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RETHINKING REGIONAL INTEGRATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MERCOSUR AND THE EAEU

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Abstract. This academic article investigates the processes of regional integration within MERCOSUR, a trade bloc in South America, and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), a regional organization in Eurasia. The objective is to identify the primary drivers, challenges and outcomes that have defined these distinct regional integration efforts.

Applying a comparative analysis framework, the article scrutinizes the factors that influence the varying degrees of success and the obstacles encountered by MERCOSUR and the EAEU. Along with a comprehensive overview of the establishment, development and current conditions of these two regional organizations, the analysis takes into account both internal and external influences affecting each bloc, including their governance structures, inter-member state relations, and external economic pressures. Furthermore, it acknowledges the difficulties faced by each bloc, such as political instability, economic inequalities, and the implications of external geopolitical circumstances. While MERCOSUR and EAEU initiatives represent distinct regional integration models, a comparative analysis reveals a nuanced and multifaceted landscape where shared challenges and opportunities coexist alongside unique contextual factors. The findings yield valuable insights into the intricate dynamics and diverse implications of regional integration, extending beyond conventional economic and political considerations to include sociocultural, geopolitical, and sustainable development aspects that have profound and far-reaching consequences for the participating countries.

This research enriches the fields of international relations and comparative political economy by enhancing the understanding of the differing regional integration processes and the determinants of their success or failure. The results provide actionable insights for policymakers engaged in regional integration initiatives, emphasizing best practices and potential challenges in promoting effective and sustainable regional collaboration. The study highlights the necessity of considering a wide range of dimensions – economic, political, sociocultural and environmental – when assessing regional integration efforts.

Key words: MERCOSUR, Eurasian Economic Union, Regional Integration, New Regionalism, Comparative Analysis, Central Asia, South America, Eurasia

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Introduction

Both the MERCOSUR and the EAEU contribute to the broader global trend of regional integration. The divergent experiences of the MERCOSUR and the EAEU underscore the need to consider the context-specific factors that drive or impede regional cooperation. For the member states, leveraging the opportunities presented by the external actors while safeguarding their own interests and the long-term sustainability of their regional integration efforts remains a critical challenge. Cooperation in climate resilience, ecological preservation and sustainable energy

could create new avenues for economic diversification and sustainable development among and beyond the member states.

Regional integration has emerged as a prominent strategy for countries seeking to enhance their geopolitical influence and economic competitiveness in an increasingly globalized world. The *Bienvenidos al Mercado Común del Sur* (the Southern Common Market, MERCOSUR), a trade bloc established in 1991 by Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, represents a prominent example of regional integration efforts in South America. Similarly, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), established in 2015 and comprising Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia, is another example of regional integration in a different geographic context. These two initiatives reflect the growing trend of countries coming together to pool their resources, coordinate policies and amplify their collective bargaining power on the global stage.

This research article aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the regional integration processes in the MERCOSUR and the EAEU, examining similarities, differences and key factors that have shaped the trajectories of these two distinct regional blocs. The novelty of this study lies in its comparative approach to address the research gap, which the existing literature has often overlooked by focusing on individual case studies of regional integration initiatives rather than conducting comparative analyses that can yield valuable insights into the diverse trajectories and dynamics of different regional blocs. By juxtaposing the experiences of the MERCOSUR and the EAEU, this study sheds light on how the unique historical, political, economic and external circumstances of South America and Eurasia have influenced the trajectories of these two distinct regional blocs.

Description of materials and methods

A reference foundation is constructed using secondary sources, including peer-reviewed academic articles, policy reports from reputable think tanks and other authoritative publications, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the MERCOSUR and EAEU initiatives and the broader context within which they operate.

