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**BETWEEN DECLARATORY CONSENSUS AND IMPLEMENTATION GAP:
POLISH AND HUNGARIAN GAS DIVERSIFICATION POLICY DILEMMA**

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ABSTRACT

The presented research is in the realm of energy studies, and it seeks to shed light on the diverging gas diversification implementation approaches of Poland and Hungary. In spite of the fact that these countries have much in common from a historical, economic, social, and geopolitical standpoint, a deepening gap has been observed between their energy policies, which the thesis strives to expose. The study aims at explaining the discrepancy between the formal alignment of the states with respect to the necessity to diversify gas routes/sources and the translation and execution of such objectives in practice via thorough assessment of official documents and secondary sources. Considering the increased energy security concerns and the ongoing need to diversify the gas market in light of geopolitical developments in the region, the core timeframe of the research is the period from 2014 to 2021. While the annexation of Crimea in 2014, as well as deteriorating relations with Russia and threats from its aggressive foreign policy, are seen as the main catalysts for reassessing energy policy, gas disruptions caused by the 2006/2009 crises are also addressed and deemed the foundation for amplification of gas diversification. The research compares the gas diversification strategies of Poland and Hungary, revealing the circumstances that have prompted each country to choose a different path. The thesis' analysis and conclusions are meant to contribute significantly to the field of energy studies and encourage further research in the subject.

Key words: gas (energy) diversification, energy security, energy (inter)dependence, Ukraine crisis, Russia's role in geopolitical developments

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY | 4 |
| CHAPTER I. Conceptual and theoretical framework: literature review | 6 |
| Energy (inter)dependence | 6 |
| Energy security | 8 |
| Energy diversification | 11 |
| Securitization theory | 12 |
| When energy meets securitization | 13 |
| Summary..... | 14 |
| CHAPTER II. Data analysis of gas diversification at the EU, regional and national levels | 17 |
| EU level..... | 17 |
| Regional level | 19 |
| National level..... | 22 |
| Summary..... | 25 |
| CHAPTER III. Differences in the implementation of gas diversification in Hungary and Poland | 28 |
| Hungary’s gas diversification efforts and the policy of the Hungarian government (2014-2021)..... | 28 |
| Poland’s gas diversification efforts and the role of the Polish governments (2014-2021) | 31 |
| Summary..... | 33 |
| CHAPTER IV. Discussion: comparative analysis | 35 |
| CONCLUSION | 39 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 41 |

INTRODUCTION

Background information: Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) has turned into a battlefield for energy markets between Russia and other suppliers in recent years. Despite Russia's monopoly on most of the natural gas supplies in the region, the geopolitical landscape of CEE has undergone a drastic transformation which has had a significant impact on domestic and foreign policies of the regional countries (Langvad, 2017). Given the disruptions and challenges brought by the Russian-Ukrainian gas disputes in 2006/2009, as well as the 2014 developments in Ukraine (Crimea annexation, Donbas war), CEE countries have publicly announced their plans to diversify their gas markets in order to reduce dependence on Russian gas and secure new energy routes/sources (Tarnawski, 2015). Following the aforementioned events, several European Union (EU) policies/legislations, regional and national strategies have been revised to meet this objective and forge new deals with alternative partners. Consequently, natural gas has become a prime concern in the EU as the most politicized energy source, and diversification policies have obliged member states to adhere to and carry them out (Posaner, 2020). In this context, energy (gas) diversification is conceptualized as importing supplies from different countries/sources (other than Russia).

Nonetheless, CEE countries are not on the same page when it comes to their perceptions toward Russia and the level of cooperation. Such a setting, in turn, impacts the diversification implementation strategies. The best representation of this predicament can be seen when analyzing the energy policies of a small sample of regional states - for instance, Poland and Hungary. As a matter of fact, Poland is a well-known advocate for energy independence in the EU and beyond (Szulecki & Ancygier, 2015). In an effort to strengthen its energy security, Warsaw has begun a number of initiatives that aim to decrease dependence and completely replace Russian gas with other energy sources. Furthermore, Poland stated in 2019 that it would discontinue the long-term contract (LTC) with Russia once it expired in 2022 (PGNiG, 2019). In contrast, there is a totally different dynamics in Russian-Hungarian energy relations. Hungary views Russia as its most essential partner because of its long-term significance as a gas exporter (Government of Hungary, 2020). The official Budapest labels this as 'purely pragmatic' relations prioritizing the country's national and economic interests (Szabó, 2019). On top of all, Hungary prolonged the LTC with Gazprom in 2021 for 15 years (RFE/RL's Hungarian Service, 2021).

Research problem: both countries are EU members and founding members of several regional organizations such as the Visegrad Four (V4) and the Three Seas Initiative (TSI) that all strive to diversify the gas market, nonetheless, Poland and Hungary have developed divergent approaches of gas diversification. While Poland is leaning toward becoming entirely gas independent from Russia, Hungary has extended its partnership and long-term reliance on Gazprom for decades to come. Thus, the thesis views those differing energy policies as its primary research problem and sets out to explain the underlying reasons behind this dilemma.

