



Habilitation Thesis Reviewer's Report

Masaryk University

Faculty

Procedure field

Applicant

**Applicant's home unit,
institution**

Habilitation thesis

Reviewer

**Reviewer's home unit,
institution**

Faculty of Social Studies

Political Science

Filip Cernoch, PhD

Department of International Relations and European Studies

Energy Transition: the Case Study of Germany and the Czech Republic

James Henderson (PhD)

Oxford Institute for Energy Studies

I thought that this thesis was very well written and constructed, leading the reader through the logic of the argument very well. It clearly lays out the theoretical framework before moving on to provide significant amounts of background information on the German and Czech electricity markets, the EU strategy for increasing the level of renewables in the power generation sector and the overall impact that renewable sources of energy can have on the energy system because of their intermittency.

The MLP approach allowed the author to frame his arguments in the context of the relevant institutions, actors and infrastructure, while using the substitution pathway to describe the key external (landscape) pressure being put on the system by the increase in renewable energy in Germany. I thought that the description of the German renewable strategy and how it is affecting neighbouring countries was very comprehensive, with particular reference of course to the Czech Republic. It is very clear that the impact has been on prices (lowering them and impacting profitability and investment in the Czech Republic) and on physical flows of electricity, which has put the Czech power grid under strain.

What was made equally clear was that the Czech reaction has not been ideal, in particular from actors and institutions who appear to be keen to maintain and expand the status quo, with a particular focus on nuclear. The author clearly explains why this is not compatible either with EU strategy or with the constraints being imposed by volatile German electricity exports. Indeed, Czech strategy focuses on reliability and security, but could actually be undermining this due a lack of compatibility with the strategies of neighbouring countries.

My only issue would be that, although I learned a lot from this thesis and it undoubtedly clarifies the key issues around the interaction of the Czech and German electricity markets very well, I did wonder whether the descriptive elements could have been augmented more with deeper analysis of what the solutions might be or about how actors might have reacted differently in other circumstances. I also wondered if the author believes that the case study

he has offered here has a wider relevance as renewable energy is expanded across the global energy economy, and if so perhaps we could develop that thought further.

Overall, though, I thoroughly enjoyed reading this thesis, which was well argued and very clear.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence

Could you expand on the broader significance of the Czech case study. Which elements do you believe are unique to this example and which have a wider sectoral relevance?

Could you discuss the balance between the three key elements of the MLP approach? Do you believe that the actors, institutions and infrastructure play equal roles throughout, or is one or more driving the key developments at various times?

Could you offer some thoughts on an ideal Czech strategy in reaction to the external pressure that you have described? Could you discuss this in the context of each of the three main elements of the MLP approach?

Could you offer some thoughts on the EU response to the issues you describe in the Case Study? Do you believe that the outcomes argue for an EU-wide energy strategy, and what is the feasibility of this?

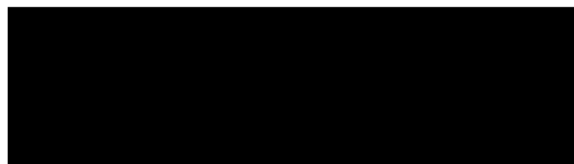
On a practical level, what is the impact of the Czech grid effectively blocking German imports in order to protect the grid? Does the use of phase shifters have a dramatic impact on other markets?

Does the general population feature in the “actors” category and if so how much weight should one give to them compared to the market actors and the institutions? Is there any push for a more environmentally friendly renewables strategy, and what would happen if this became a political issue?

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled “Energy Transition: the Case Study of Germany and the Czech Republic” by Filip Cernoch *fulfils* requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of political science.

In Brno on 9 April 2018



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