With respect to methodology, the above materials are used in conjunction with the “new regionalism” paradigm, which contends that contemporary regional integration transcends the traditional economic and political spheres to encompass a broader range of socio-cultural and geopolitical dimensions [1]. Whereas classical theories of regionalism, such as neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism, emphasize the role of economic and trade-related factors in driving regional integration, the emerging new regionalism paradigm recognizes the multifaceted nature of contemporary regional blocs, which pursue a broader range of objectives beyond the traditional economic sphere. New regionalism scholars argue that the formation and evolution of regional integration initiatives are shaped by a complex interplay of historical, geographic, political, social and cultural factors, in addition to economic considerations [1, c. 2]. The new regionalism approach provides a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the diverse motivations and dynamics underlying the establishment and development of contemporary regional integration

efforts across the world. Prominent scholars such as Björn Hettne, Andrew Hurrell and Fredrik Söderbaum have been at the forefront of theorizing and empirically examining the new regionalism paradigm.

The suitability of this theoretical framework for the comparative analysis of MERCOSUR and the EAEU lies in its ability to capture the multidimensional nature of these two regional integration initiatives. As will be discussed in subsequent sections, the formation and evolution of MERCOSUR and the EAEU have been driven by a complex interplay of economic, political and geopolitical factors rather than purely trade-oriented concerns. The MERCOSUR, for instance, has sought to strengthen the regional bargaining power of its member states in global trade negotiations while also promoting social and cultural integration within South America. Likewise, the EAEU has been driven by a combination of economic, political and geopolitical motives, including the desire to strengthen Russia's influence in the Eurasian region and counterbalance the perceived encroachment of Western institutions and alliances. The new regionalism perspective enables a more comprehensive understanding of the unique trajectories of these two regional blocs, which have sought to achieve diverse objectives, including enhancing the regional bargaining power of their member states, promoting socio-cultural integration and advancing geopolitical interests within and beyond their respective constituencies.

Results

Historical Context and Drivers of MERCOSUR and EAEU

The history of the MERCOSUR can be traced back to the 1980s when Brazil and Argentina, the two largest economies in South America, began to deepen their bilateral economic cooperation. This process was driven by a shared desire to reduce their economic and political dependence on the United States and to assert their own regional influence. The formation of the MERCOSUR in 1991 marked an important progression in this context, with the inclusion of Uruguay and Paraguay as founding members. This regional integration agreement was established under the principles of open regionalism and was formalized by the signing of the Asuncion Treaty on March 26, 1991. The Framework Agreement on Regional Energy Cooperation in 2005 further emphasized the potential for consolidating regional, sub-regional, or bilateral agreements among these countries in various areas, such as the commercial exchange of fossil fuels, the interconnection of electric transmission networks, the interconnection of pipeline networks, cooperation in the exploration, exploitation and industrialization of fossil fuels, as well as the promotion of renewable and alternative energy sources. The primary drivers underlying this development can be comprehended as consisting of two distinct elements: First, the member states sought to enhance their collective economic and political bargaining power in the face of an increasingly globalized and competitive world economy. By pooling their resources and negotiating as a bloc, the MERCOSUR member states aimed to gain greater leverage in global trade negotiations and better protect their economic interests [2]. Second, there was a strategic imperative to strengthen regional stability and cooperation in the wake of the Cold War's end and the transition to a multipolar international system. The member states recognized the need to foster deeper

regional integration and cooperation to mitigate potential conflicts, promote shared prosperity and assert their geopolitical influence in a rapidly changing global order. In other words, the formation of the MERCOSUR reflected a desire to establish a stable and unified regional framework that could serve as a counterweight to the growing influence of external powers while also addressing the shared economic and political concerns of the South American nations [3]. It is worth mentioning that South America's regional integration has always been complex and challenging, with various initiatives and organizations co-existing and sometimes competing over the years. The MERCOSUR model and the European Union's integration model have frequently been compared, but their trajectories and contexts are quite distinct.

