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Opportunities for a Sharia-Based Free Trade Agreement Within the Framework of Multipolarity and BRICS Economic Integration: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: *The development of multipolarity and the strengthening of BRICS economic integration have encouraged the emergence of various alternative forms of international trade cooperation beyond the conventional multilateral trading system. However, studies on the opportunities for a Sharia-based Free Trade Agreement (FTA) within the BRICS framework remain limited. This study aims to analyze the opportunities for a Sharia-based FTA within the context of multipolarity and BRICS economic integration using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The study adopted the PRISMA 2020 guidelines by conducting a literature search through Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and Scopus. Based on the processes of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion, seven articles published between 2014 and 2024 met the established criteria and were analyzed descriptively through thematic synthesis. The findings indicate that the strengthening of BRICS economic capacity through increased trade and investment, the establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB), the expansion of BRICS+ membership, and the growing economic cooperation among developing countries provide conceptual opportunities for the development of a Sharia-based FTA. Furthermore, the characteristics of BRICS cooperation demonstrate conceptual compatibility with the principles of Islamic economics, including justice, cooperation, and public welfare (maslahah). Nevertheless, the reviewed literature does not provide explicit discussion or evidence of the implementation of a Sharia-based FTA within the BRICS framework. This study contributes conceptually by offering a perspective on the potential integration of Islamic economic principles as an alternative normative foundation for the development of a BRICS Free Trade Agreement amid the increasingly multipolar global economic landscape.*
Keywords: *BRICS, Free Trade Agreement, Multipolarity.*

Abstrak: *Perkembangan multipolaritas dan menguatnya integrasi ekonomi BRICS mendorong munculnya berbagai alternatif kerja sama perdagangan internasional di luar sistem perdagangan multilateral konvensional. Namun, kajian mengenai peluang Free Trade Agreement (FTA) berbasis syariah dalam kerangka BRICS masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis peluang FTA berbasis syariah dalam kerangka multipolaritas dan integrasi ekonomi BRICS melalui pendekatan Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Penelitian dilakukan dengan mengadopsi pedoman PRISMA 2020 dengan menelusuri literatur pada Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, dan Scopus. Berdasarkan proses identifikasi, penyaringan, penilaian kelayakan, dan inklusi, diperoleh tujuh artikel dengan rentang waktu 2014-2024 yang memenuhi kriteria untuk dianalisis secara deskriptif melalui sintesis tematik. Hasil sintesis menunjukkan bahwa penguatan kapasitas ekonomi BRICS melalui peningkatan perdagangan dan investasi, pembentukan New Development Bank (NDB), perluasan keanggotaan BRICS+, serta berkembangnya kerja sama ekonomi antarnegara berkembang membuka peluang konseptual bagi pengembangan FTA berbasis syariah. Selain itu, karakteristik kerja sama BRICS menunjukkan kesesuaian konseptual dengan prinsip-prinsip ekonomi syariah, seperti keadilan, kerja sama, dan kemaslahatan. Namun, literatur yang dianalisis belum menunjukkan adanya pembahasan maupun implementasi FTA berbasis syariah secara eksplisit dalam kerangka BRICS. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi konseptual dengan menawarkan perspektif mengenai peluang integrasi prinsip-prinsip ekonomi syariah sebagai alternatif fondasi normatif dalam pengembangan FTA BRICS di tengah dinamika ekonomi global yang semakin multipolar.*
Kata Kunci: *BRICS, Free Trade Agreement, Multipolaritas.*

A. Introduction

The global economic landscape has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades, shifting from a system predominantly dominated by Western countries toward an increasingly multipolar order[1]. One of the key indicators of this transition is the growing economic contribution of the BRICS countries to the global economy[2]. Following the expansion of its membership in 2024, BRICS accounted for approximately 41.4% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) based on purchasing power parity (PPP), surpassing the G7, which had previously dominated the global economy[3]. This development has positioned BRICS as one of the world's largest economic blocs. Furthermore, the economic growth of BRICS member countries is projected to exceed the global average, with an annual growth rate of more than 4%, compared with the global average ranging from approximately 2.0% to 3.1%.[4]. These trends demonstrate the increasing influence of BRICS in international trade and investment.

In line with these developments, BRICS economic cooperation has evolved beyond merely promoting trade among its member states toward the establishment of alternative economic institutions. This has been reflected in the creation of the New Development Bank (NDB), the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), and the strengthening of intra-

[1] Deddy S Bratakusumah, "Dinamika Global Dan Regional Serta Implikasinya Bagi Ekonomi Indonesia 2026," vol. IX, 2026.

[2] Juliana, Hilda Monoarfa, and Fitranty Adirestuty, *Industri Halal: Peluang Dan Tantangan Global*, 1st ed. (Depok: PT. Rajawali Buana Pusaka, 2025), https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=en&lr=&id=OfZkEQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA2&dq=masuknya+negara+mayoritas+muslim+membuka+peluang+besar+bagi+integrasi+nilai-nilai+perdagangan+Islam+dalam+arsitektur+perdagangan+BRICS,+terutama+dengan+meningkatnya+permintaan+glo.

