

EU Energy Security in the Gas Sector: Evolving Dynamics, Policy Dilemmas and Prospects. By FILIPPOS PROEDROU. Pp. 192. Farnham: Ashgate. 2012. £55. Hardback. ISBN: 978-1-4094-3804-5.

Filippos Proedrou's study is for anyone interested in understanding the European Union's present energy situation, particularly the gas sector. The book is a well-summarized monograph that deals with salient themes of the EU's energy security. The first chapter functions as a theoretical introduction that to the theme of energy security; the second, third, and fourth look at the global context, the main institutions and actors, as well as the internal energy market; the fifth and sixth chapters focus on external actors, with an emphasis on Russia. The final chapter acts as a conclusion to the study.

Several chapters deserve commendation for skilfully weaving facts into a coherent narrative. Proedrou is clearly well-read in energy and international relations; particularly with regard to the gas sector, the complex narrative of the EU's internal rift due to its intergovernmental and supranational character is tied in well. However, some shortcomings persist, even by the book's own standards. The discussion of the EU neglects the extensive narrative on the evolving liberalization dynamics concerning individual policy sectors. The study also lacks an analysis of the efforts to improve the internal market as a whole. In terms of actors, the focus on the European Commission and the larger states limit the complexity of the discussion. Proedrou neglects the complex regulatory structures of interdependent and competing institutions, particularly when these institutions change and become key decision makers. More focus on the efforts of smaller states to galvanize their own energy policies would have fitted the narrative well. For instance, the increasing saliency of unconventional energy sources in Poland and Estonia and the strategies of smaller states to develop regional energy links are overlooked.

There are also two important shortcomings in the book's strategy. Firstly, there is a noticeable reliance on online policy documents and related articles. Despite the fact that the book is aimed at a general readership, I feel that this source material limits the understanding of energy policy. The lack of interviews with policymakers and actors in energy reduces the credibility of potentially effective propositions. In addition, since energy is a continuously evolving, politically salient topic, any policy documents or online chapters available to the public would have been screened to be politically neutral and must have already occluded the most salient points of the issue. Thus, there is a limit to the insights that can be acquired from such filtered literature. While arranging interviews with policy makers from EU institutions can be an extremely tedious process, Proedrou could have collected and analysed policy documents from national capitals and energy departments of EU member states. Specifically, a focus on Germany, France, and the UK for the internal market, and a focus on Germany's relations to Russia could have illuminated newer perspectives on energy.

Secondly, there is no attempt to test or to contribute to theory. The study aims to understand the EU's energy security in the gas sector, but lacks a coherent theoretical basis to do so. While energy security is discussed sufficiently in the opening chapter, the empirical chapters do not tie in well with the theoretical component. At times, the chapters read more like independent essays rather than a

coherent narrative. The problem of this strategy is that most chapters conclude with an allusion to the EU's impotence in dealing with energy matters, particularly since the EU Commission has few disciplinary instruments to act against any one member state, not to mention member states that have their own strong national imperatives in energy, such as France and Germany. At the same time, it is widely known that the EU, as both an intergovernmental and supranational organization, can take some time before it is able to implement full supranationalization of specific policy sectors. In this case, the question of how the EU's goals could be furthered is missing from Proedrou's chapters. This, I believe, is due primarily to the lack of a comprehensive theoretical perspective to be probed, and instead a reliance on secondary sources.

Overall, this is a solid book when it comes to consolidating facts, records, and reports in a single study. However, the lack of an attempt to build a theory, to situate the book in the literature, or to extract new data from the field limit its contribution to the understanding of the EU's energy policy.

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