On the other hand, the formation of the EAEU, which unites Russia with former Soviet countries in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Eastern Europe, can be understood within Lev Gumilyov's ideas of Eurasianism. Originated in 1978, Gumilyov's Eurasianism advocates integration of the Eurasian space based on the concept of the great Russian "super-ethnos" to accomplish ethnic consolidation for the Eurasian culture [4]. The EAEU, in this context, can be understood as Russia's strategic response to the evolving geopolitical landscape in Eurasia following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union was signed on May 29, 2014 by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia and came into force on January 1, 2015. Treaties aimed for the accession of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan were signed on October 9 and December 23, 2014, respectively. It is important to highlight that post-Soviet Central Asia was marked by a state of fragmentation since the mid-2000s, with regional cooperation increasingly incorporating a variety of overlapping regional organizations, facilitated by international organizations or neighboring countries. Following the formation of the EAEU in mid-2010s, the then Central Asian Cooperation Organization, which comprised Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, was disbanded, creating distinct EAEU and non-EAEU factions that reinforced the existing fragmentation within the Central Asian region. As the dominant regional power, Russia has played a central role in shaping the formation and development of the EAEU, driven by its desire to maintain strong economic and political ties with the former Soviet states, while many of which have been economically dependent on Russia and wary of potential consequences of defying Russian interests. With the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Collective Security Treaty Organization serving as the basis for previous attempts to foster regional integration, the EAEU represents a more ambitious and comprehensive initiative to establish a common economic space and coordinate policies across a wider range of issues, including trade, investment, and regulatory harmonization. Russia's efforts in establishing the EAEU also reflect its ambition to reassert its influence in the post-Soviet space and counter the perceived encroachment of Western powers, such as the United States, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which Russia sees as a threat to its national security and regional dominance [5]. The EAEU is considered the first successful example of regional economic integration between countries from the former Soviet Union, described as "Holding-Together Regionalism" – integration of countries originally part of a single political entity [6].

Institutional Frameworks and Policy Coordination

The MERCOSUR and the EAEU have their own unique institutional frameworks and policy coordination that reflect the distinct historical, political and economic contexts of their respective regions. The MERCOSUR is based on a relatively flexible, intergovernmental model, in which major decisions are made by consensus among the four founding member states. The bloc's primary decision-making body is the Common Market Council, which comprises the foreign and economy ministers of the member states. The decentralized nature of the MERCOSUR's decision-making process has enabled the member states to navigate their individual national interests and priorities more easily, as they can advocate for and negotiate policies that align with their specific economic and political agendas. This has allowed for a degree of flexibility and responsiveness to the diverse interests and priorities of the MERCOSUR member states but it has also sometimes resulted in a lack of cohesion and effective policy implementation, making it challenging to achieve a unified regional vision and implement policies in a timely and coordinated manner, as reaching consensus among the member states can be a complex and time-consuming process. Despite the limited supranational elements of its institutional framework, the MERCOSUR has been able to achieve some notable successes, such as the establishment of a common external tariff and the elimination of intra-regional tariffs on a substantial number of goods [2, c. 3].

In contrast, the EAEU has a more centralized and supranational institutional structure, with the Eurasian Economic Commission serving as the main executive body responsible for coordinating economic policies and overseeing the integration process. This model has provided a greater degree of policy harmonization and coherence, and the centralized decision-making process has allowed the EAEU to implement policies and initiatives more efficiently. For example, the EAEU has facilitated the free movement of goods, services, capital and labor across its member states, enhancing regional economic integration. However, the concentration of decision-making power at the supranational level has raised concerns among some EAEU member states about the erosion of their ability to independently develop and pursue their own economic policies. This tension between regional integration and national sovereignty has been a source of ongoing debate and negotiation within the EAEU, as member states seek to balance the benefits of deeper economic cooperation with the preservation of their domestic policy autonomy [5, c. 4].

Comparative Analysis of the Impacts of Economic, Political, Socio-cultural and External Elements