[3] Ben Norton, "BRICS Grows, Adding Indonesia as Member: World's 4th Most Populous Country, 7th Biggest Economy," Eurasia, 2025, https://geopoliticaleconomy.com/2025/01/07/brics-adds-indonesia-member-economy/.

[4] Muhammad Wilda Nurifqi, Flori Mardiani Lubis, and Prilla Marsingga, "Pengaruh Organisasi Brazil , Rusia , India , China Dan Afrika Selatan (BRICS) Dalam Kerja Sama Ekonomi Global," *INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research* 4 (2024): 18448–60.

BRICS trade[5]. However, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the trade capacity of BRICS has not yet fully reflected the bloc's substantial economic potential. Although BRICS member countries account for approximately 27% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and 24% of global exports, intra-BRICS trade remains relatively low compared with the bloc's overall economic capacity[6]. This condition suggests that there remains considerable scope for developing a more integrated and adaptive model of trade cooperation that is better aligned with the evolving dynamics of the global economy[7].

On the other hand, the *State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2024/2025* indicates that global Muslim consumer spending across six halal economy sectors reached US$2.4 trillion in 2023 and is projected to continue growing. Meanwhile, the overall size of the global halal economy, including Islamic financial assets, amounted to approximately US$7.3 trillion[8]. These findings indicate that the Islamic economy has evolved into a significant component of global economic activity and international trade. This development is particularly relevant given that the expansion of BRICS membership has brought several Muslim-majority countries into the bloc, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates, all of which possess extensive experience in the development of the halal industry and Islamic finance[9]. These developments create an opportunity to examine the potential integration of Islamic economic principles into the development of BRICS trade cooperation.

[5] Daily News, "The New Development Bank: BRICS' Alternative to the IMF and World Bank," 2025, https://infobrics.org/en/post/52505#:~:text=July 18%2C 2025-,In 2015%2C the BRICS nations—Brazil%2C Russia%2C India,IMF) and the World Bank.
[6] United Nations Conference On Trade and Develompment, *Two Decades of Intra-BRICS Trade Trends , Patterns and Policies* (United Nations Conference On Trade and Develompment, 2026).
[7] Juliana, Monoarfa, and Adirestuty, *Industri Halal: Peluang Dan Tantangan Global*.
[8] Dinar Standard, "State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2024/25," 2025.
[9] Achmad Nur Alfianto, "From Value-Free Positivism To Prophetic Paradigm : Rethinking Paradigms In The Halal Industry," *AL-IQTISHOD: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Penelitian Ekonomi Islam* 14, no. 1 (2026): 25–45.

Previous studies have examined BRICS from various perspectives. Mitsuo Matsushita[10] highlighted the evolving role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the potential for establishing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) within the BRICS framework. Kumar[11] discussed the prospects for BRICS regional trade integration in response to the emergence of Mega-Regional Trade Agreements. Ghori[12] analyzed the opportunities and challenges associated with establishing a BRICS FTA, while Kettab[13] examined the implications of BRICS+ expansion for global economic integration. In addition, Coulibaly[14] investigated the determinants of economic growth in BRICS countries, whereas Kornegay dan Naidu[15] explored BRICS as a representative of the Global South within an increasingly multipolar world order. Nevertheless, these studies have primarily focused on geopolitics, international trade, economic integration, and the institutional development of BRICS, while paying little attention to the potential development of a Sharia-based Free Trade Agreement (FTA) as an alternative trade model within the context of multipolarity.

Based on this research gap, the present study aims to analyze the potential for a Sharia-based Free Trade Agreement (FTA) within the framework of multipolarity and BRICS economic integration using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. This study is expected to make a conceptual contribution by integrating the perspective of

[10] Mitsuo Matsushita, "A View on Future Roles of The WTO : Should There Be More Soft Law in The WTO ?," *Journal of International Econnomic Law*, no. 17 (2014): 701–15, https://doi.org/10.1093/jiel/jgu035.
[11] Bipin Kumar, "BRICS and Free Trade Agreements : A Special Relationship," *Emerald Insight* 11 (2016): 247–65, https://doi.org/10.1108/S1745-886220160000011013.
[12] Umair Ghori, "The BRICS+ : Fault Lines and Opportunities," in *The Rise of the BRICS in the Global Political Economy* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2018), 191–218, https://doi.org/10.4337/9781782545477.00018.
[13] Zahia Kettab, "The Expansion of Brics Membership and Its Impact on International Trade," *Russian Law Journal* 88, no. 2 (2024): 1925–35.
[14] Salifou K Coulibaly, Cao Erbao, and T Metuge Mekongcho, "Economic Globalization, Entrepreneurship, and Development," *Technological Forecasting & Social Change*, 2017, 1–10, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.09.028.
[15] Francis A Kornegay and Sanusha Naidu, "BRICS in the Post-Liberal World Order : A New Agenda for Cooperation ? Perspectives from South Africa," *Strategic Analysis*, 2019, 1–13, https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2019.1669893.

