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Book Reviews

Janne Haaland Matláry, *Energy Policy in the European Union*, Macmillan, London, 1997, ISBN 0-333-64349-6, Dfl 50,80.

Energy Policy in the European Union explains why and how the EU was ble to become highly influential in European energy policy-making over the 1985-1992 period. Traditionally, energy was considered a matter of national interest and governments played a dominant role in the energy sector through regulation, public ownership, subsidization, etc. Therefore, the 1985 *White Paper on the Internal Market* did not cover the energy sector. However, by 1988 the Commission extended the internal market concept to include the energy sector with a series of proposals for the creation of the *Internal Energy Market* (IEM). Besides this, the Commission sought to achieve formal competence in energy matters and attempted to formulate a *Common Energy Policy* (CEP) beyond the deregulatory nature of the IEM. Since 1992, as is argued in this study, the EU has reverted to more modest ambitions regarding the further development of the IEM and the CEP.

On the back cover, Haaland Matláry's work is labelled as 'the first comprehensive book-length study of EU energy policy', which it is not. Regrettably, it lacks an evaluation of the actual implementation of EU energy policy at the national level and the consequences for the supply and use of energy. *Energy Policy in the European Union* is essentially an empirical case study on the *process* of energy policy-making within the EU framework, and the role therein of the member states, the various EU institutions and interest groups. In this sense, it is a welcome and relevant addition to the existing sector-based studies of EU policy-making. Moreover, as energy analysts follow the developments in 'Brussels' meticulously, the *process* of EU energy policy-*making* has not received much attention so far, and therefore the book is a valuable contribution to European energy studies.

The book also claims to contribute to European integration theory in general by asking to what extent an intergovernmental approach is appropriate to explain the evolution of EU energy policy-making. The hypotheses tested are, first: *the only significant actors are governments* and, secondly: *all policy-making outcomes in the EU process can be traced to prior government interests.* The alternative hypotheses are: *institutional EU actors matter independently and interests may be formed during the policy-making process itself.*

The analysis takes off with Putnam's 'two-level games' model – in which the strategic options open to governments in EU negotiations vary with their autonomy versus domestic interests and versus other member states. Subsequent empirical analysis of the policy-making process leads the author to reject the intergovernmental hypothesis. Instead, as is argued, a *substance* (i.e. energy policy) oriented approach that traces the process of policy-making through its various stages would be much more effective in explaining what has happened. Such an approach should facilitate a more precise delineation of the role of state and non-state actors during these stages and thus yield an improved evaluation of the games played and their outcomes.

This conclusion is not very surprising in the light of the analysis preceding it. Already in chapter two intergovernmentalism is set aside, the analysis is clearly biased towards the alternative hypotheses. It is surprising, however, that the book *concludes* with such statements because the process oriented approach has guided the analysis implicitly throughout most of its chapters. Therefore, it would have been preferable to fully introduce this approach in the introductory chapter, side by side with Putnam's 'two-level games' model. As it is, the actual analytical approach remains obscure until the final chapter of the book. This raises doubts about the theoretical implications of the study. More serious is that it also weakens the presentation of the most valuable element of the book, namely the account of the policy-making process.

The analysis starts with a summary overview of the development of EU energy policy from the ECSE and Euratom to present times. Chapter two continues with a rather cursory examination of national energy policies and structural characteristics of some EU member states (UK, Germany, France and Italy). This includes aspects like indigenous resources and import dependence, and the role of the state and interest groups. The trivial conclusion of this chapter is that there is considerable variation among the member states and that these differences affect their policy. The north-south and the importer-exporter divisions are considered to be the main cleavages.

The next two chapters describe proposals related to the *Internal Energy Market* and the *Common Energy Policy*. It is illustrated in detail that the IEM principles were extended to areas like energy transport, state aids to the coal industry, and the rules for exploration and production. Eventually, the Commission's original IEM proposals were either not adopted, or only in a diluted form, because of member states' opposition. Regarding the CEP proposals, the study concentrates on three cases: first, the Commission's lost struggle to achieve formal competence in energy matters through a chapter in the Treaty on the European Union; second, the proposal for a union-wide carbon tax, which was not adopted either; and, third, the energy policy towards central Europe and the CIS, including the European Energy Charter, which was more successful.

