

Habilitation Thesis Reviewer's Report

Masaryk University	Faculty of Social Studies
Faculty	
Procedure field	Politology
Applicant	Mgr. Jan Osička, Ph.D.
Applicant's home unit, institution	Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University
Habilitation thesis	The Challenges of Achieving Energy Security through Cooperation: The Case of the Visegrad 4 Natural Gas Market Integration
Reviewer	James Henderson, Dr. <i>[name, surname, title]</i>
Reviewer's home unit, institution	Oxford Institute for Energy Studies.....

The author is aiming to answer two main questions: what is the state of the project to integrate the gas markets of the V4 countries and what are the challenges that are hindering its progress. He starts with a significant and informative literature review on the topic of energy security which highlights the huge variety of views on the topic. Indeed he argues that there is no definitive answer to the question “what is energy security?” an instead argues that his research will use energy security as an analytical framework rather than a concept. He also reviews the idea of market integration and suggests that it is concerned with market interconnection and harmonization of rules, both of which will be important in his later analysis.

A lengthy description of research methods follows, which essentially involves the use of case studies based on official communications and a series of interviews, the content of which is classified according to certain codes. The inter-relationship between various key words is then analysed using statistical modelling to draw conclusions about the attitudes of the governments and key players in the V4 countries towards gas market integration. I am not qualified to comment on the robustness of the methodology, but there is no doubt that a full description of the tools used is provided in the thesis.

The author then provides a full description of the broader gas market and also the more specific markets of the V4 countries. He looks in great depth at the various sources of gas supply available to Europe and also at the key pieces of gas infrastructure that can make the gas available to the V4 countries. He concludes that although there would appear to be sufficient infrastructure in most areas (with some significant exceptions), the levels of supply availability are limited, with Russia and the global LNG market providing the most flexibility. This is largely in line with my views and I would certainly agree with the view that the potential for unconventional gas in Poland is limited.

The statistical analysis and the results from it are then presented. Initially the author offers the correlations between various key words such as “gas”, “energy” and “security” in an overall sense from the literature he has reviewed, but the analysis becomes much more interesting when the differences between countries and actors is analysed. It becomes obvious quite quickly that there are major areas of difference between the views and attitudes of the various players, and that this can start to explain why the process of integration has taken so long. The diagrams of stakeholder analysis highlight the contrasts, and as a result although the topic of energy is an issue that is much discussed in the V4 countries, each clearly has very differing incentives and interpretations of future development, and also very different perceptions of the way that the integration process should move forward. The differences in the discourse in the four countries and the key institutions within them highlights why a number of sticking points have emerged, in particular because of a lack of shared understanding of what the ultimate goal is and how it should be achieved.

The author argues that this can provide a good example of why the European gas market integration model may struggle, and I agree that he provides a persuasive theory about the key issues that can cause differences of opinion and important examples of how different constituencies with different analytical starting points can address the issues of energy security and its potential solutions in remarkably different ways.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence (number of questions up to the reviewer)

Do events in 2017/18, when Russian gas has increased its market share in Europe while LNG and other sources have not risen as much, support your thesis or not?

You conclude that the use of supra-national institutions may be needed to override national interests - do you not think that this would fly in the face of free market principles?

How does the rise of renewable energy in Europe affect the relevance of gas market issues and security of supply?

How has the discourse around gas been affected by rising and falling gas prices – is this a key issue for the development of gas markets in the V4 countries?

Conclusion

I enjoyed reading this thesis and believe that it provides an important contribution to the understanding of gas market development in the V4 countries, and by example in the EU as a whole. The analysis is detailed and thorough, the conclusions are drawn logically and clearly and the overall thesis has a logical flow and very readable style. I offer my congratulations to the author on a very good piece of work.

The habilitation thesis entitled “The Challenges of Achieving Energy Security through Cooperation: The Case of the Visegrad 4 Natural Gas Market Integration” by Jan Osička *fulfils –does not fulfil* requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Politology.

In...Oxford.... on 29th August 2018



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