Although the MERCOSUR and the EAEU have both sought to deepen regional economic integration, their outcomes have been markedly different. Among the MERCOSUR member states, mixed results have been experienced, with the bloc struggling to achieve a fully functional customs union and progress stalling on initiatives such as the implementation of a comprehensive common external tariff. The diverse economic interests and development strategies of the member states have posed significant challenges to the harmonization of trade policies and the

deepening of regional integration within the MERCOSUR framework [7, 8]. By comparison, the EAEU has made substantial progress in terms of economic integration, with the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor being largely realized. The varying economic outcomes can be partly attributed to differing levels of political commitment and the ability to navigate complex domestic and regional power dynamics. The MERCOSUR bloc has faced challenges in reconciling its members' divergent economic interests and development strategies, particularly between the larger economies of Brazil and Argentina and the smaller economies of Paraguay and Uruguay. The EAEU, on the other hand, has been more successful in aligning the economic interests of its members, due in part to the dominant role of Russia and its ability to leverage its economic influence to shape the regional integration process in a manner that serves its strategic priorities among its less economically robust allies [9]. However, the Russo-Ukrainian War and Western sanctions on Russia have created significant political tensions and uncertainty within the EAEU. As the five post-Soviet Central Asian states, regardless of their varying degrees of association with the EAEU, seek to navigate the complex geopolitical landscape and reduce their respective economic dependence on Russia, Central Asian regional integration – independent of Russian influence – has been regaining momentum in recent years. Recognizing the risks associated with their heavy reliance on the Russian economy, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have begun to demonstrate greater willingness to engage with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which have historically been more cautious about regional integration, as well as with Tajikistan, the smallest economy of the region. This shift in approach is evident in the growing cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, transport and energy connectivity, as Central Asian states explore opportunities to diversify their international partnerships, strengthen intra-regional ties and develop collaborative initiatives that engage multiple regions. This trend reflects a broader strategic imperative for these countries to enhance their economic autonomy and resilience while maintaining a balance between their economic interdependence and their geopolitical affiliations.

In the political realm, the MERCOSUR has been more susceptible to the shifting tides of ideological and partisan politics, with the rise and fall of left-wing and right-wing governments in member states significantly impacting the bloc's overall policy orientation and commitment to regional integration. The electoral cycles and changing political ideologies of member states have led to marked swings in the MERCOSUR's approach, as incoming administrations may prioritize nationalistic or protectionist policies over deeper regional cooperation [7, p. 5]. This political instability has made it challenging for the MERCOSUR to maintain a consistent and cohesive long-term strategy, as the bloc's policy focus and integration efforts have been repeatedly disrupted by the ebbs and flows of domestic politics within its member countries. The lack of a strong, centralized institutional framework has exacerbated this vulnerability, causing the bloc to be increasingly affected by the whims of shifting political winds in the region. For instance, the election of Jair Bolsonaro as President of Brazil in 2019 has marked a shift toward more nationalist and protectionist policies, which have at times clashed with the

MERCOSUR's regional integrationist agenda. Similarly, the rise of a populist president like Javier Milei in Argentina in 2023, who is critical of regional integration and fosters tensions with both neighboring and distant countries, in addition to the reemergence of Mauricio Macri's center-right political movement, which has expressed skepticism toward the MERCOSUR, have posed considerable challenges to the bloc's future direction and its ability to maintain a consistent and coherent policy approach. In contrast, the EAEU's political trajectory has been relatively more stable. Despite the authoritarian tendencies and political dominance of Russia, the member states, irrespective of shifts in leadership, have largely aligned their economic interests and policy priorities to support the overarching goals of the EAEU. This stability in the political commitment to regional integration under Russia has enabled the EAEU to make more substantial progress beyond the economic domain, with the expansion of cooperation in areas such as security, foreign policy and the harmonization of regulatory frameworks [5, 6]. However, the Russo-Ukrainian War has inevitably strained geopolitical alignment and economic interdependence among the rest of the EAEU member states as they navigate the complex fallout from the conflict and the imposition of Western sanctions on Russia, leading to disruption to the delicate balance of interests and the coordinated policy approach that had previously sustained the bloc. These EAEU member states are currently confronted with challenging decisions as they strive to maintain their allegiance to the bloc while simultaneously seeking to ensure their own security without reliance on Russia and to safeguard their economic stability amid the ongoing crisis. Moreover, the war has fueled nationalist sentiments and resentment toward Russian dominance within the EAEU, especially in Kazakhstan. It is noteworthy that, of all the member states within the EAEU, Kazakhstan's policy actions seem to have provoked the most considerable discontent from Russia, especially when considering the implications of the "Latinisation" of the Kazakh language since 2017 and the authorities' refusal to recognize Russia-backed breakaway territories of Ukraine in 2022. More importantly, Kazakhstan has adopted a neorealist approach to external balancing in its foreign policy agenda by seeking closer cooperation with its Central Asian neighbors since 2017. As stated in its Concept of the Foreign Policy for 2020-2030, Kazakhstan intends to consolidate its status as a responsible participant in the world community, a key contributor to the system of geopolitical and geo-economic coordinates of the Eurasian continent, and a leading state in the Central Asian region [10]. The increasing rifts and diminishing trust between Russia and the rest of the member states within the EAEU may ultimately jeopardize the bloc's ability to maintain cohesion and effectively coordinate its economic and political integration efforts in the long term.

