



Between Securitisation and Europeanisation? Projecting European energy agenda into regional governance The case of Ukraine and Georgia

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Abstract

What kind of actor is the European Union (EU) in its external energy relations with the Eastern neighborhood? This question is central to the ongoing scholarly discussion on the EU's energy actorness. Yet, beyond academic debate, the EU's external energy policy has become a front-page topic over the last year. In turn, this thesis offers to look back at the past practices. It aims to empirically answer the research question with a reference to the comparative analysis of the two case studies, Ukraine and Georgia.

The research framework is based on Herranz-Surrallés' distinction of three specific dimensions of the EU external energy policy, namely 1) external dimension of the EU internal market; 2) energy security or foreign energy policy; and 3) intersection between energy policy and other foreign-policy aims. The thesis proposes to operationalise the above-mentioned concepts as liberal, strategic and green actor. While the EU has been famously named a 'liberal actor in a realist world', this assumption has been challenged by the return of the power relations to the region, symbolised by the 'arc of instability' surrounding the Union and leading to the securitisation shift in the energy policy. Yet another challenge comes from the EU's ambitious climate objectives.

The selected case studies offer a testing ground to assess the strategic shift's validity, extent, and nature. While Ukraine is the key transit country strategically located between the EU and Russia, Georgia is an important alternative transit hub in the Southern Caucasus energy trade. Members of the Energy Community, the two countries, are also part of the multilateral sectoral integration process into the EU's energy regulatory space. The document analysis is used to extract the EU priorities in the two cases.

While the research question is difficult to give a clear-cut answer to, the main finding of the analysis indicates that the EU is still mainly using liberal actor tools to pursue the strategic and environmental actor's objectives. Moreover, the thesis points out that the different types of actorness coexist in a variable manner depending on a partner country.