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IS DEMOGRAPHY ENERGY DESTINY? COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN ENERGY POLICIES

With the ongoing climate crisis, conflicts in the Middle East and Europe over energy resources, and rapid political and economic transformations driven by advancements in renewable energy technologies, the 21st century has increasingly been defined by humanity's complex relationship with energy. In particular, the countries of Southeastern Europe have undergone an exceptionally difficult transition, grappling with both technological and political challenges which impacted, and were impacted by, their energy policies. Despite having broadly different political outcomes, the countries of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia exhibit striking similarities in certain aspects of their respective energy policies, while showing divergence in others. Therefore, this paper addresses the following question: why have the energy policies in the three countries diverged and converged? under what conditions have energy policies developed in the three countries? This paper tests explanations from the literature on Europeanization, climate entrepreneurship and climate policy integration, energy security, policy diffusion, and coalition dynamics as to why the countries have developed in the observed ways. In doing so, it examines the impact of theoretically significant exogenous and endogenous factors in determining energy policy. Through this analysis, the paper aims to refine our understanding of the conditions under which energy policies and energy systems are shaped.

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NAVIGATING EU ENLARGEMENT: BALANCING CHRONOLOGICAL PRECEDENCE AND GEOPOLITICAL PRIORITIES

By employing a realist approach, the authors investigate how geopolitical factors influence the EU's decision to expand into regions of strategic importance or vulnerability to major powers' influence, as a means to enhance its security and projection of power. They also explore the obstacle posed by the absence of a unanimous stance on "pre-scheduled" accessions, as seen in the past in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The authors argue that the changed geopolitical landscape in Europe has profoundly influenced the European Union's (EU) enlargement policy. However, its impact has been asymmetrical in the two main micro-regions: the Western Balkans on the one hand and the Eastern neighbourhood on the other. The authors contend that the EU's response has not predominantly been strategic but rather tactical. This phenomenon reflects the

longstanding deficiencies in the EU's enlargement policy, coupled with the urgent need to extend commitments to the eastern partners who face immediate security threats from Russia. Nevertheless, the authors hypothesise that such tendencies are not advantageous for the Western Balkans, which face lower direct jeopardy from Russia. Consequently, it becomes a lower priority for the European Union, despite its chronological precedence in the enlargement domain. While ideally, both enlargement regions should be granted an "accession timetable" along with on-ground democratic reforms (similar to CEE), the authors highlight that due to differing geopolitical dynamics and pressure, the outcomes for the two regions may either diverge in terms of potential favouring of the new candidates or, perhaps more likely, converge – meaning that the accession of either region might be postponed until after the invasion of Ukraine ends.

Keywords: enlargement policy, Eastern partnership, priority, strategy, interest, security, threats

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SANCTIONS PRESSURING: EU INTEGRATION CHALLENGES IN THE CASE OF SERBIA

This paper deals with new developments of the EU integration of Serbia after Russian fully-fledged invasion against Ukraine on 24th February 2022. It attempts to analyse the contextual setting and efficiency of sanctions pressuring of the EU directed at Serbia. The key leading question regards reasons why Serbia did not decide to join the sanctions against Russia and align with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Empirical analysis addresses recent history of the EU-Serbian-Russian relations, scope of sanctions pressuring and its limitations from the EU's perspective as well as comparative study of conditionality in cases sensitive to national identity with regard to cost-benefit analysis and credibility of conditions. This study is based on empirical research and 22 interviews conducted during fieldworks in Belgrade (March-April 2023) and Brussels (May 2023) involving perspectives of NGOs, experts and academics, representatives of governmental and EU institutions.