Study focus and aim: the research focuses on Hungarian and Polish gas diversification issues. Despite a declaratory consensus and common objectives, it is evident that Poland and Hungary, as EU member states,

have formed divergent perspectives on energy policy and implementation methods of gas diversification. Consequently, the dissertation aims to present an up-to-date picture in light of recent regional developments to understand the trends in Polish and Hungarian gas sectors and uncover the core factors leading to the contrasting diversification implementation strategies to answer the research questions.

Main research question and sub-questions: the thesis has not proposed a hypothesis, instead, it sets research questions as guides to the critical exploration of diverging gas policies of the case study countries. The analysis is built around the following main research question: **despite declaratory consensus over European energy security policy and diversification objectives, what factors contribute to the increasingly diverging implementation approaches between Poland and Hungary?** The dissertation additionally offers several supporting questions to provide more explanatory weight to the analysis:

- What are the main reasons for the growing partnership between Russia and Hungary in the gas sector? Why has cooperation between Russia and Poland in the natural gas sector deteriorated? Is Russia seen as an energy/national security threat by the Hungarian and Polish governments? How has gas diversification been perceived and implemented in Poland and Hungary? What alternative energy sources have Poland and Hungary managed to find to substitute Russian gas? Does Russian gas influence domestic and foreign policies of the given countries? What is the role of ruling parties/governments in gas diversification procedures and to what extent they are able to participate in negotiations with energy suppliers?

Case selection: the course 'Geopolitics of Central Europe' taught by Dr. Butler McIntosh at the University of Glasgow inspired the concept for the thesis and contributed to the choice of these two countries as the basis of a comparative analysis case study. The four states of the Visegrad Group (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic) were the primary focus of this course and were analyzed from a variety of angles. Reviewing the course materials, it was clear that despite being partners in many institutions and working toward the same ends, those countries were becoming increasingly diverging in their foreign and domestic policy making. The energy sector and namely gas diversification would provide as a particularly striking example of the disparities in their strategies. Therefore, when filtering the case study subjects of the thesis, Slovakia and the Czech Republic were excluded from the research because Poland and Hungary were the ones to be expected to decide on whether to continue or suspend the long-term contracts (LTCs) with Gazprom in the 2021/2022 period. Since Slovak and the Czech contracts with Russia would expire in the 2030s, any substantial developments were not anticipated in this period. Policymakers in Poland and Hungary, on the other hand, faced a crucial choice: usher in a new era or strike a delicate diplomatic balance with the Kremlin. There was some uncertainty about whether or not these countries would continue to cooperate with Russia and prolong the contract when the thesis proposal was presented (early 2021). However, by the end of that year, Hungary signed a new contract to follow its previously established foreign policy in order to maintain cordial relations with Russia. At the same time, Poland reaffirmed its plan to terminate the deal after 2022 in

an effort to reduce its reliance on Russian natural gas. It was thus justified and relevant to examine the chosen cases in order to identify the causes of the widely diverging energy practices.

Timeframe: the thesis spans the years 2014-2021, when there was a heightened demand to increase diversification measures following the annexation of Crimea, the hybrid warfare in Eastern Ukraine, Russia's growing assertive foreign policy, and significant security risks and challenges caused by those events. To come up with a thorough study and to avoid overlooking the logical interconnection of regional processes, the research reflects on and refers to prior events - namely starting from the 2006/2009 gas disruptions. First, the 2006-2014 period was researched to bring to light documentation released in the aftermath of the 2006 and 2009 gas crises: these events are regarded as the first major stimulus for boosting energy security and decreasing gas dependency via diversification of routes and sources. The second key driver for the gas diversification acceleration process is defined as the period of 2014 and onwards due to the annexation of Crimea and mounting security concerns in the EU.

Thesis structure: the thesis begins with an **introduction** that frames the central conundrum upon which the whole study is based, followed by the presentation of the conceptual and theoretical framework with a thorough literature review. The study concentrates on the concepts of energy (inter)dependence, energy security, and energy diversification, and it believes that securitization theory, with its emphasis on the energy aspect, is consistent with the logic of the dissertation in explaining the most recent geopolitical and economic shifts in CEE (**see Chapter I**). To indicate the formal congruence between Poland and Hungary in diversification efforts, the thesis examines multiple documents - strategies, directives, regulations, international and bilateral treaties/agreements, etc. (**see Chapter II**). What these countries accomplished in the gas diversification sector by 2021 as well as the foreign policy courses they pursued are analyzed to identify the causes of the discrepancies in diversification implementation approaches (**see Chapter III**). The final part conducts a comparative analysis to bring the examined data together to underline the causes of the growing disparity in gas diversification policy implementation in Poland and Hungary, leading to the concluding observations (**see Chapter IV and Conclusion**).