From a socio-cultural perspective, the MERCOSUR has struggled to foster a strong sense of regional identity and community that transcends national boundaries and galvanizes the public behind the MERCOSUR integration project, as the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of its member states have posed significant challenges to the development of a cohesive regional ethos. This lack of a unifying regional identity has hindered the bloc's ability to rally widespread support for deeper integration efforts and has contributed to the political instability and

ideological divisions that have plagued the MERCOSUR over the years [11]. By comparison, the EAEU has been more successful in leveraging its shared historical and cultural legacies to promote a greater sense of regional belonging and shared identity among its members. The common heritage of the Soviet Union, including the use of the Russian language, shared cultural traditions, and the lingering nostalgia for the perceived stability and economic prosperity of the former Soviet era, have provided a foundation for the EAEU to build upon. This sense of shared regional identity has helped foster strong commitment to the integration process among the member states and has facilitated the alignment of their economic interests and policy priorities [9, c. 6]. However, since the Russo-Ukrainian War has significantly impacted the economic and political fabric within the EAEU, the socio-cultural cohesion of the bloc has also come under strain, as the unfolding events have reignited existing tensions and introduced new fault lines along ethnic and national lines among the member states. Anti-war rallies and demonstrations in Kazakhstan in 2022, for instance, have highlighted the growing assertiveness of the Kazakhstani public in voicing their concerns over the perceived imbalance of power within the EAEU, where Russia is seen as occupying a dominant position and exerting disproportionate influence in steering the bloc's collective agenda.

With respect to the influence of external actors, both the MERCOSUR and the EAEU have faced significant pressure and interference from the great powers seeking to shape regional integration processes in their respective spheres of influence. The MERCOSUR has been subject to significant pressure and intervention from the United States, which has consistently sought to steer the regional integration process in South America toward alignment with its own geopolitical and economic interests. The United States has leveraged its economic and political clout to influence the policy decisions of the MERCOSUR member states, often pushing for trade and investment agreements that favor American corporate interests over the broader regional integration agenda [3, c. 3]. This external meddling has complicated the MERCOSUR's efforts to forge a cohesive and autonomous regional economic bloc, as member states have at times been compelled to prioritize their bilateral relationships with the United States over the collective interests of the bloc. Conversely, the EAEU has been shaped primarily by the dominant role of Russia from within, which has used its economic and political influence to steer the integration process in a manner that aligns with its strategic priorities at the regional and global level [9, c. 6]. However, attention must be given to the significance of non-EAEU investments in Kazakhstan's natural resources, as well as their geopolitical implications, which act as a strategic counterbalance to Russian influence in the Eurasia region. Besides providing an alternative source of economic and political support, these external investments have reduced Kazakhstan's dependence on Russia and enabled it to maintain a more independent foreign policy [12]. China's growing economic and political prominence in South America and the Eurasian region, in particular, presents both opportunities and challenges for the member states of the MERCOSUR and the EAEU, including Russia. On the one hand, China's massive investment through the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as its expanding multilateral security, trade and financial

