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Panel: Mercosur in Comparative Perspective

“New Regionalism and Energy Integration in Mercosur”

Abstract

Regional Integration is important for most regions in order to ensure energy security. Although being blessed with natural resources such as oil and gas energy cooperation is especially important in the Mercosur region in order to solve constant energy shortages and to foster economic growth. Going beyond the general focus on oil and gas however, this presentation tackles the issue of regional integration on the example of renewable energy. Making use of the region's favorable conditions to generate energy from various renewable sources especially in Mercosur's most important countries of Brazil and Argentina represents a possible alternative to overcome supply shortages. As has been argued however, the state-led focus and diverging assumptions about Mercosur's political orientation has undermined the deepening of political and economic integration. Referring to the institutionalist approach of „new regionalism“ theory in international relations, the presentation shall highlight regional energy integration in this field on the Mercosur level, its driving factors and some of its local implications in both Brazil and Argentina. By doing so, the presentation shall outline the “new regionalism” theory's importance, validity and its shortcomings in order to explain current stages of energy integration despite diverging political orientations.

Key words: Regional Integration, Regionalism, Energy, Mercosur

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