Islamic economics into the discourse on BRICS free trade while enriching the literature on alternative models of international trade governance that are more ethical, inclusive, and adaptive to the evolving dynamics of the global economy.

B. Literature Review

Theory of Regional Economic Integration

Regional economic integration refers to an agreement among countries within the same geographical region to facilitate the more efficient movement of goods, services, and factors of production across national borders. Within the framework of regional economic integration, member countries agree to coordinate various trade, fiscal, and monetary policies in order to strengthen economic cooperation and reduce barriers to cross-border economic activities. In general, the primary objective of regional economic integration is to enhance economic efficiency, promote sustainable economic growth, and ultimately improve the welfare of society[16]. Through economic integration, trade among member countries is expected to expand, thereby increasing their gross domestic product (GDP). As economic output and trade activities grow, the welfare of the population is also expected to improve through higher income levels, greater employment opportunities, and enhanced overall economic prosperity[17].

Regional economic integration can be effectively implemented when its prerequisite conditions are fulfilled. These conditions include social assimilation, shared values among participating countries, mutual economic benefits, relatively low costs of

[16] Andi Muhammar Qadafi Abidin, "INTEGRASI EKONOMI REGIONAL DALAM ASEAN FREE TRADE," *Jurnal Education and Development* 7, no. 4 (2019): 162–67.
[17] Hamzah Miftahun Ni'am et al., "TANTANGAN DAN DAMPAK INTEGRASI EKONOMI REGIONAL TERHADAP," *Jurnal Akademik Ekonomi Dan Manajemen* 1, no. 4 (2024): 266–72, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61722/jaem.v1i4.3339.

establishing economic integration, close relationships among member states, and favorable external influences that promote cooperation between member countries[18].

Based on these considerations, regional economic cooperation can be established on the foundation of these prerequisite conditions. By pursuing shared objectives, namely promoting economic prosperity and stability, regional economic integration serves as a strategic framework for strengthening cooperation among member countries and advancing their collective economic interest.

Theory of Global Economic Multipolarity

A multipolar international system enables developing countries to strengthen their strategic position by adopting a flexible approach, establishing selective relationships with multiple major powers based on their respective national interests. Within this context, developing countries are afforded greater opportunities to play a more active role in international institutions, build strategic coalitions, and advance their shared interests through multilateral cooperation, such as the BRICS alliance[19].

Furthermore, this system provides developing countries with greater opportunities to play a mediating role in conflicts among major powers by leveraging their non-aligned position to promote global stability and foster international cooperation[20].

Theory of Sharia Trade

The theory of Sharia trade is founded on the core principles of Islamic economics, which emphasize justice (*ʿadl*), balance (*mīzān*), and public welfare (*maslahah*) in all economic activities. Within the Islamic framework, trade is viewed not merely as the exchange of goods and services but also as a process of distributing benefits that must be free from the elements of *riba* (usury or interest), *gharar* (excessive uncertainty), and *maysir*

[18] Khairai Alawiyah Matodang et al., "Kerjasama Ekonomi Regional : Analisis Peluang , Tantangan Dan Strategi Indonesia Dalam Menghadapi Era Masyarakat Ekonomi Asean (MEA)," *JETBUS: Journal of Education Transportation and Business* 1, no. 2 (2024): 734–40.
[19] Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014).
[20] Iwan Gunawan, "Dinamika Politik Global Dalam Era Multipolar: Tantangan Dan Peluang Bagi Negara Berkembang," *COSTING: Journal of Economic, Business and Accounting* 6, no. 2 (2023).

(gambling or speculation)[21]. Consequently, values such as transparency, honesty, information disclosure, and the prohibition of exploitation constitute the ethical foundations governing commercial relationships[22]. These principles are intended to ensure that all transactions are conducted fairly and do not generate harm, inequality, or imbalances that could undermine social and economic welfare.

In the context of international trade relations, the theory of Sharia trade provides a normative framework that emphasizes mutually beneficial cooperation rather than arrangements dominated by particular economic powers. Principles such as *taʿāwun* (mutual cooperation) and *ʿadl* (distributive justice) serve as guiding values in designing international trade mechanisms that are more ethical, equitable, and sustainable[23]. These principles are highly relevant to the development of modern economic cooperation, including within the framework of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). With the inclusion of several Muslim-majority countries in BRICS, the principles of Sharia trade have the potential to serve as a normative reference for designing a more inclusive and adaptive model of trade integration that reflects the diverse preferences of member states. This also creates opportunities for the future development of harmonized halal standards and the promotion of ethical trade practices within the BRICS framework.

C. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The SLR approach is applied to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize empirical and conceptual studies relevant to the potential for a Sharia-based Free Trade Agreement (FTA) within the framework of multipolarity and BRICS economic integration. The reporting and literature review process in this study follows the

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[21] Mursal, "IMPLEMENTASI PRINSIP-PRINSIP EKONOMI SYARIAH : Alternatif Mewujudkan Kesejahteraan Berkeadilan," *Jurnal Perspektif Ekonomi Darussalam* 1, no. 1 (2015): 75–84.
[22] Said Safri Ibrahim and Achmad Syamsul Huda, "Prinsip-Prinsip Etika Bisnis Dalam Al-Qur ' an Dan Hadits : Relevansinya Terhadap UMKM Di Kota Bogor," *Jurnal Kajian Ekonomi Dan Bisnis Islam* 6, no. 8 (2025): 2609–29, https://doi.org/1047467/elmal.v66i8.8056.
[23] Ibrahim and Huda.

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines and were analyzed descriptively through thematic synthesis.

1. Data Serach Strategy

The primary literature was collected from the internationally recognized academic database Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The literature search was conducted using a combination of carefully designed search strings intended to capture three principal dimensions of the study: free trade, the halal economy, and BRICS or multipolar geopolitics. The search keywords used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Keyword and Database

Database	Keyword
Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar	"Free Trade Agreement" AND "Islamic Economics" AND "BRICS" ("Free Trade Agreement" OR "FTA" OR "Trade Integration") AND ("Islamic Economics" OR "Sharia" OR "Islamic Finance" OR "Halal") AND ("BRICS" OR "Multipolarity" OR "Emerging Economies" OR "Global South")

2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure that the selected studies were relevant to the research topic, this study established inclusion and exclusion criteria during the literature selection process. The criteria are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

No	Data Criteria	Inclusion	Eksclusion
1	Publication period	Documents published between 2014 and 2024	Documents published before 2014 or after 2024
2	Publication language	Documents published in English or Indonesian	Documents published in languages other than English or Indonesian
3	Type of literature	Peer-reviewed journal articles	Conference proceedings, books, book chapters, theses, or dissertations
4	Accessibility	Full-text documents available for access	Documents without full-text access
5	Relevance to the	Documents discussing	Documents that merely mention

research topic	the intersection of trade cooperation, Islamic finance or the Islamic economy, and the dynamics of BRICS or global multipolarity	the keywords without substantive discussion relevant to the research topic

3. Literature Selection Process

The literature screening process was conducted through several systematic stages in accordance with the PRISMA framework. The stages of the selection process are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Literature Identification and Selection Process

No	Stage	Process	Description
1	Identification	Data search	The literature search was conducted using the Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar database. The search employed the following search string ("Free Trade Agreement" OR "FTA" OR "Trade Integration") AND ("Islamic Economics" OR "Sharia" OR "Islamic Finance" OR "Halal") AND ("BRICS" OR "Multipolarity" OR "Emerging Economies" OR "Global South").
2	*Screening*	Data screening	Articles were screened based on the relevance of their titles and abstracts to the research topic, while duplicate records were removed. This stage aimed to identify studies directly related to the subject under investigation
3	*Eligibility*	Quality assessment	Articles that passed the screening stage underwent a full-text review to assess their methodological quality and determine their relevance to the research objectives
4	*Included*	Final selection	Articles that met all inclusion criteria were selected as the primary sources for the systematic review and were subsequently analyzed in greater depth

Based on these systematic stages, the literature identification and selection process from the initial search to the final inclusion stage is illustrated in detail using the PRISMA flow diagram. The diagram records the number of documents initially identified, the data elimination process, the screening of titles and abstracts, and the full-text eligibility assessment, as presented in Figure 1.

