



Review of the publication: Sybille Reitz, *Die Energiesicherheit Deutschlands und Polens im Kontext der EU*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag 2017, ISBN 978-3-96023-071-7

Reviewer: Dr. Falk Flade

Editor: Andrzej Ceglaz

Date of publication: 18.06.2018

DOI: 10.11584/opus4-812

Die Energiesicherheit Deutschlands und Polens im Kontext der EU is the author's published master thesis. The aim of the book is to make a contribution to the ongoing discussion about the European Union's energy security strategy. Sybille Reitz's focus is on the cases of Germany and Poland, which are meant to represent "old" and "new" EU member states (p. 22). The author points out the differences and similarities of both cases and highlights potential solutions to improve energy security. While the analysis focuses on the 2000s and especially the first half of the 2010s, according to Reitz, however, the most significant difference between the Polish and German approaches to energy security results from their respective historical experiences.

The study aims at answering the following research questions (p. 15): Are common strategies and solutions for securing the EU energy supply possible? How do Germany and Poland define their strategies for a secure energy supply and how do they act on a European level? The research design is not based on hypotheses or theories, but focuses on the comparison of case studies (descriptive survey model). According to the author, the comparison of differing national approaches to energy security represented by Germany and Poland still constitutes a research gap – one that she intends to target. Her analysis is based on primary and secondary literature, such as: legislative texts, white and green papers, reports, internet documents, scientific and journalistic material as well as EU statistics, the BP Statistical Review 2016 and the World Energy Outlook 2015 (p. 23). Most of the data covers the time period between 2012 and 2015.

The book follows a traditional structure of scholarly literature. After laying down the topic, state of research, research questions, methodology and sources (chapters 1 and 2), the book presents the challenges and risks to energy security (chapter 3), the macroeconomic and historical context of energy security (chapter 4), the EU's legal framework and an overview of the debates and policies on energy security in Germany and Poland (chapter 5) and finally points out differences and similarities between the German and Polish approaches to energy security (chapter 6). A short summary as well as additional numerical data conclude the book.

Chapter 4 to 6 constitute the main parts of the book. Chapter 4 offers a broad range of informative data regarding energy stocks, energy production, current and projected energy demands, import dependencies and energy transports against the background of GDP development, energy intensity and other economic data. This data is supplemented by a short historical description of the political and economic development of Germany and Poland after the Second World War. Although the author avoids delving deeper into the (energy) history of both countries, she identifies the main difference between Germany and Poland in their relationship to the Soviet Union and today's Russia, respectively. Whereas the Soviet Union/Russia is considered in Germany as a reliable energy supplier, the same country is treated in Poland with distrust and aversion (p. 62 f.). Unfortunately, at this point the author leaves aside the German Democratic Republic's experience in this matter, which probably would have painted a more complex picture.

Chapter 5 gives an overview over energy policies and debates in the EU, Germany and Poland. The author shows how the EU's approach to the subject has changed over the course of the recent two decades, from a side issue to a major policy field. Since there is no generally accepted definition of energy security (p. 24), the implementation of concrete measures is not yet in sight. These differing understandings become especially visible with regard to Germany and Poland. Whereas energy security is framed mainly as a technical and economic issue in Germany, in Poland it is seen in a geopolitical and security context. [1] According to the author, this difference is due to a higher degree of diversification of energy imports in Germany, as well as to a larger share of renewable energies and Germany's natural gas storage facilities, which are the largest in the EU (p. 72). Poland, however, still mainly depends on Russian oil and gas supplies. Nonetheless, diversification measures, such as the new LNG terminal in Świnoujście, have been implemented, although the Polish energy dependency was only 26 percent in 2013 as

compared to Germany's 63 percent. The author correctly points out that the Polish dependency on Russian oil and gas supplies is related to historical path dependences. She reduces, however, the energy transport infrastructure, as established in the socialist period, to serving mainly military aims (p. 81). [2] Other characteristics of the Polish energy sector are relatively inefficient coal-fired power plants and an outdated electricity grid, as well as the Polish "coal monoculture" – the result of a strong energy and coal sector lobby. Polish hard and brown coal reserves are perceived as an asset guaranteeing the national energy security and independency.

Chapter 6 brings together the main findings of the previous sections. Sybille Reitz concludes that both Germany and Poland are in a similar situation regarding the availability of energy resources as well as transport routes (p. 91). There are slight differences with regard to the current energy mix, even though coal still plays a central role in both countries. Larger differences remain concerning import dependency, energy intensity and the overall economic productivity of both countries. The author sees the most considerable differences between both countries as resulting from historical experiences, which have led to different approaches to current energy security challenges. Whereas Poland is striving for a necessary diversification of oil and gas imports, Germany is continuing to cooperate with Russia due to clear economic advantages.

Die Energiesicherheit Deutschlands und Polens im Kontext der EU is a highly recommendable book and provides a broad range of revealing facts regarding energy security at a European, German and Polish level. In accordance with a master thesis design, the book offers a compilation of existing facts and does not aim at adding new data coming from interviews with stakeholders or archive material. Although it is not the main goal of the book, the inclusion of the historical perspective allows Reitz to identify the main similarities and differences between both cases. In order to further substantiate the existing discussion concerning energy security in the German-Polish context, it would have been valuable to pay closer attention to the intense debates about the Nord Stream pipeline connecting Germany and Russia, which Reitz mentions only briefly (p. 81). [3] Besides, the research question on possible joint approaches and solutions to the issue of energy security on a European level remains largely unaddressed. The author contents herself with pointing to the alternative of problem solving on a regional, not a European level (p. 99). Nevertheless, Reitz has written an insightful study worth reading that gives a good overview on debates about energy security, especially in the German and Polish context.

[1] This finding is confirmed by results of the study *Auf dem Weg zu einer gemeinsamen europäischen Energiepolitik? Energiesicherheitsdebatten in Polen und Deutschland*, in: *Polen-Analysen* 190 (01.11.2016).

[2] Except for the Druzhba crude oil pipeline, constructed between 1961 and 1964, cross-border energy infrastructure projects in the Eastern Bloc were the results of economic considerations. See e.g. Falk Flade: *Energy Infrastructures in the Eastern Bloc. Poland and the Construction of Transnational Electricity, Oil, and Gas Systems*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2017 (Studien zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte Ostmitteleuropas, Bd. 26).

[3] Unfortunately, the author wrongly states some consequences of Nord Stream I. This pipeline did not lead to a reduction of transport volumes through the Jamal pipeline and, therefore, did not lead to a reduction of Polish gas transmission revenues.

This review was originally published on www.pol-int.org.