relationships through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS coalition of emerging economies, offer the MERCOSUR and the EAEU new avenues for economic growth and diversification of international partnerships [13]. This may potentially provide more leverage for the comparatively smaller and less powerful member states within these blocs in navigating the complex web of regional and global rivalries. On the other hand, the increasing influence of China also introduces new complexities and risks for this specific category of states. This is particularly pertinent when considering that overdependence on China could lead to the substitution of one form of external influence for another, limiting their ability to chart their own independent course and foreign policy maneuver. This phenomenon can manifest in various ways, such as China's capacity to leverage its economic might to shape the policy priorities of these states as they become increasingly beholden to Chinese interests, which can ultimately undermine their sovereignty and autonomy, potentially forcing them to make concessions that go against their national interests [14]. From a Western perspective, concerns about China's economic influence and its potential for "debt trap diplomacy" are valid because Western imperialism and colonialism of the past inflicted extensive economic control and loss of sovereignty on colonized nations, raising alarms about potential modern-day equivalents. To capitalize on China's economic potential while also maintaining their sovereignty and autonomy, these states should strive to strike a careful balance. This may require diversifying their international partnerships, strengthening regional integration and developing robust institutional frameworks that can withstand external pressures. Ultimately, a nuanced and proactive approach that harnesses the opportunities presented by China while vigilantly safeguarding their own interests may be the most effective way for these states to navigate the complexities of the evolving geopolitical landscape.

Discussion

This comparative analysis of the MERCOSUR and the EAEU reveals the multi-dimensional nature of regional integration, with both blocs navigating a complex interplay of political, economic, sociocultural, and geopolitical factors that shape their trajectories. Despite their differing institutional frameworks and policy coordination, both the MERCOSUR and the EAEU contribute to the broader global trend of regional integration, an alternative to the multilateral institutions and frameworks that have traditionally dominated international economic and political relations, such as the World Trade Organization, as states seek to enhance their economic and political influence through the formation of regional blocs. The divergent experiences of the MERCOSUR and the EAEU underscore the need to consider the context-specific factors that drive or impede regional cooperation, rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all approach [1, c. 2].

While the MERCOSUR and the EAEU have made progress in establishing common regulatory frameworks and promoting intra-regional trade, when compared with the European Union, which has achieved a higher level of political and economic integration, both of these regional integration initiatives appear to be facing more significant hurdles. The comparative analysis in the previous section

suggests that the sustainability and resilience of regional integration initiatives depend on their multifaceted ability to navigate complex dynamics [15]. Fostering a shared sense of regional identity, promoting balanced economic development, and effectively navigating the intricate web of external geopolitical influences are crucial factors that can either bolster or undermine the long-term viability of such regional integration efforts. Given the intensifying competition among the great powers in a changing international order, it is anticipated that geopolitical tensions and power relations within and between the respective member states of the MERCOSUR and the EAEU will become increasingly intricate, which may undermine the cohesion and stability of the regional integration processes. Leveraging the opportunities presented by the external actors while safeguarding their own interests and the long-term sustainability of their regional integration efforts remains a critical challenge. Achieving this delicate balance requires member states to transcend narrow self-interests, forge a common regional vision and develop robust institutional frameworks that can withstand political and economic shocks.

As issues such as climate change mitigation and the urgency of renewable energy transition dominate the contemporary global agenda, the potential for regional integration initiatives to foster cross-border cooperation on environmental protection, the development of renewable energy infrastructure and the creation of green economic opportunities could be explored. In South America, while water resources foster hydroelectric power cooperation among the MERCOSUR member states and beyond, the Amazon rainforest produces an additional binding effect in terms of intra-, extra- and inter-regional climate adaptation and regional environmental governance. The Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program, initiated in 2015, serves as a notable example of a collaborative effort involving Brazil, a member state of MERCOSUR, alongside Colombia and Peru, which are not part of this regional bloc. With regard to the EAEU, the collective response to the environmental consequences of resource extraction and greenhouse gas emissions likewise could emerge as a key area of intra-, extra- and inter-regional cooperation, particularly in light of the member states' shared reliance on the export of fossil fuels and other natural resources. Under the leadership of Russia, the EAEU actively promote the establishment of a unified electricity market, which is a crucial step toward electrification of energy. Pursuing the status of the twenty-first century's energy superpower amidst Western economic sanctions, Central Asia theoretically offers Russia a strategic land corridor to enlarge the EAEU's interstate power network infrastructure and connect it with Afghanistan, the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East and West Asia through the Caspian Sea. Cooperation in climate resilience, ecological preservation and sustainable energy could not only contribute to mitigating climate change but also create new avenues for economic diversification and sustainable development within and beyond the member states of the blocs. In other words, cooperative energy security frameworks, joint investments in renewable energy projects across borders, and the harmonization of environmental regulations and standards among the member and non-member states could be some innovative areas where the MERCOSUR and the EAEU could explore mutually beneficial integration and enlargement. This would require a shift