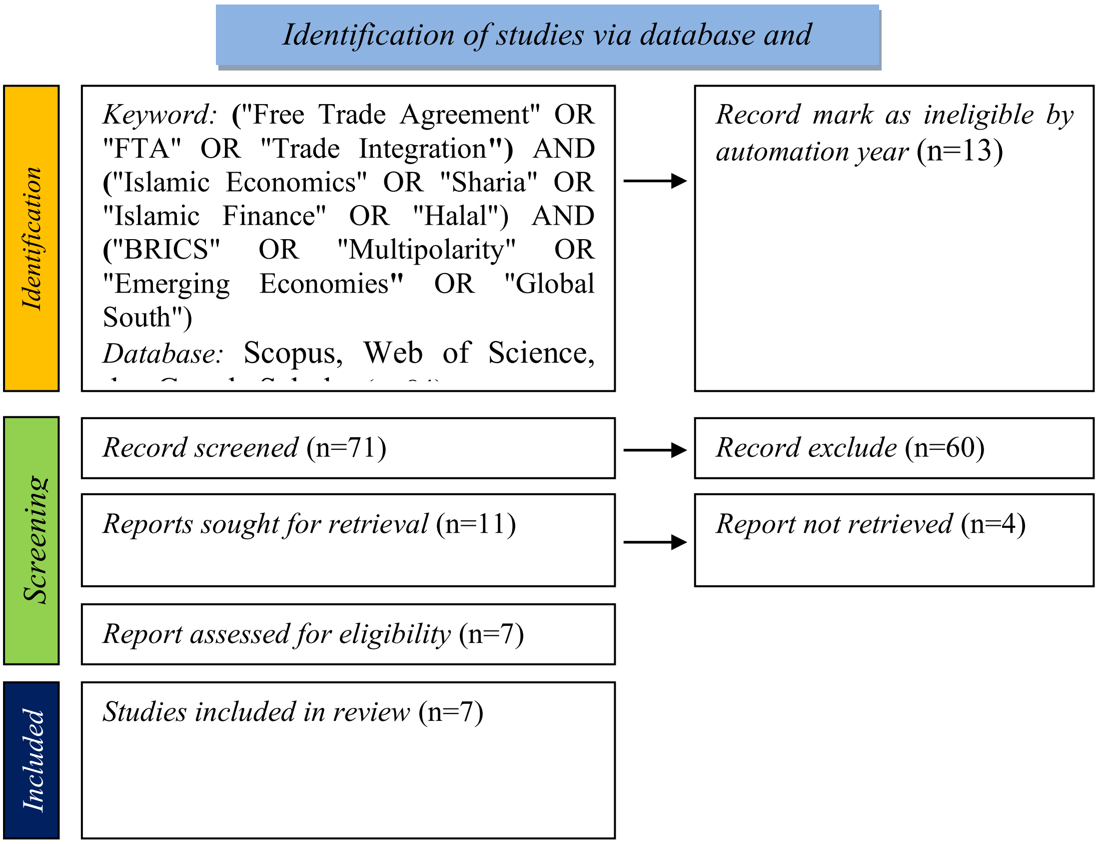

Figure 1 PRISMA Flow Diagram

D. Results and Discussion

Literature Synthesis Results

Based on the literature selection process using the SLR method, seven articles met the inclusion criteria and were selected for analysis in accordance with the research topic on the potential for a Sharia-based Free Trade Agreement (FTA) within the framework of multipolarity and BRICS economic integration. These studies were published between 2014 and 2025, with the highest number of publications appearing in 2019 (two articles). The remaining publications were distributed across 2024, 2018, 2017, 2016, and 2014, with one article published in each of those years, as illustrated in Figure 2.

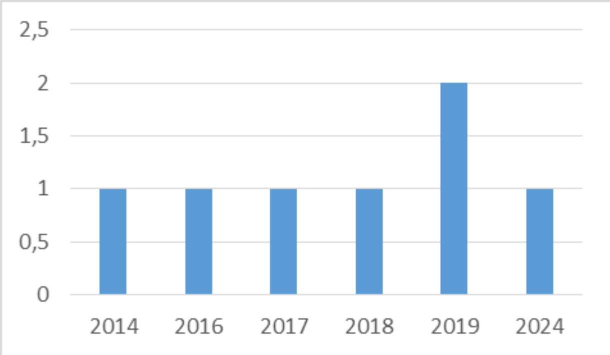

Figure 2 Number of Article

(Source: Researchers' Data Processing, 2025)

The publication trend exhibits fluctuations over time, indicating sustained scholarly interest in various aspects related to the reform of international trade governance, the development of BRICS, regional economic integration, the expansion of BRICS+, and the potential establishment of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Based on the reviewed literature, the findings are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 Results of the Literature Review Analysis

Year	Author	Title	Research Subject	Research Focus	Key Findings
2014	Mitsuo Matsushita [24]	A View on Future Roles of The WTO: Should There be More Soft Law in The WTO?	The role of the WTO amid the deadlock in multilateral trade negotiations, the proliferation of free trade agreements, and the emergence of new economic powers such as BRICS	Examines the relevance of the WTO by proposing the adoption of soft law as a mechanism for harmonizing overlapping international trade regulations	The shift toward a multipolar global order, including the rise of BRICS, has contributed to the deadlock of hard-law negotiations within the WTO. The WTO is therefore encouraged to adopt a non-binding soft-law approach by

[24] Matsushita, "A View on Future Roles of The WTO : Should There Be More Soft Law in The WTO ?"

