diversity of perspectives and channels of scholarly dissemination contributing to the field.

The very dense red cluster on the left side of the image consists of journals focused on public economics, governance, and fiscal policy, such as the Journal of Public Economics, Journal of Money Laundering Control, Journal of Business Ethics, and Governance. This network illustrates that the anti-corruption literature is strongly linked to issues of public financial governance, institutional ethics, and cross-border financial oversight strategies. This cluster also indicates the involvement of development economics and public management in shaping the policy foundations of asset recovery.

Meanwhile, the more center-focused green cluster, led by journals such as Journal of Legal Studies, Journal of Law and Economics, and American Economic Review, represents the core of the law and economics approach. The journals in this cluster provide a conceptual

link between legal discourse and market efficiency. The network shows that anti-corruption issues are not only positioned within a normative legal framework, but also through economic rationality, incentives, and empirical analysis based on quantitative data.

The purple cluster on the right side of the graph indicates a more theoretical and conceptual community, with a focus on developing economic legal frameworks. Journals such as *Economic Analysis of Law* and *Law and Economics*, as well as several other philosophy of law journals, form the center of the theoretical approach. This cluster makes an important contribution in shaping the epistemic foundations and normative reflections on anti-corruption regulation and burden of proof reversal.

Meanwhile, the yellow and blue clusters respectively represent journals that fall on the borderline between public policy, institutional analysis, and behavioral economics. Although not as dense as the main cluster, these clusters act as thematic and methodological bridges between normative, empirical, and theoretical approaches.

Overall, the journal's co-citation map shows that the discourse on asset recovery and anti-corruption legal strategies is multidimensional and interdisciplinary, with key nodes distributed between public economics, law and economics, and global governance policy. This confirms that interdisciplinary collaboration and epistemic synergies are key to the development of effective anti-corruption legal strategies and policies at the global level.

H. Thematic Structure: Co-Occurrence of Keywords in the Global Literature

Keyword co-occurrence analysis is one of the main approaches in bibliometrics to understand the conceptual structure and evolution of topics in a field. This "all keywords" visualization displays the most frequently co-occurring keywords in publications related to asset recovery, economic analysis of law, anti-corruption, and illicit enrichment during 1971-2025. Using VOSviewer, color clusters group keywords that have co-occurrence in documents, conceptually forming interrelated thematic clusters. This map not only represents the intellectual landscape, but also illustrates how important topics evolve and connect in the global literature.

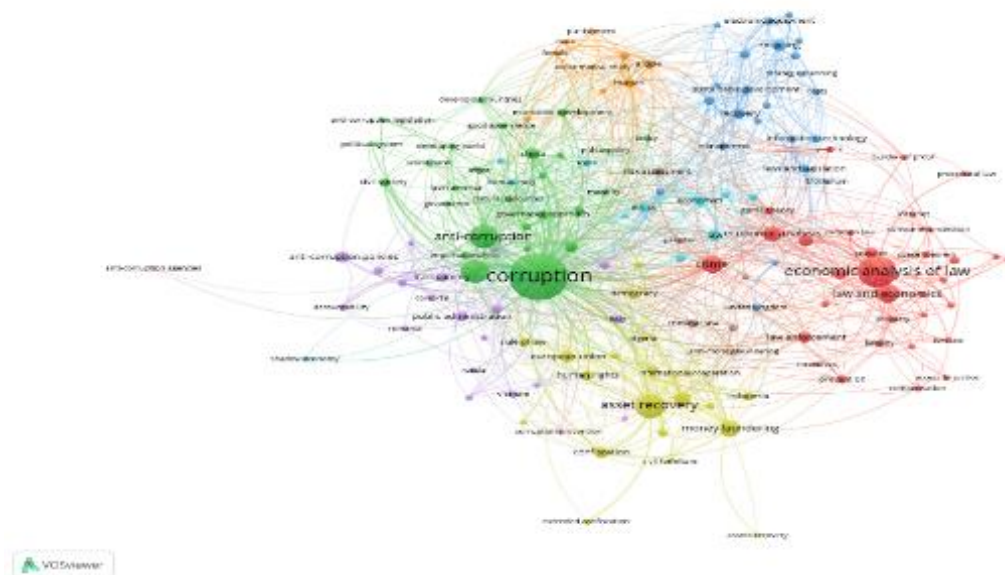


Figure 8. Keyword Co-Occurrence Map: Thematic Structure in Asset Recovery Studies and Anti-corruption Economic Law

