Towards Common European Energy Policy

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ABSTRACT

A common European energy policy is emerging. That poses a puzzling instance of European integration and policy-making. Despite the origins of the European integration project rooted in the coal and nuclear sectors, integration in the energy domain largely failed until the 1990s. The last two decades, however, witnessed an increasing number of energy policy initiatives at the European Union (EU) level and culminated in the inclusion of the energy article in the 2009 Lisbon Treaty. The dissertation aims to explain under what conditions, and how, European integration succeeds or fails in the domain of energy policy. I combine a process tracing method with a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) to examine twelve key legislative proposals in the EU energy policy domain. I use the data from the elite survey and interviews conducted in Brussels and other European capitals. In the dissertation, I develop a configurational approach that brings together structure (rules), agency (member states, or supranational policy entrepreneurs) and contingency (external shocks). I argue that integration can follow different causal paths – a conjunction of causal conditions that are jointly sufficient for the integration outcome. The results support my proposition. I find alternative paths of integration in the EU’s energy policy domain.