

Research Design — Energy Policy in Europe

- **Research Question: Is it only the member states that determine the degree of integration in the area of energy policy?**

- Application of **Intergovernmentalism** and **Institutionalism** to the process of integration in the European Union
- *Why is the question relevant?*
 - * Security of energy supply has become an important international issue
 - * Disputes between Ukraine and Russia have shown that action at the European level is warranted

- **Theoretical Foundation**

- (liberal?) **Intergovernmentalism** as an analytical framework to explain decisions about integration
- Member countries are the 'Masters of the Treaties' — Opt-out option in the Treaty on the European Community
- Energy supply is considered by Neo-Realists as vital to the states' interests
- Traditionally the energy sector is close ties with the state or is even publicly owned
 - * Energy is crucial for the economy as well as defense of a country
 - * Historically energy companies have always been under government control — even today there persist close links e.g. EnBW, EdF, GdF (revolving door)

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- **Intergovernmentalism** does not explain satisfactorily integration steps — Why would the European Commission and representatives from the European Parliament have travelled to Ukraine when the gas disputes broke out, if it was only member state governments that determined energy policy?
 - Certain characteristics of the energy sector, notably pipelines networks call for collective action in regards to ensuring supply and maintenance of infrastructure e.g. natural monopolies, resource pooling to ensure sufficient investment in transmission/transport infrastructure, negotiation with supplier countries, which are not exactly motivated by markets logic in their export strategies
 - * Solving cooperation dilemmas (Defense against a divide&rule – strategy of supplier countries)
 - * Considerable resources could be pooled thus allowing even smaller, poorer countries to build and maintain the infrastructure needed to ensure security of supply (and to meet the European Union's environmental & efficiency targets)
 - Other actors in the EU institutional system must not be overlooked: European Commission (Agenda-Setting) and European Parliament (Co-Decision – Procedure)
 - Delegation of competences to the European Union bodies like the Commission or regulatory agencies to formulate policy and supervise the implementation of common measures
⇒ *Rational-Choice* approaches are quite appropriate to analyse such situations with a *Principal-Agent* relationship

Energy policy in Europe is less and less determined by member states

⇒ **increasingly it is the result of negotiations between the institutions European Commission, Council of Ministers and the European Parliament**

The integrationist preferences of the Commission and Parliament lead to more delegation of powers and responsibilities to EU bodies and institutions

- **Dependent variables**

- Degree of integration in the field of energy policy
- operationalization: (ordinal measurement — x-level scale):
 - * Delegation of powers to European institutions
 - * Control mechanisms in order to ensure proper implementation of EU legislation
 - * Amount of community funds allocated for transeuropean energy project to increase supply security
 - * Results of steps taken so far: *Has the degree of supply security increased?*

- **Independent variables**

- Preferences of member states towards integrating energy policy
- Propositions by the European Commission: *Does the Commission demand more powers for the EU as time moves on?*
- Role of the European Parliament
- Qualitative measurement based mainly on documents
 - * *Did treaty provisions relating to the allocation of competences change over time?*
 - * *In which direction go these treaty changes?*
 - * *Did the EU establish any independent watchdogs to monitor member state compliance with EU regulation? Do these regulatory bodies have any means of sanctioning non-compliant governments?*
 - * *How much discretion in agenda-setting and policy implementation do member states grant the European Commission and European regulatory agencies? (Word count of founding documents as a proxy for measuring degree of agency discretion in addition to qualitative analysis if the latter proves too time consuming)*