					functioning as a coordination platform (FTA Network) through the Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM) to harmonize overlapping FTA regulations (the *spaghetti bowl* phenomenon)
2019	Rostam Neuwirth[25]	China and the "Culture And Trade" Debate: A Holistic Approach	China's legal and trade policies in addressing the relationship between culture and trade at the domestic, regional, and global levels	Analyzes technological advances that have driven the convergence of the creative industries and the digital economy, as well as China's holistic approach in bilateral and regional trade agreements, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and BRICS cooperation	China adopts a holistic approach by integrating cultural and digital economy provisions into Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and BRICS cooperation, thereby strengthening its soft power and contributing to the development of a multipolar trade architecture
2016	Bipin Kumar[26]	BRICS and Free Trade Agreements: A Special	The role and responses of BRICS member states	Examines the similarities, differences, and foreign trade	The expansion of Western-led Mega-RTAs, such as the TPP

[25] Rostam J Neuwirth, "China and the 'Culture and Trade' Debate : A Holistic Approach," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 25, no. 5 (2019): 629–47, https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2019.1626846.
[26] Kumar, "BRICS and Free Trade Agreements : A Special Relationship."

		Relationship	to the growing trend of Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) and global Mega-Regional Trade Agreements (Mega-RTAs)	policy implications of BRICS countries in responding to Mega-RTAs promoted by developed economies	and TTIP, has negatively affected BRICS exports. Consequently, BRICS members have pursued balancing strategies independently, including China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and RCEP, India's participation in RCEP and bilateral diplomacy, Russia's non-dollar cooperation, and Brazil's and South Africa's optimization of regional blocs such as MERCOSUR and SACU/AfCFTA
2024	Zahia Kettab[27]	The Expansion of Brics Membership and Its Impact on International Trade	The BRICS economic bloc and its membership expansion, officially implemented on 1 January 2024 with the accession of new member countries	Investigates the motivations behind BRICS expansion and projects its potential impacts on global trade, supply chains, and the international financial system	BRICS expansion strengthens the bloc's global economic influence and trade volume through the accession of new member states aimed at diversifying markets and

[27] Kettab, "The Expansion of Brics Membership and Its Impact on International Trade."

					reducing dependence on the U.S. dollar. Although the expansion offers significant opportunities for trade growth and alternative financial institutions, such as the New Development Bank (NDB), its effectiveness remains constrained by internal heterogeneity and geopolitical tensions with Western countries
2017	Salifou K. Coulibaly, Cao Erbao, T. Metuge Mekongcho [28]	Economic globalization, entrepreneurship, and development	The relationship between economic globalization, opportunity entrepreneurship, and economic development across five BRICS member countries	Examines the roles of economic globalization and entrepreneurial activities in promoting economic growth and facilitating the transition from efficiency-driven to innovation-driven economies in BRICS countries	Economic globalization and opportunity entrepreneurship have a positive and statistically significant impact on economic growth in BRICS countries by accelerating technology transfer and supporting the transition toward innovation-driven

[28] Coulibaly, Erbao, and Mekongcho, "Economic Globalization, Entrepreneurship, and Development."

					economies
2018	Umair Ghori[29]	The BRICS+: Fault lines and opportunities	Investment profiles, trade flows in goods and services, and the feasibility of establishing an intra-BRICS Free Trade Agreement (FTA)	Evaluates structural challenges as well as initiatives involving development banks and the use of local currencies within the BRICS bloc	An inclusive FTA model is considered the most effective mechanism for integrating supply chains and expanding intra-BRICS trade by utilizing existing regional networks. However, such integration continues to face significant structural challenges, including China's manufacturing dominance, the absence of a unified investment arbitration mechanism, weak intellectual property rights (IPR) protection, and divergent political interests among member states
2019	Francis A. Kornegay Jr. dan Sanusha Naidu[30]	BRICS in the Post-Liberal World Order: A New Agenda for	The evolution of BRICS within the post-liberal international	Examines the relationship between South Africa and BRICS	The institutionalization of BRICS through the New

[29] Ghori, "The BRICS+ : Fault Lines and Opportunities."
[30] Kornegay and Naidu, "BRICS in the Post-Liberal World Order : A New Agenda for Cooperation ? Perspectives from South Africa."

		Cooperation? Perspectives from South Africa	order	alternative financial institutions, as well as South Africa's strategic role and position as the representative of the African continent in advancing regional interests	Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) has established an alternative financial architecture that reduces dependence on the U.S. dollar and Western financial institutions. Nevertheless, South Africa's efforts to integrate its regional trade agenda (AfCFTA) into BRICS continue to face challenges arising from power asymmetries and internal geopolitical competition among member states

Based on Table 4, the literature synthesis indicates that studies on BRICS have predominantly focused on the reform of international trade governance, regional economic integration, the establishment of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), and the emergence of multipolarity as a response to the changing structure of the global economy. The reviewed literature further suggests that strengthened trade and investment cooperation, the establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB), and the expansion of BRICS membership have become the principal drivers of the bloc's growing economic capacity and institutional development in promoting economic cooperation among developing countries.

