



Comparative Economic Integration Dynamics within African Regional Blocs in São Tomé and Príncipe,

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Abstract

This study examines the economic integration dynamics within regional blocs in São Tomé and Príncipe (STP), a small island nation in West Africa. This study employs a qualitative approach, analysing existing literature on regional economic blocs and conducting interviews with stakeholders in key sectors of the economy. The findings reveal that while STP benefits from increased trade flows within its main regional bloc (the Economic Community of West African States - ECOWAS), there is significant variation in integration across different bloc memberships, particularly regarding financial services and infrastructure development. Despite these variations, the study underscores the importance of harmonizing policies and enhancing cross-border cooperation to achieve more balanced economic growth within STP's regional blocs. Recommendations include developing a comprehensive strategy for regional integration that addresses sector-specific challenges and fosters greater collaboration among member states.

Keywords: *Geographic Expansion, Mercosur, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Continentalism, Regional Autarky, Dependency Theory, Decolonization Processes*

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