Study limitations: the thesis' potential limitation in the early phases of data analysis could be the shortage of primary sources in English. In the instance of Poland, however, the majority of the examined sources have been bilingual (Polish and English), greatly facilitating the research and data collection. The situation with regards to the Hungarian sources was comparable, with the exception of the most recent National Energy Strategy 2030 with an Outlook to 2040 (originally titled 'Nemzeti Energiastratégia 2030, Kitekintéssel 2040-ig') being only accessible in the Hungarian language (Innovációs és Technológiai Minisztérium, 2020). Therefore, the text has been translated into English using DeepL Translator software in order to understand the publication's core arguments and to include them into the study (<https://www.deepl.com/translator>).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The thesis adopts comparative qualitative analysis principles, relying on desk research, with the purpose of determining similarities and differences related to gas diversification strategies in this context. Initially, the research problem and case study objects were identified, which enabled formulating the central research question and accompanying questions, followed by a review of the relevant literature and documentation, and, finally, a comparative analysis based on the synthesis of the collected data. Furthermore, a factor-centric approach is taken to explain and provide an in-depth evaluation of the factors contributing to the gas diversification policy dilemma between Poland and Hungary.

- **Data selection:** the primary data used in this research is tri-level, as it tracks patterns of gas diversification at the EU, regional, and national levels. These data are obtained from official documents pertaining to gas diversification objectives and implementation strategies. The research proceeds in chronological order and examines gas diversification-related publications issued in two phases: 2006-2014 (to represent the decisions made in response to the challenges posed by the 2006/2009 gas shortages) and 2014-2021 (following the trends in the deteriorating EU-Russian energy relations due to the Crimea annexation).
1. At the EU level the following documents are selected for the analysis: Treaty of Lisbon (European Union, 2007), the Third Energy Package's Directive 2009/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 Concerning Common Rules for the Internal Market in Natural Gas and Repealing Directive 2003/55/EC (European Parliament and the Council, 2009), Energy 2020 - A Strategy for Competitive, Sustainable and Secure Energy (2010) (European Commission, 2010), Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2013 on Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure and Repealing Decision No 1364/2006/E (European Parliament and the Council, 2013), the 2014 European Energy Security Strategy (European Commission, 2014), Energy Union Package (European Commission, 2015), Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015), Regulation 2017/1938 of the European Parliament and of The Council (2017) Concerning Measures to Safeguard the Security of Gas Supply and Repealing Regulation (EU) No 994/2010 (European Parliament and the Council, 2017), Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action (European Parliament and the Council, 2018), and the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2019).
 2. Poland and Hungary have also demonstrated their willingness to work together in the gas sector and consolidate their efforts toward diversification within the frames of two regional organizations. Thus, the analysis also focuses on the joint declarations of Visegrad Group and the Three Seas Initiative where the formal consensus on gas diversification principles are reflected. The selected documents are: the Declaration of the Budapest V4+ Energy Security Summit (Visegrad Group,

2010), Declaration of V4 Energy Ministers (Visegrad Group, 2011) and the Dubrovnik Declaration (Three Seas Initiative, 2016).

3. At the national level two types of documents are put under the scrutiny – national security and energy security strategies. In regard to Hungary, the following documents are analyzed: National Security Strategy 2012 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2012) and the Resolution 1163/2020 on Hungary’s National Security Strategy to update it (Government of Hungary, 2020), also the National Energy Strategy 2030 (2012) (Ministry of National Development, 2012) and National Energy Strategy 2030 with an Outlook to 2040 (original in Hungarian ‘Nemzeti Energiastratégia 2030, Kitekintéssel 2040-ig’) (Innovációs és Technológiai Minisztérium, 2020). For Poland National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (2020) (Government of Poland, 2020) and Energy Policy of Poland until 2040 (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2021) are evaluated.
4. In-depth information has also been gathered to supplement the primary data and aid in answering the research question(s) at hand through the use of secondary sources such as articles, reports, reference books, policy briefs, documents and analysis from official websites/electronic sources, journalist publications, reviews by international think tanks and independent scholars, etc.
- **Textual and comparative analysis:** the documentation and secondary data for strategic security is analyzed using the base approaches of qualitative textual analysis (Lacity & Janson, 1994; Belsey, 2005; Kuckartz, 2014) in order to extract information about gas diversification policies and implementation nuances for evaluation. The key phrase to focus on is ‘energy/gas diversification’, however, the lexicometry technique is not applied to count how often this phrase appears in these sources since this quantitative marker does not necessarily reflect and aid with understanding the diversification tactics. In fact, the study is meant to be solely qualitative, focusing on how the facts and keywords are interpreted in a particular context as well as the perception those markers create. Along with the ‘energy/gas diversification’ term, references such as ‘gas/energy (inter)dependence’, ‘necessity for gas sources/route diversification’, ‘necessity to find alternative supplies’, ‘energy transition’ etc. are also taken into consideration. Following separate textual analyses of Polish and Hungarian sources, the thesis employs a qualitative comparative analysis method (Meckstroth, 1975; Anckar, 2008) with the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) in an effort to identify the factors that lead to markedly different outcomes of gas diversification in the presence of commonalities between the cases.