Figure 8 shows the co-existence structure of the main keywords in the global literature on corruption and economic law approaches. The word *corruption* appears as the largest node in

the center of the map, signifying its position as the core concept that connects the themes. This keyword is strongly connected to anti-corruption, public administration, governance approach, and economic development, which are grouped in the green cluster. This cluster signifies the literature's focus on strengthening governance, the role of public institutions, and policy responses to corruption.

On the right side, the red cluster is strongly formed around economic analysis of law, law and economics, incentives, procedural law, and burden of proof. This cluster represents a legal approach based on efficiency and economic rationality. The presence of names such as Posner, Coase, and Becker as keywords emphasizes the intellectual heritage of the classical economic law approach in this discourse. Topics such as consumer protection, compliance, and access to justice indicate that the focus is not solely on punishment, but also on functional and responsive legal system reform.

The blue cluster in the top right corner features keywords such as recycling, environmental protection, information technology, and sustainable development, showing the linkages between economic law studies and sustainability and environmental law literature. This indicates the expansion of the application of the economic analysis of law approach into non-traditional sectors.

Meanwhile, the yellow cluster, with the keywords asset recovery, confiscation, money laundering, and extended confiscation, highlights non-conviction-based (NCB) asset recovery approaches. This cluster shows strong links between international legal strategies, burden of proof reversal and cross-border collaboration in dealing with corruption proceeds.

The purple and orange clusters contain more socio-political concepts such as civil society, accountability, experimental study, human, female, and policy, which link data-driven and behavioral approaches with structural and institutional governance issues.

Overall, this visualization shows that asset recovery and economic law studies are evolving in a multidimensional manner-with dominant nodes on corruption (normative and institutional), law and economics (efficiency and incentives), and global governance. The interconnections between clusters suggest a dynamic knowledge ecosystem, which continues to move away from repressive approaches towards more efficient structural and public policy-based solutions.

I. International Collaboration: Intercountry Co-Authorship Networks

The analysis of co-authorship between countries is an important approach in bibliometrics to understand patterns of international collaboration in scientific knowledge production. When authors from two or more countries are involved in the same publication, they form a collaborative relationship that can be visualized as a network. This map illustrates cross-country interactions in the context of global research on asset recovery, illicit enrichment, economic law, and anti-corruption based on publications during 1971-2025. The thicker the lines between countries, the stronger the frequency of co-authorship collaboration; the larger the country nodes, the more publications are affiliated.

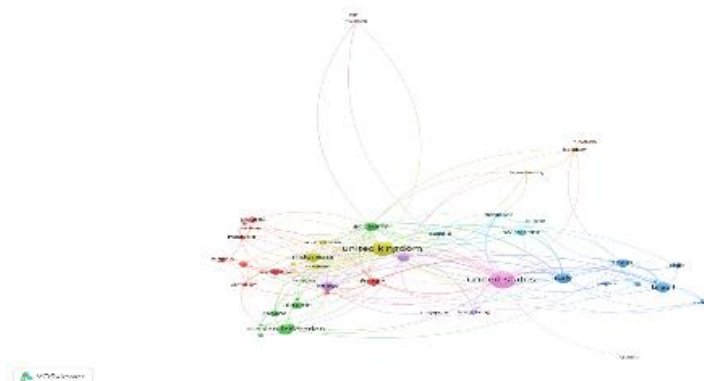


Figure 9. International Collaboration Map: Inter-Country Co-Authorship Networks in Global Anti-Corruption Studies

Figure 9 shows the network of collaboration between countries in academic publications related to asset recovery and economic law approaches to corruption. The United States and United Kingdom occupy a dominant position with the largest node sizes and extensive connectivity, signaling their central role in driving global knowledge production. The United States in particular is seen to be connected to countries such as Germany, Italy, Brazil, China and Israel, suggesting a diverse network of collaboration across continents.