in the regional integration narratives from a focus on trade and investment to one that addresses the globally shared environmental challenges and sustainable development imperatives faced by the international community.

Conclusion

The comparative study of regional integration in practice between the MERCOSUR and the EAEU reveals a complex and multifaceted landscape characterized by both successes and challenges. While the MERCOSUR has struggled to reconcile the divergent economic interests and political ideologies of its members, leading to instability and uncertainty, the EAEU has been more successful in aligning the economic priorities of its members, driven largely by Russia's dominant role and its ability to leverage its economic influence to shape the regional integration process. However, the Russo-Ukrainian War has undoubtedly introduced significant political tensions and uncertainty within the EAEU, prompting its Central Asian member states to explore opportunities to reduce their economic dependence on Russia and diversify their international partnerships. China's growing economic and political influence in South America and the Eurasian region has also emerged as a significant external factor that could further complicate the existing regional integration dynamics, as the member states of the MERCOSUR and EAEU seek to navigate the complex geopolitical landscape. Climate change mitigation and the urgency of renewable energy transition represent additional global challenges but could potentially create new avenues for cross-regional cooperation and integration, provided that the member states are able to transcend narrow self-interests and forge a shared regional vision centered on the collective benefits of sustainable development and environmental protection.

To strengthen and sustain the regional integration processes in South America and the Eurasian region, it is of utmost importance to conduct a deeper analysis of the role of domestic political dynamics and leadership changes within the member states and how these factors have shaped the trajectory of regional integration processes in the MERCOSUR and the EAEU. Equally crucial is the need to investigate the social and cultural dimensions of regional integration, including the challenges of fostering a sense of regional identity and community and the strategies employed by the member states to promote greater sociocultural cohesion. Furthermore, an examination of the impacts of climate change and renewable energy transition on the regional integration agendas can help explore opportunities for collaborative intra-, extra- and inter-regional initiatives that address shared environmental challenges and sustainable development goals.

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АЙМАҚТЫҚ ИНТЕГРАЦИЯНЫ ҚАЙТА ҚАРАУ: МЕРКОСУР МЕН ЕАЭО-НЫ САЛЫСТЫРМАЛЫ ТАЛДАУ

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Аңдатпа. Бұл академиялық мақала Оңтүстік Америкадағы сауда блогы МЕРКОСУР және Еуразиядағы аймақтық ұйым Еуразиялық экономикалық одақ (ЕАЭО) аясындағы аймақтық интеграция процестерін қарастырады. Мақсаты – осы әртүрлі аймақтық интеграциялық күш-жігерді қалыптастырған негізгі драйверлерді, қиындықтарды және нәтижелерді анықтау.

Салыстырмалы талдау жүйесін қолдана отырып, мақалада МЕРКОСУР мен ЕАЭО тап болатын әртүрлі жетістіктер мен кедергілерге әсер ететін факторлар мұқият зерттеледі. Осы екі аймақтық ұйымның құрылуына, дамуына және қазіргі жағдайына жан-жақты шолу жасаумен қатар, талдау әр блокқа әсер ететін ішкі және сыртқы факторларды, соның ішінде олардың басқару құрылымдарын, мүше мемлекеттер арасындағы қатынастарды және сыртқы экономикалық қысымды ескереді. Сонымен қатар, саяси тұрақсыздық, экономикалық теңсіздік және сыртқы геосаяси жағдайлардың әсері сияқты әрбір блоктың алдында тұрған қиындықтарды мойындайды. МЕРКОСУР мен ЕАЭО бастамалары аймақтық интеграцияның әртүрлі үлгілері болғанымен, салыстырмалы талдау жалпы проблемалар мен мүмкіндіктер бірегей контекстік факторлармен қатар өмір сүретін ландшафттың нюанстары мен жан-жақтылығын көрсетеді. Нәтижелер әдеттегі экономикалық және саяси ойлардан шығатын және қатысушы елдер үшін терең және ауқымды салдары бар әлеуметтік-мәдени, геосаяси және тұрақты даму аспектілерін қамтитын аймақтық интеграцияның күрделі динамикасы мен әртүрлі салдары туралы құнды түсінік береді.