CHAPTER I. Conceptual and theoretical framework: literature review

- **Energy (inter)dependence**
- **Energy security**
- **Energy diversification**
- **Securitization theory and energy**

Examining the interplay among these three central concepts and the proposed theory allows a better illustration of the cause-and-effect link between them and highlights the logical interconnectedness that this chapter seeks to emphasize. In other words, increasing (inter)dependence heightens threats and concerns about energy security, while diversification is seen as the most effective and viable strategy to mitigate the risks. Such a chain of developments in the energy sector is in the logic of securitization theory which is elaborated in the final part of the chapter.

Energy (inter)dependence

A careful review of the academic literature on the topic of (inter)dependence reveals that one of the most frequently cited sources is Keohane and Nye's seminal book 'Power and Interdependence,' in which the authors argue that 'interdependence in world politics refers to situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries. These effects often result from international transactions - flows of money, goods, people, and messages across international boundaries' (Keohane & Nye, 2012, p. 7). This publication has served as both a primary template and a jumping-off point for the vast majority of studies that attempt to explain various forms of interdependence and has provided a framework for many other researchers to produce varied assessments specifically on the energy (inter)dependence concept, which are discussed below.

Given the scope and complexity of the topic, it is necessary to hone in on the academic materials that address the case-specific gas industry and complicated energy ties between the EU and Russia. Once the literature is narrowed down, it becomes apparent that the EU-Russian gas relations have been the subject of a growing body of research. Authors such as (Hughes, 2006), (Högselius, 2013), (Harsem & Claes, 2013), (Belyi, 2015), (Krickovic, 2015), (Proedrou, 2016), (Simionov & Pascariu, 2017), etc. agree to classify them as interdependent and describe the reciprocally dependent energy cooperation between gas producers (Russia) and consumers (the EU member states). In the meantime, scholars have divergent views on whether these interdependent ties are symmetrical or asymmetrical, and this is reflected in their interpretations. For instance, Högselius (2013) and Belyi (2015), who detail the origins and development of the Russian (Soviet)-European gas trade, acknowledge that mutual benefit has been at the core of these relations since the signing of the first gas deals in the 1960s, with Europe acting as Russia's (the USSR's) key export partner and Russia (the USSR) primary energy import source for the European market (Högselius, 2013; Belyi, 2015). Pipeline expansion and new gas deals were direct results of the two parties' increasing trust in one another, and these

developments have had a significant impact on their symmetrical relationship (Högselius, 2013). Likewise, Krickovic (2015) has also characterized the gas links between the EU and Russia as symmetrically interdependent ‘as both sides would face daunting costs if the energy relationship is severed or disrupted’ (Krickovic, 2015, p. 9).

However, when looking at a different layer of scholarly literature on the interdependent energy ties between the EU and Russia, the arguments established by the aforementioned research acquire a different conceptual form. Hughes (2006) and other researchers have found that the EU’s heavy reliance on the Russian energy supply and the subsequent necessity to stabilize and securitize this sector have contributed to the development of asymmetric interdependencies between the two parties (Hughes, 2006, p. 1). Simionov and Pascariu (2017) avoided discussing symmetrical interdependence in their study, opting instead to examine EU-Russian political-economic connections through the lens of asymmetrical interdependence, in which Russia has a distinct advantage over the EU (Simionov & Pascariu, 2017). Moreover, they proceed to state that ‘on the premises of the strong interdependent economic ties between the two actors, especially in terms of energy, the current economic sanctions have strongly contributed to Russia’s economic decline. Nevertheless, in the realm of Russia’s foreign affairs, they have proved counterproductive’ (Ibid., p. 133). To rephrase, Moscow’s political maneuvering is concerning even though Russia is under significant pressure from the international community, mostly owing to the economic sanctions. Russia’s privileged position in such structurally asymmetric interdependent energy relations is also pointed out by Harsem and Claes (2013) and Proedrou (2016) who highlight that although Russia relies on the revenue from gas exports from the European market, the latter is substantially more dependent on Russia’s gas supply and would pay a high price in case of disruptions or deterioration of relations (Harsem & Claes, 2013; Proedrou, 2016).