The United Kingdom also has strong collaborative relationships with countries in mainland Europe (e.g. Germany, France, Austria), Asia (India, China, Indonesia), as well as other developing countries. This signals the UK's propensity as an academic hub that bridges knowledge production between developed and developing countries.

Indonesia, despite its smaller node size, appears to be actively connected to countries such as Malaysia, Nigeria, Poland and South Korea. This reflects Indonesia's growing role in contributing to international literature, particularly in the context of the global South and governance studies.

Countries such as Brazil, Iran, and Italy appear in a fairly solid blue cluster, showing close ties between countries with a focus on corruption and public sector economics. Meanwhile, the green cluster shows intense connections between Russia, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Canada—possibly in the context of international law and state financial control policies.

Some countries such as Sweden, Chile and Iran are on the periphery of the network, indicating more limited or regional collaborative engagement. This indicates the potential for increased international collaboration from these countries.

Overall, this co-authorship map reveals a collaborative structure that is still concentrated in the Global North, but is beginning to show the inclusion of developing countries that are active in the global anti-corruption discourse. This analysis is important to encourage more balanced collaboration and expand knowledge transfer across national borders.

4. Discussion

This study shows that the literature on asset recovery and economic law approaches has experienced a significant surge since the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2003. This development represents a paradigm shift from traditional repressive approaches towards asset-oriented justice models that emphasize legal efficiency and cross-jurisdictional fairness (Brun & Sotiropoulou, 2024; Hira, 2022). UNCAC became an important milestone in the development of an international legal framework for tracking, freezing and seizing assets resulting from corruption (Borlini & Rose, 2024). Nonetheless, the asset recovery process is still faced with significant challenges, including procedural barriers, limitations on mutual legal assistance, and differences in legal systems between countries (Alzubi et al., 2024; Wibowo, 2023).

To address these complexities, new legal and institutional initiatives are emerging, both at the national and transnational levels. Countries are encouraged to develop domestic regulations that align with international frameworks to facilitate cross-jurisdictional asset recovery (Helfer et al., 2023; Rose, 2024). Mechanisms such as the Global Forum on Asset Recovery are proposed as platforms for cooperation to bridge the gap between national practices and international needs. Case studies from countries such as Indonesia and Nigeria emphasize the importance of transparency, legal reforms and effective international collaboration in strengthening asset recovery processes (Arifin et al., 2023; Olujobi & Yebisi, 2023). Experiences from the United States, France and Germany also show variations in approaches to regulatory implementation that impact the effectiveness of recovery outcomes (Andersen, 2024; Del Teso, 2020; Lageson & Stewart, 2024).

In general, the patterns that emerge from this literature confirm a shift towards a more equitable and efficient asset-based justice model. This model places asset recovery and return as a strategic instrument in achieving economic justice and sustainable development (Raimi & Bamiro, 2025; Zuo et al., 2024). Legal harmonization efforts, including in the form of mutual recognition of freezing and forfeiture judgments such as in EU Regulation (EU) 2018/1805, show the direction of transformation towards a more coherent and integrated asset recovery system (Mirandola, 2020).

The co-citation findings in this study reveal a dualism of approaches in the intellectual structure of asset recovery studies and anti-corruption policies, namely between the law and economics school and the institutional governance approach. These two approaches represent different but complementary theoretical orientations in viewing the role of law and institutions in addressing corruption.

The law and economics approach, represented by figures such as Posner and Sunstein, places law as a tool to achieve economic efficiency. Posner (as a representative of the Chicago school) advocates the use of economic principles in understanding and designing the legal system in order to produce optimal resource allocation (Marchionatti, 2024). Sunstein also extended this approach by incorporating behavioral theory and the concept of nudging into regulatory design, so that public policy becomes more responsive to individual mindsets and decisions (Gramcheva, 2019).