The analysis shows that member governments and national interest groups had an important role in the development of the IEM and the CEP. Yet, the book fails to relate the national and sectoral policy preferences to variations in structural and institutional

characteristics convincingly – partly as a consequence of the sketchy analysis of these characteristics referred to above.

The study then goes on to examine the specific roles of the EU institutions and their relations with interest groups. The Commission launched most of the proposals and their subsequent reformulations. This was facilitated by the integrative mood in Europe in the second half of the 1980s and by external events that provided the Commission with opportunities to take the initiative (the Iraq-Kuwait war, the fall of the iron curtain, environmental concerns, etc.). A crucial factor is neglected, namely that the first steps towards liberalization were taken after the fall in oil prices and the collapse of OPEC in 1986, which induced a more relaxed attitude among governments regarding the security of supply and the need for intervention. Moreover, Haaland Matláry argues that the 1990 Gulf War underlined the need for a common policy. Yet, the fact that the *market* managed to absorb the tensions associated with this war relatively easily supported an increasingly widespread belief that coordinated intervention was *not* necessary. Also, it can be questioned whether the observed post-1992 slowdown in the Commission's policy output really means that the internal market momentum has been lost. EU policy has already provoked an intense dynamism in the energy sector. It seems likely that the process will further develop through national implementation of the EU guidelines and the interaction between the governments and the industry.

Haaland Matláry gives the Commission the leading role in the process of policy-making and initiation. She convincingly illustrates that there was a specific pattern of cooperation between the Directorates General for Energy (oriented primarily to the CEP) and Competition (involved with the IEM) and the various sectoral interest groups, while the much weaker DG for Environment had little influence. The IEM was supported by the Court of Justice with a ruling that electricity had to be considered a *good* instead of a public *service*, and which therefore brought energy under the competition rules. The European Parliament is mainly involved with environmental aspects and has an insignificant impact in the development of policy.

The evaluation of the role of the Council of Energy Ministers and the European Council is rather inconclusive by stating that decisions are postponed until an acceptable compromise is reached. The important questions of why a *specific* compromise is reached is left untouched. While it is admittedly true that decision-making at these levels lacks transparency, more analysis of the justification of the councils' decisions in national parliaments or in the media could have yielded a clearer view of the positions taken by the member countries.

To conclude, Janne Haaland Matláry's *Energy Policy in the European Union* gives a useful up-to-date account of the evolution of EU energy policy and the role of the EU institutions therein over the post-1988 period. The book contains a well-organized section of references although some publications referred to in the text are missing. A 'Guide to Further Reading' unfortunately neglects some crucial publications on European and EU energy policy. The presentation of the material suffers from

overlap, as each chapter more or less repeats the policy process for the several proposals. Also, there is a lack of balance. The rather cursory analysis of the energy policies in the member states – an overview of the European energy situation is absent – did not lead to a very perceptive evaluation of the states' policy preferences. In contrast, the role of the EU institutions is strongly emphasized by its prominent and detailed presentation. This, on the one hand, weakens the empirical conclusions and, thus, the theoretical implications of this study. On the other hand, the book gives us much detailed information about the actions of the institutions. This will undoubtedly stimulate and ease further investigations of the impact of European integration on the member states' energy policy and the consequences for the supply and use of energy in Europe.