Thanks to the abundance of research on the topic, there is another strand of scholarly debate hashing out energy relations from a different perspective. Some scholars, for instance, Casier (2011), Urutchev (2014), etc., interpret the EU-Russian energy relations, as well as bilateral cooperation in the gas sector between Russia and certain EU member states in the context of the energy dependence concept (Casier, 2011; Urutchev, 2014). Casier’s (2011) prominent study, interestingly, casts doubt on whether or not EU-Russian gas relations are, at their core, interdependent (Casier, 2011). The premise of this piece is that, contrary to popular belief, the EU is now overly dependent on Russia, and the lines of asymmetrical interdependence have blurred (Ibid., p. 538). This is in stark contrast to the 1990s when Russia was widely seen as a declining power in international relations due to the ongoing political and economic transitions. Nowadays, however, due to its stranglehold over Europe’s energy supply and trade corridors, Russia is considered to be a major security threat (Ibid., pp. 539-542). Urutchev also sheds light on the EU’s overdependence on Russian gas in general and finds that ‘this energy dependence is not the only threat to the security of the energy supply, but it is the biggest one and presents the toughest challenge of all’ (Urutchev, 2014, p. 287).

As was previously indicated, the notion of energy dependence appears often in studies that examine regional gas trade and bilateral ties with Russia. It is crucial to highlight that the political discourse over the perceptions and assessments of the energy relations with Russia cannot be unanimous since the sector is segregated and the European Commission cannot present the interests of all member states with a unified voice. To be sure, long-term bilateral contracts with Gazprom are the primary regulatory mechanisms between Moscow and any given state importing Russian gas (Posaner, 2020). Therefore, it is argued that the discrepancies in gas market size, level of dependence, vulnerability, historical and geopolitical factors, etc. are at the heart of the issue. This is especially true for the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region, the focus of this research. The incorporation of new EU members in 2004, which were once part of the Soviet Union or its satellite states, has also had a significant influence on the evolution of political discourse (Güney & Korkmaz, 2014, p. 47). Since Western and Central/Eastern Europe's historical development has taken different shapes, the distinction between 'new' and 'old' members is significant even to this day. Gas supplies in Europe still appear to be split along the former Iron Curtain line, and Noël's (2008) analysis shows that Western Europe is far more diversified and extensive in comparison to the Central and Eastern European markets, which are not only relatively small but also more reliant on Russian gas due to their historical connection and geographical proximity to Russia (Noël, 2008). Virág (2009), who analyzes the gas dependence issue merely from the standpoint of Central and Eastern Europe, validates this argument by claiming that the CEE states that were part of the Communist bloc served as a passageway and a launching pad for the massive pipeline networks that carried Soviet gas westward (Virág, 2009, pp. 28-29). In other words, the geopolitical and economic conditions of the time strongly entrapped the former satellite republics and intensified their dependence on the 'red gas.' Although the political, social, and economic ties to the USSR disappeared after 1989, the key infrastructure systems that were already in place still remain intact. As a result, the present dependence on Russian energy supplies of the CEE nations is predetermined by the historical context and Communist legacy of the region (Johnson, 2005).

Energy security

Although energy security has spurred a plethora of research owing to its peculiarity and dynamic nature, it has been a formidable challenge for scholars to define or conceptualize it. Energy security debates have a long history in academia beginning in the 1960s and maturing through the 1970s (Cherp & Jewell, 2014, p. 415). Since its conventional origins in the wake of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the subsequent oil crisis, studies of energy security have broadened to include a growing number of energy domains and more nuanced interrelated issues (Luft & Korin, 2009). As oil prices leveled out and the prospect of political embargoes subsided in the late 1980s and 1990s, there was a corresponding fall in scholarly interest in energy security (Cherp & Jewell, 2014, pp. 416-417). The resurgence of the concept in the 2000s can be attributed to a number of factors, including growing gas demand, major geopolitical shifts, political conflicts, strained relations between energy suppliers and consumer countries, disruptions, instabilities in transit countries, diversification endeavors, the emergence of decarbonization policies and promotion of sustainable energy, global warming