Бұл зерттеу аймақтық интеграцияның әртүрлі процестерін және олардың сәтті немесе сәтсіз детерминанттарын түсінуді тереңдету арқылы халықаралық қатынастар мен салыстырмалы саяси экономия салаларын байытады. Зерттеу нәтижелері аймақтық интеграциялық бастамаларға қатысатын саясаткерлерге тиімді және тұрақты аймақтық ынтымақтастықты ілгерілетудегі үздік тәжірибелер мен ықтимал қиындықтар туралы практикалық түсініктер береді. Зерттеу аймақтық интеграцияның күш - жігерін бағалау кезінде экономикалық, саяси, әлеуметтік - мәдени және экологиялық аспектілердің кең ауқымын ескеру қажеттілігін көрсетеді.

Тірек сөздер: МЕРКОСУР, Еуразиялық экономикалық одақ, аймақтық интеграция, жаңа регионализм, салыстырмалы талдау, Орталық Азия, Оңтүстік Америка, Еуразия

ПЕРЕСМОТР РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЙ ИНТЕГРАЦИИ: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ МЕРКОСУР И ЕАЭС

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Аннотация. В данной научной статье исследуются процессы региональной интеграции в рамках МЕРКОСУР, торгового блока в Южной Америке, и Евразийского экономического союза (ЕАЭС), региональной организации в Евразии. Цель состоит в том, чтобы определить основные движущие силы, проблемы и результаты, которые определили эти разные региональные интеграционные усилия.

Применяя систему сравнительного анализа, в статье тщательно изучаются факторы, влияющие на различную степень успеха и препятствия, с которыми сталкиваются МЕРКОСУР и ЕАЭС. Наряду со всесторонним обзором создания, развития и текущего состояния этих двух региональных организаций, анализ учитывает как внутренние, так и внешние факторы, влияющие на каждый блок, включая их структуры управления, отношения между государствами-членами и внешнее экономическое давление. Кроме того, в нем признаются трудности, с которыми сталкивается каждый блок, такие как политическая нестабильность, экономическое неравенство и последствия внешних геополитических обстоятельств. Хотя инициативы МЕРКОСУР и ЕАЭС представляют собой различные модели региональной интеграции, сравнительный анализ выявляет нюансы и многогранность ландшафта, где общие проблемы и возможности сосуществуют наряду с уникальными контекстуальными факторами. Полученные результаты дают ценное представление о сложной динамике и разнообразных последствиях региональной интеграции, выходящих за рамки обычных экономических и политических соображений и включающих социокультурные, геополитические аспекты и аспекты устойчивого развития, которые имеют глубокие и далеко идущие последствия для стран-участниц.

Данное исследование обогащает области международных отношений и сравнительной политэкономии, углубляя понимание различных процессов региональной интеграции и определяющих факторов их успеха или неудачи. Результаты исследования дают возможность разработчикам политики, участвующим в инициативах по региональной интеграции, получить практическое представление о передовом опыте и потенциальных проблемах в деле содействия эффективному и устойчивому региональному сотрудничеству. Исследование подчеркивает необходимость учета широкого спектра аспектов - экономических, политических, социокультурных и экологических - при оценке усилий по региональной интеграции.

Ключевые слова: МЕРКОСУР, Евразийский экономический союз, региональная интеграция, новый регионализм, сравнительный анализ, Центральная Азия, Южная Америка, Евразия

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