Aad Correljé

Matthew Festenstein, *Pragmatism & Political Theory.* Polity Press, Cambridge, 1997, ISBN 0-74561-627-5, £ 13.95

In *Pragmatism and Political Theory*, Matthew Festenstein addresses the question "what resources pragmatism has to offer normative political theory" (p.1). To answer this question, Festenstein examines the writings of John Dewey, Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam and Jürgen Habermas. The first part of his study is devoted to the moral and political theory of Dewey. Festenstein criticizes the – still widespread – belief that Dewey's political thoughts should be understood as a theory which provides the analytical tools for the solution of technical problems only. By contrast to this belief, Festenstein argues that Dewey's political theory is grounded in a moral theory, based on the assumption that the aim of moral deliberation is self-realization or growth. The notion of moral deliberation is closely associated with Dewey's concept of positive freedom, which requires social institutions that are fit to help shape individuality, while being open to change. The second part of *Pragmatism and Political Theory* critically examines the political theories of Rorty, Putnam and Habermas in relation to the insights put forward by Dewey.

According to Festenstein, political thinking in the area of political philosophy can be reconstructed on the basis of a set of concerns common to the philosophers mentioned above.

The first topic of pragmatism is the rejection of "metaphysical realism" in moral and political theory. At first sight, the term "metaphysical realism" might be confusing for readers familiar with the writings of the founding father of pragmatism: Charles Sanders Peirce. In Peirce's philosophy, the term 'realism' refers to the belief in the reality of generals (e.g. laws of nature). In Festenstein's definition, however, the term "metaphysical realism" does not refer to the belief in the reality of generals, but stands for the claim that the outside world (including the social world and the world of

values) is an object accessible to knowledge independent of human emotions, choices and self-understanding. Underlying this type of realism, Festenstein holds, is an epistemological dualism of known subject and known object. Pragmatism rejects this dualism of subject and object. Following Peirce's theory of the *Fixation of Belief*, Dewey insists on the "centrality of practical problem-solving to inquiry" (p.5): inquiry aims at the settlement of an opinion in order to deal with practical problems. The rejection of "metaphysical realism" and the insistence on the centrality of problem-solving is taken up by modern pragmatism. Rorty ridicules what he perceives to be the "mirror theories" of knowledge and language, while arguing that theories of knowledge, as well as moral theories should be relevant to our needs and interests. Similarly, Putnam attacks the pretensions of a "God's eye point of view" which claims that a single, objective representation of the world is possible. In a less radical fashion, Habermas attempts to develop a pragmatic equivalent of Kant's "transcendental vantage point" on the basis of an analysis of the moral assumptions underlying the performance of speech acts in a particular community.

The second topic dealt with by pragmatism is the rejection of scepticism. Festenstein distinguishes two types of scepticism (p.106): *subjectivism*, that claims that what is valuable for a particular person is a matter of his or her subjective and irrational desire or choice, and *cultural relativism*, that claims that the validity of moral values can only be justified relative to the set of beliefs of a particular community. The first type of scepticism has been sharply criticized by Dewey. Dewey argues that pragmatism has to acknowledge the plurality of actually existing moral, political and ideological conceptions. This external – sociological – observation, however, should be accompanied by the internal perspective of moral theory which aims at the formulation of grounds on which existing conceptions can be questioned and ideological conflicts can be rationally addressed. Putnam and Habermas likewise criticize cultural relativism by arguing that this type of relativism is the result of taking the "observers perspective" only. In addition, moral theory should take a "participant's perspective" and recognize that no given set of beliefs is immune from moral criticism. The task of moral theory, then, consists of the articulation of the criteria and conditions which make rational moral criticism possible. The position of Rorty with respect to cultural relativism is more ambiguous. Rorty has – in my view rightly – been criticized by Putnam for embracing relativism by holding that an improvement in our values and standards does not imply that they are better "by reference to a previously known standard, but just better in the sense that they come to seem clearly better than their predecessors." (p.183) Although Festenstein attempts to defend Rorty against the accusation of moral relativism, his study fails to demonstrate how Rorty can uphold his self-proclaimed anti-relativistic position with respect to his claim that rational criticism is only possible within the familiar procedures of a given society.

The third topic of pragmatism is the articulation of a moral theory which avoids the pitfalls of both metaphysical realism and scepticism. As was indicated above, Dewey's moral theory takes as its starting point the self-realization or growth of