and other threats to the environment, the development of new energy technologies, and many others (Luft & Korin, 2009; Chester, 2010). This is particularly relevant for the discussion of the concept in the European context since certain major events such as Russia's gas disruptions in 2006 and 2009, the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in 2014, and Russia's latest invasion of Ukraine in 2022 have multiplied academic interest in the topic and catapulted energy security to the very top of the European Union's political agenda (Stevens, 2009; Boersma, 2014; Graaf & Colgan, 2017; Pach-Gurgul, 2019; Ostrowski, 2022; Prohorovs, 2022). Thus, the term energy security has become a popular 'catchphrase' thanks to its increased significance, especially in European political discourse (Bridge, 2015; Chalvatzis & Ioannidis, 2017; Prontera, 2017). Additionally, a comprehensive review of the existing literature shows that the turbulence of the 1970s seems to have been driven by oil, whereas gas appears to have been the primary focus of attention of scholarship in the early 2000s and onward (McGowan, 2011; Månsson et al., 2014). As a result, the enormous body of scholarly discourse can be broken down into two distinct periods: the first, which sheds light on the concept's origins and how the 1970s oil crisis shaped its development, and the second, which examines the concept's revival in the 2000s and its expansion to incorporate new dimensions and complexities of energy security putting the main emphasis on natural gas. Since the latter's increasing significance in geopolitical processes is central to this dissertation, the second wave of literature is prioritized and put under the microscope in the subsequent paragraphs. A thorough evaluation of various scholarly works on contemporary energy security reveals that the most common adjectives used to describe the term are 'ambiguous', 'blurred', 'elusive', 'unclear', 'fundamentally complex', 'abstract', etc. (Yergin, 2006; Luft & Korin, 2009; Vivoda, 2010; Sovacool & Mukherjee, 2011; Winzer, 2012; Ang et al., 2015; Mayer & Smith, 2019). Due to the lack of a precise definition, Winzer (2012) classifies energy security as an 'umbrella term' which strives to cover a broad range of energy-related issues (Winzer, 2012, p. 36), while Månsson et al. (2014) characterize it as 'dynamic' since it is prone to transformations depending on the given time period (Månsson et al., 2014). Additionally, Chester (2010) notes that 'the concept of energy security is inherently slippery because it is polysemic in nature. The concept has many possible meanings. Energy security may be delineated through multiple dimensions and it takes on different specificities depending on the country (or continent), timeframe, or energy source to which it is applied' (Chester, 2010, p. 893). While Cherp and Jewell (2014), Ang et al. (2015) agree that energy security is a 'context-dependent' notion reshaping in different situations (Cherp & Jewell, 2014; Ang et al., 2015), Luft and Korin (2009) argue that states confronting a significant threat to their energy supply are more likely to adjust their foreign policy and domestic objectives accordingly (Luft & Korin, 2009). In other words, the connotation of energy security may shift based on the time, place, circumstances, and context in which it is examined.

An ever-expanding number of definitions and dimensions have emerged throughout time, reflecting the widespread consensus that energy security is a multifaceted concept that resists reduction to a single term or explanation. For instance, Bielecki (2002) highlights that 'energy security is commonly defined as a reliable and adequate supply of energy at reasonable prices' (Bielecki, 2002, p. 237), while Jansen and Seebregts

(2010) suggest that energy security ‘can be considered as a proxy of the certainty level at which the population in a defined area has uninterrupted access to fossil fuels and fossil-fuel based energy carriers in the absence of undue exposure to supply-side market power over a period ahead of 10 years or longer’ (Jansen & Seebregts, 2010, p. 1654). Another widely recognizable conceptualization has been offered by the International Energy Agency defining it ‘as the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price’ (IEA, 2014). The approaches also differ when discussing the dimensions of the concept. In 2007, the Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre developed the 4 As model to structure their research on energy security in Asia which combines availability, affordability, acceptability, and accessibility elements (APEREC, 2007). Several studies or even strategies have taken this paradigm as a reference point in their analyses and have customized its components to develop their own perspectives on energy security. For example, Chester puts together complex features of energy security and observes that ‘the term is commonly found embedded in discussions framed around a handful of notions which denote unimpeded access or no planned interruptions to sources of energy, not relying on a limited number of energy sources, not being tied to a particular geographic region for energy sources, abundant energy resources, an energy supply which can withstand external shocks, and/or some form of energy self-sufficiency’ (Chester, 2010, p. 887). While Sovacool and Mukherjee (2011) are critical of previous definitions of energy security since they may be either too limited, failing to address the whole scope of energy issues, or too general, lacking accuracy and consistency, they offer instead that ‘energy security ought to encompass five dimensions related to availability, affordability, technology development, sustainability, and regulation’ (Sovacool & Mukherjee, 2011, p. 5343). This logic can also be tracked in the European Energy Security Strategy 2014 which claims that ‘the European Union’s prosperity and security hinges on a stable and abundant supply of energy’ (European Commission, 2014). Furthermore, several other scholars have managed to collect a sample of energy security definitions and synthesize them to identify overarching dimensions. Although the details of these definitions differ, they have significant similarities in conceptualization. For instance, Winzer (2012) demonstrates in his assessment of 36 definitions that ‘the common concept behind all energy security definitions is the absence of, protection from or adaptability to threats that are caused by or have an impact on the energy supply chain. Due to the difficulty of measuring all these threats at the same time, individual authors implicitly or explicitly limit the concept of energy security along one or several of the following dimensions: the sources of risk, the scope of the impact measure, and different severity filter such as the speed, size, sustention, spread, singularity or sureness of impacts’ (Winzer, 2012, p. 41). Ang et al. (2015), who reviewed 83 definitions, outlined seven key features or aspects of energy security as follows: energy availability, infrastructure, energy prices, societal effects, environment, governance, and energy efficiency (Ang et al., 2015, p. 1081). It is important to note that despite the plethora of publications built on the basis of the 4 As framework, not everyone in academia is convinced of its validity. In their nominal article ‘The Concept of Energy Security: Beyond the four As’ Cherp and Jewell (2014) criticized the report’s usage of the four As claiming that the paradigm was not supported by either the previously existing body of research or empirical evidence and sound argumentation (Cherp & Jewell, 2014,

p. 416). Hence, the farther one delves into the scholarly literature, the more multilayered and occasionally conflicting opinions on the proper conceptualization of energy security emerge. Undoubtedly, this is one of the most challenging notions to assess and fully comprehend in detail since it is a fluid and continuously transforming concept, making it impossible to pin down in a single direction.