Opportunities for a Sharia-Based Free Trade Agreement within the Framework of Multipolarity and BRICS Economic Integration

The literature synthesis reveals that the transformation of the international trading system has been characterized by the declining effectiveness of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in producing new multilateral trade rules. This has encouraged the proliferation of alternative trade arrangements, including Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs), and Mega-Free Trade Agreements (Mega-FTAs). Matsushita[31] argues that the need for the Doha Development Agenda was driven by the shifting distribution of global economic power, including the growing influence of BRICS countries as emerging trading powers. This transformation has encouraged BRICS member states to develop regional trade mechanisms that complement the multilateral trading system. Similar findings were reported by Kumar[32] who argues that the increasing number of Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) reflects the stagnation of WTO negotiations, prompting BRICS countries to become more actively engaged in regional trade cooperation.

Alongside these developments, BRICS has strengthened its economic capacity through enhanced trade and investment cooperation, as well as the establishment of alternative financial institutions. Coulibaly et al[33] demonstrate that economic globalization, opportunity-driven entrepreneurship, and regional economic cooperation have made significant positive contributions to the economic development of BRICS member countries. Ghori[34] further argues that BRICS possesses considerable potential to deepen

[31] Matsushita, "A View on Future Roles of The WTO : Should There Be More Soft Law in The WTO ?"
[32] Kumar, "BRICS and Free Trade Agreements : A Special Relationship."
[33] Coulibaly, Erbao, and Mekongcho, "Economic Globalization, Entrepreneurship, and Development."
[34] Ghori, "The BRICS+ : Fault Lines and Opportunities."

trade cooperation through the establishment of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), although such efforts continue to face challenges arising from differences in national interests and the diverse economic structures of its member states. Furthermore, the expansion of BRICS membership in 2024 has further enhanced the bloc's economic capacity while broadening opportunities for trade integration among developing countries.

In addition to its growing economic capacity, BRICS has evolved within an increasingly multipolar international order. Kornegay dan Naidu[35] argue that BRICS seeks to establish a new cooperation agenda for countries of the Global South in response to the changing geopolitical and economic landscape. From a different perspective, Neuwirth[36] demonstrates that China's holistic approach to integrating trade and public policy reflects the emergence of a more adaptive paradigm of international economic cooperation in response to global transformation. Collectively, these studies suggest that multipolarity has created greater opportunities for the development of more diverse models of economic cooperation than those associated with the previously Western-dominated international system.

Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature, the emergence of multipolarity, the strengthening of BRICS economic integration, and the growing use of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) have created opportunities for the development of alternative models of international trade governance. Although none of the reviewed studies explicitly discusses a Sharia-based Free Trade Agreement within the BRICS framework, the characteristics of BRICS' development indicate a conceptual opportunity to explore a free trade model that integrates the principles of ethics, justice, and inclusiveness derived from Islamic economics. Therefore, this concept requires further theoretical development and empirical investigation as a potential alternative framework for international trade governance in an increasingly multipolar global economy.

[35] Kornegay and Naidu, "BRICS in the Post-Liberal World Order : A New Agenda for Cooperation ? Perspectives from South Africa."
[36] Neuwirth, "China and the 'Culture and Trade' Debate : A Holistic Approach."

Compatibility of Sharia Principles with the Characteristics of BRICS Trade Cooperation

The literature synthesis indicates that the evolution of BRICS cooperation has increasingly emphasized the strengthening of trade, institutional coordination, and the development of an economic system that is more adaptive to changes in global economic governance. Matsushita[37] argues that the deadlock in WTO negotiations has highlighted the need for a soft law approach to enhance coordination among Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), thereby promoting the harmonization of trade rules without replacing the multilateral trading system. This approach places dialogue, coordination, and regulatory harmonization at the center of international trade governance.

These findings are reinforced by Ghori[38] who argues that the development of an FTA within the BRICS framework should not be aimed solely at promoting trade liberalization but should also take into account the economic characteristics of individual member states to ensure that cooperation remains more inclusive and sustainable. According to Ghori[39], differences in levels of economic development, national interests, and trade structures constitute the principal challenges to achieving deeper BRICS economic integration. Consequently, an FTA framework capable of accommodating the diversity of member states has become essential for the successful development of BRICS trade cooperation.

Furthermore, Kornegay dan Naidu[40] explain that BRICS has evolved as a representative platform for the Global South, seeking to establish a new agenda for cooperation within an increasingly multipolar world order. This agenda emphasizes stronger economic cooperation, more inclusive development, and the enhancement of developing countries' positions within the international economic system. From a

[37] Matsushita, "A View on Future Roles of The WTO : Should There Be More Soft Law in The WTO ?"
[38] Ghori, "The BRICS+ : Fault Lines and Opportunities."
[39] Ghori.
[40] Kornegay and Naidu, "BRICS in the Post-Liberal World Order : A New Agenda for Cooperation ? Perspectives from South Africa."

complementary perspective, Neuwirth[41] demonstrates that China's holistic approach highlights the importance of integrating multiple interests into trade policymaking, thereby extending the focus of trade policy beyond purely economic objectives to encompass broader social and public policy considerations.

Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature, this study argues that the characteristics of BRICS trade cooperation exhibit several conceptual points of convergence with the principles of Islamic economics. The soft law approach, which emphasizes coordination and consensus-building among member states, is conceptually consistent with the Islamic principle of shūrā (consultative decision-making). Likewise, efforts to establish more inclusive forms of cooperation reflect the principles of taʿāwun (mutual cooperation) and maṣlaḥah (public welfare), while the emphasis on harmonizing trade regulations corresponds to the principle of al-ʿadl (justice), one of the fundamental values underpinning Islamic economic thought.

Implications of a Sharia-Based Free Trade Agreement for Strengthening BRICS' Position in the Multipolar Global Economic Order

The literature synthesis indicates that the transformation of the global economic order toward an increasingly multipolar system has encouraged BRICS to strengthen its position as one of the principal representatives of developing countries in international trade. Kornegay dan Naidu[42] argue that BRICS has evolved into a cooperative platform that seeks to establish a new agenda for the Global South by promoting stronger economic cooperation, enhancing regional integration, and developing mechanisms that reinforce the position of developing countries within the international economic system. From this perspective, BRICS is viewed not merely as an economic forum but also as a strategic

[41] Neuwirth, "China and the 'Culture and Trade' Debate : A Holistic Approach."
[42] Kornegay and Naidu, "BRICS in the Post-Liberal World Order : A New Agenda for Cooperation ? Perspectives from South Africa."

platform for increasing the influence of non-Western countries in response to the changing architecture of global governance[43].

Consistent with this view, Ghori[44] argues that deeper trade cooperation through the establishment of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has the potential to enhance trade and investment among BRICS member states. Nevertheless, the success of such trade integration depends largely on the ability of member countries to manage differences in national economic interests, trade structures, and institutional frameworks. Accordingly, stronger trade cooperation requires not only greater economic capacity but also a shared strategic vision and common objectives as the foundation for regional integration.

These findings are further supported by Kumar[45] who argues that the increasing use of Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) and Mega-Regional Trade Agreements (Mega-RTAs) reflects the growing tendency of developing countries to establish broader trade networks in response to the evolving dynamics of international trade. Furthermore, as highlighted by Kettab[46] the expansion of BRICS membership has significantly increased the bloc's economic capacity, market size, and influence in global trade. The accession of new members from the Middle East and Africa has also expanded opportunities for economic cooperation among developing countries within the BRICS framework.

Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature, this study argues that the emergence of multipolarity, the strengthening of BRICS economic integration, and the expansion of BRICS membership have created a conceptual opportunity for the development of a Sharia-based Free Trade Agreement (FTA) as an alternative model of international trade cooperation. The inclusion of several Muslim-majority countries within BRICS broadens the scope for discussing a trade framework that extends beyond economic liberalization by incorporating the principles of ethics, justice, transparency, and public welfare derived from Islamic economics. However, the findings also indicate that there is

[43] Kornegay and Naidu.
[44] Ghori, "The BRICS+ : Fault Lines and Opportunities."
[45] Kumar, "BRICS and Free Trade Agreements : A Special Relationship."
[46] Kettab, "The Expansion of Brics Membership and Its Impact on International Trade."

currently no empirical evidence in the existing literature demonstrating that BRICS has developed or implemented a Sharia-based FTA. Therefore, the concept remains at the theoretical level and requires further research on its institutional design, implementation mechanisms, and potential implications for the international trading system.

E. Conclusion

The findings of this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) indicate that the emergence of multipolarity, the stagnation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) multilateral trading system, and the strengthening of BRICS economic integration have created opportunities for the development of alternative models of international trade cooperation beyond conventional multilateral mechanisms. Within this context, the expansion of BRICS' economic capacity through increased trade and investment, the enlargement of BRICS membership, and the establishment of institutions such as the New Development Bank (NDB) provide a conceptual basis for the development of a Sharia-based Free Trade Agreement (FTA) as a more ethical, inclusive, and welfare-oriented model of trade cooperation. Although the literature reviewed does not explicitly discuss or provide evidence of the implementation of a Sharia-based FTA within the BRICS framework, the findings reveal a clear conceptual alignment between the evolving characteristics of BRICS cooperation and the fundamental principles of Islamic economics. Accordingly, this study not only broadens the academic discourse on BRICS economic integration from the perspective of Islamic economics but also offers a conceptual foundation for future research on the development of Sharia-based FTAs in international trade. The findings are expected to contribute to the advancement of regional economic integration theory while serving as an initial reference for scholars and policymakers seeking to explore alternative models of international trade cooperation that are more adaptive to the dynamics of an increasingly multipolar global economy.

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