In contrast, the institutional governance approach developed by Rose-Ackerman and Rothstein emphasizes the importance of strong institutional design and public integrity in preventing corruption. Rose-Ackerman argues that the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies depends on structural reforms of state institutions to make them more transparent and accountable (Spithoven, 2018). Rothstein highlights the importance of institutional legitimacy and public trust in building fair and stable governance, especially in developing countries (Blikhar et al., 2023).

The comparison shows that the law and economics approach is oriented towards economic efficiency and outcomes, while the governance approach emphasizes legitimacy, fairness and institutional design. Despite their different emphases, both make important contributions to understanding the complexities of anti-corruption law and designing effective policies in transnational contexts.

Knowledge production in the fields of asset recovery and economic law remains highly concentrated in the Global North. Academic institutions and authors from countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands dominate the intellectual structure and direction of development of key theories such as law and economics, institutional governance, and cross-jurisdictional legal frameworks (Contreras & Dornberger, 2023; Demeter, 2020). Meanwhile, Global South countries, including Indonesia, are more often positioned as objects of study rather than producers of ideas. This imbalance is exacerbated by limited resources, access to reputable publication platforms, and the dominance of the language and academic standards of the Global North (Dados, 2020; Jiménez, 2019).

These inequalities pose challenges in developing anti-corruption theory and practice that is truly contextually relevant. Approaches developed in the Global North are not necessarily compatible with the socio-political conditions of developing countries (Thamrin, 2022). Therefore, more inclusive efforts are needed to encourage active contributions from the Global South in knowledge production. Strategies such as knowledge justice-based international collaboration (Arundhati, 2023), strengthening local research capacity, and adapting global policy models to domestic contexts are necessary (Bazbauers & McCarthy-Jones, 2024; Marjerison & Gatto, 2024).

Examples such as Indonesia, which has established institutions such as the KPK but still faces systemic corruption challenges, show the importance of anti-corruption approaches that not only adopt external models, but also develop from local experiences and dynamics (Thamrin, 2022). Thus, strengthening the Global South's position in the knowledge ecosystem is not only about representation, but also about the effectiveness of solutions in

dealing with the complexity of corruption across contexts.

The results of this study show that the Journal of Money Laundering Control and the Journal of Financial Crime are the two most productive journals in publishing articles related to asset recovery and economic law. However, World Development and the European Journal of Political Economy have the highest average citations. This finding confirms that publication volume is not always directly proportional to a journal's scientific impact. Instead, the conceptual quality and methodological depth of an article contribute more to its academic impact (Braun & Clarke, 2023; Krawczyk & Kulczycki, 2021; Lim & Koay, 2024). This difference also implies that researchers and academic institutions need to consider the quality and scholarly impact of their chosen publication channels more than the quantity of publications (Bawack et al., 2022; Jadhav et al., 2023; Shahid et al., 2024). Moreover, the dominance of publishing houses such as Taylor & Francis and Emerald in disseminating anti-corruption literature reinforces the formation of a global discourse mainstream, and emphasizes the importance of editorial reputation and publishing standards in determining the credibility of scholarly literature (Saxena & Kumar, 2023).

The interdisciplinary nature of the literature related to asset recovery, illicit enrichment, and burden of proof is strengthened by the emergence of keywords such as digital forensics, illicit enrichment, and burden of proof in keyword co-occurrence (Febriansyah et al., 2023; Körtl & Chbib, 2024). This approach demonstrates the integration of law, digital forensics and public policy in addressing the challenges of increasingly complex and cross-border financial crime. Digital forensics is rapidly growing as a branch of forensic science that covers not only legal investigations, but also cybersecurity and technology policy (Sharma et al., 2019). Technologies such as blockchain are now being integrated to ensure the integrity of digital evidence (Anne et al., 2021), thus strengthening the synergy between the fields of computer science, law and digital governance (Dunleavy & Margetts, 2023).