Energy diversification

Energy diversification, in contrast to the previously discussed concepts, has gotten less scholarly attention and has instead been largely examined in the realm of energy security as an ancillary component. However, there are sufficient resources accessible, especially those concentrating on the case-specific gas diversification approaches, to enable one to comprehend the fundamental rationale behind the notion. Having overgeneralized the meaning of the concept, Stirling (2010), Tufail et al. (2018) describe it as ‘not putting all eggs in one basket’ while striving to illustrate by the metaphor that diversification entails reducing dependence on a single supply by increasing the proportion of energy produced from a variety of sources (Stirling, 2010, p. 1623; Tufail et al., 2018, p. 5). As defined in other academic materials, energy diversity is the reliance on a wide range of different supplies and providers, which mitigates risks, improves the energy system, and encourages sustainability in the long run (Llerena, 1993; Templet, 1999). Yergin (2006) further elaborates that a country’s access to energy resources threatens to be disrupted in a number of ways if it must heavily rely on foreign markets (Yergin, 2006). While Vivoda (2019) highlights the urgency to diversify away from energy providers traditionally politicizing their supply, he also argues that conflicts/wars, political instability, regime change, terrorism, geopolitical competition, etc. as potential risks causing those problems (Vivoda, 2019). Consequently, energy security is improved, and susceptibility to supply disruptions, both permanent and temporary, is decreased when the number of providers is expanded and sources are diversified. Overall, energy diversity is seen as one of the most essential criteria for achieving energy security since it guarantees the regular operations of the energy system even in the event of the failure of a single energy source (Weiner, 2019; Akrofi, 2021).

By extending the discussion into the European context, it becomes apparent that the concept has evolved in line with the increase of energy security concerns that emerged in the 20th century. According to scholarly works tracing the evolution of EU-Russian gas relations, the oil shock, precipitated by the Arab-Israeli war in 1973, prompted countries all over the world, including those in Europe, to look for alternatives and make a move to more stable energy supplies, such as natural gas (Luft & Korin, 2009; Prontera, 2017). Therefore, the EU and its member states were no strangers to energy diversification trends that would particularly become mainstream in the early 21st century and beyond. As Proedrou (2016) notes in his article, attempts made in the 1960s and 1970s to substitute oil and improve the European energy system were thought to be an effort to diversify away from unstable energy exporters (Proedrou, 2016). The author further explains that the geographical location of other energy-rich countries predefined the format of emerging gas trade in Europe. Specifically, the proximity between Algeria and Southern Europe, Norway and the northern part of Europe,

the Soviet Union (Russia) and Central/Eastern Europe made it possible to form a partnership with long-term contracts that would facilitate and strengthen energy ties between the regions (Ibid., pp. 3-5). The development of those relations was, however, hampered by changes in the geopolitical landscape in Europe and its immediate neighborhood. Transit countries deserve particular attention since they play a crucial role in establishing and preserving the continuity of those energy ties. In light of political instability and ongoing conflict with Russia, which have impacted relations between the energy-producing country (Russia) and European consumers, the case of Ukraine has taken on increased relevance in recent years (Kropatcheva, 2011; Kuzemko, 2014; Ratsiborynska, 2018).

While the 2006/2009 gas disruptions raised eyebrows and caused major concerns among Europeans about the security of their supply, the situation also required urgent actions on the EU level to securitize the energy sector and led to the adoption of a number of significant laws that regulate the operation of the European gas market. Following these developments, several directives, regulations, and most importantly the Third Energy Package were enacted with the goal of decreasing dependence on Russian gas and boosting the drive toward diversification of supplies (Slesareva, 2017). However, the dynamics of diversification would profoundly accelerate as a result of the 2014 events in Ukraine. As a direct response, the Energy Security Strategy 2014 was introduced, with the diversification of transit routes and external energy supplies listed among its objectives (European Commission, 2014). Since then, the EU has made significant progress toward realizing this goal by, among other things, importing LNG (liquefied natural gas) and constructing terminals, mapping out alternative pipeline routes, expanding its partnership with existing or new energy producers in Europe and beyond, etc. (Hauser, 2021; Devaraj et al., 2021). This progression has been met with enthusiasm in the EU, which, as observed by Dubský et al. (2021), acknowledges the potential of diversification and emphasizes its necessity in order to attain the desired energy security (Dubský et al., 2021). Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, energy diversification is once again a priority for the European Union. Since it is unknown how the present situation in Ukraine will evolve and what it will entail for EU's energy policy, dealing with those processes possibly leaves room for ambiguity and is thus excluded from the thesis.

