



Informal Cross-Border Trade Networks within ECOWAS: A Theoretical Framework for Regional Integration in Botswana, 2009

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Published: 02 November 2009 | **Received:** 02 July 2009 | **Accepted:** 06 September 2009

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18894720](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18894720)

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Abstract

Informal cross-border trade networks have played a significant role in regional integration within Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These informal networks often bypass formal regulatory structures and can offer insights into potential pathways for more structured integration. The study will employ qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews with traders, focus group discussions, and secondary data analysis of trade records and regulatory documents from ECOWAS member states. The theoretical framework highlights the importance of integrating informal trade actors into regional integration efforts to enhance both economic efficiency and regulatory compliance. Policy recommendations include developing incentives for formalizing trade practices, fostering cross-border infrastructure development, and enhancing capacity-building programmes for traders in Botswana and other ECOWAS member states.

Keywords: *West African, Botswanization, Dependency Theory, Mercantilism, Regional Economics, Geocapitalism, Globalisation Studies*

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