Meanwhile, illicit enrichment is a central theme in anti-corruption legal approaches that emphasize strengthening asset recovery regimes and validating the source of individual wealth (Alqattan, 2023; McIntyre et al., 2025). Countries such as Germany and South Africa have developed legal frameworks that allow the state to confiscate ill-gotten assets without having to prove criminal behavior (McIntyre et al., 2025).

The concept of burden of proof in this context has evolved significantly. The application of burden of proof reversals, such as in Unexplained Wealth Orders (UWOs), reflects a shift in responsibility to the defendant to prove the legality of the assets (Ireland, 2024; Ramírez-Carvajal & Meroi, 2020). This practice raises ethical and juridical debates because it touches on the basic principles of due process in criminal law (Skontzos, 2018).

The integration of these three issues - digital forensics, illicit enrichment and burden of proof - shows that asset recovery and anti-corruption studies are evolving towards an evidence-based and multidisciplinary approach. Collaboration between forensic scientists, legal experts and policymakers is a prerequisite for designing more resilient, adaptive and fair policies in the face of transnational financial crime (Anne et al., 2021; Ireland, 2024).

The findings of this study demonstrate the importance of integration between law and economics in designing anti-corruption strategies that are not only normative, but also adaptive and evidence-based. This multidisciplinary approach enriches the theoretical framework through the incorporation of legal efficiency principles, behavioral analysis, and institutional governance that encourage policy design that is more responsive to the dynamics of corruption across jurisdictions. In this context, non-conventional asset recovery models such as non-conviction based forfeiture (NCB), reversal of the burden of proof, and criminalization of illicit enrichment gain validation as a more flexible alternative to conventional repressive approaches. For developing countries, this model offers an opportunity to strengthen legal reform by adopting a more legally substantial and

institutionally functional policy framework. In addition, strengthening international cooperation through the principles of mutual trust and substantive justice is a prerequisite for the effectiveness of global asset recovery strategies.

However, this study has a number of methodological limitations that need to be addressed. The use of a single database (Scopus) may create a bias towards English-language publications and highly indexed journals, thus risking overlooking contributions from local literature, non-English languages, and journals that are not included in the main index. In addition, the quantitative nature of the bibliometric approach does not allow exploration of the content, context or ideological dimensions of the publications analyzed. Another limitation relates to the use of specific keywords, which may lead to the exclusion of synonyms or variations of substantively relevant terms. To address these limitations, it is recommended that future studies use a mixed-method approach, combining bibliometrics and qualitative content analysis, and expanding data sources to other platforms such as Web of Science, Dimensions, or regional databases. This approach is believed to produce a more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the literature, conceptual constructs, and actual regulatory practices in the field of asset recovery and anti-corruption policies across countries.

5. Conclusion

This research has succeeded in systematically mapping the development of global literature related to asset recovery, illicit enrichment, and economic law approaches in anti-corruption policies. The findings show that since 2003 there has been a significant surge in publications marking the transition from a repressive approach to an asset-oriented justice framework. The law and economics approach represented by figures such as Posner, Sunstein, and Thaler, and the institutional governance approach by Rose-Ackerman and Rothstein, form the two dominant poles in the intellectual structure of this literature. Emerging thematic clusters reflect the multidisciplinary linkages between law, economics, public policy and forensic technology.

Recommendations from this study include the importance of increasing the contribution of researchers from developing countries, especially Indonesia, to participate in the global publication ecosystem through cross-country collaboration and writing on highly reputable channels. In addition, the results of this study can be used as a basis for designing anti-corruption policies that are more efficient, adaptive and evidence-based.

However, this study has limitations, mainly related to the exclusivity of using the Scopus database, which may cause bias towards English-language literature and internationally reputable journals. In addition, the quantitative bibliometric approach does not capture the depth of conceptual content of each document. Therefore, future studies are recommended to combine bibliometric methods with qualitative content analysis or a mixed meta-analysis approach, as well as expanding data sources to Web of Science and Dimensions.

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