



Burundian Perceptions and Practices in Responding to the AfCFTA: An Ethnographic Study on Regional Supply Chains

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Abstract

Burundi's integration into the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents a unique case study for examining regional supply chain dynamics in Southern Africa. The research employed participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis among key stakeholders in Burundi's business sector, including government officials, private sector representatives, and small-scale producers. Burundian firms reported mixed sentiments towards the AfCFTA, with approximately 60% indicating increased access to regional markets but also facing challenges related to regulatory complexity and market competition. Small enterprises were particularly affected by these changes. This study highlights the nuanced impact of the AfCFTA on Burundi's business environment, emphasising the need for tailored policy support to mitigate adverse effects and harness potential opportunities. The government should prioritise sector-specific support programmes and regulatory simplification to facilitate smoother integration into the regional market. Small businesses require additional resources and training in export strategies.

Keywords: *African geography, regionalization theory, ethnography, supply chain management, globalization studies, cross-cultural analysis, community engagement*

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