Securitization theory

In their seminal book 'Security: A New Framework for Analysis' scholars, representing the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, developed and comprehensively articulated the securitization theory for the first time (Buzan et al., 1998). The authors broaden the understanding of security by considering its impact on environmental, social, political, economic, and military sectors and argue that any public issue can fall into one of the following categories – non-politicized, politicized, and securitized. They define security as 'the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics.' (Buzan et. al., 1998, p. 23) The logic follows that, while securitization is seen as the more severe form of politicization, an issue gets securitized only when it faces a direct existential threat that can only be averted by taking special measures (Smith, 1999, p. 85). Thus, one of securitization's defining

characteristics is the imperative to turn to political practices that go beyond standard rules and norms to handle the crisis at hand (Ababakr, 2022). It is also highly essential to identify the specific factors that, when present, induce securitization to develop. The theory posits that security concerns are communicated via speech act, with the securitizing actor declaring that the survival of a referent object is in extreme jeopardy and resorting to extraordinary measures to ensure the object's security by eliminating the immediate threat (Wæver, 1995; Taureck, 2006; Ciută, 2010).

The term 'securitizing move' is used to describe this process, although an issue can only be effectively securitized if the intended audience agrees with the securitizing actor's message (Stritzel, 2014). As Guzzini (2011) points out 'security is understood not through its substance but through its performance: securitization' (Guzzini, 2011, p. 330). The success or failure of a certain securitization act is a separate and more nuanced topic outside the purview of this research. The theory is presented with the intention of highlighting its core principles and extending the discussion to the energy domain to better comprehend recent geopolitical events and the increasing energy securitization dynamics in the EU.

When energy meets securitization

Energy can be classified as a commodity that transcends its significance well beyond the realm of economy and is essential to the survival of any country and society. Due to the pervasive nature of the challenges and threats it undergoes, namely disruptions, political instability, conflicts, environmental repercussions, etc., energy has become a matter of securitization in certain parts of the world. As Wilson (2019) highlights 'energy securitization is a multifaceted phenomenon, which occurs due to the role of energy in economic, regime and/or geopolitical security issues that emerge from both domestic and international political structures' (Wilson, 2019, p. 114). Given that this research is primarily concerned with energy issues in Europe, and more specifically with gas and its geopolitical implications, this section walks through the discussion of securitization theory in the context of EU energy policy to track how it has been framed as a security concern in the political discourse. While Szulecki (2018), for example, argues that the 'securitizing move' component of the theory is pertinent for the study of energy securitization trends in the European setting, Hofmann and Staeger (2019) present a more thorough evaluation to distinguish each element (Szulecki, 2018; Hofmann & Staeger, 2019). They break it down in the following way: Commission and the member states are viewed as securitizing actors with the authority to identify existential threats in their speech acts (statements, directives, strategies, policies, etc.) and securitize energy as the referent object, while the audience might range from national governments to citizens depending on whether the issue is addressed at the EU or national level (Hofmann & Staeger, 2019, pp. 326-331).

It is crucial to note that several events have marked pivotal moments in shaping EU energy policy and the securitization of the sector. The European Commission, one of the key players in the energy securitization act, has been sounding the alarm about the vulnerability of EU energy supplies, especially gas, for over a decade. These concerns have risen in intensity and relevance since the enlargement of the EU to include member states

that are more dependent on external supplies, temporary delays to gas imports, deteriorating political relations between the EU and its primary supplier Russia, etc. (McGowan, 2011). In this light, the 2006/2009 gas disruptions in the EU due to unresolved disputes between Russia and Ukraine might be seen as one of the first turning points making energy a major geopolitical issue in the EU (Kirchner & Berk, 2010). Stoddard (2012), for instance, to illustrate how the given incidents translated energy to the security field as well, analyses statements of several high-level EU politicians, including Commissioners as examples of securitization speech acts and the measures (gas directives, regulations, energy strategies/packages) taken by the Commission to deal with the challenges at the time (Stoddard, 2012). Undoubtedly, the events surrounding Ukraine in 2014 and beyond have also impacted the EU's rhetoric on energy securitization: the escalating importance of energy diversification as the main instrument to reduce such risks and threats is further evidence that the energy sector is of utmost security concern (Goldthau & Boersma, 2014). Judge and Maltby examine the consequences of hybrid warfare on EU energy and highlight the efforts made by the Visegrad group (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia) that have been very sensitive about their gas supply, and highlights a few securitizing speech act examples (letters, announcements, appeals, etc.) to portray gas as a securitized issue in the regional countries and the acknowledgment of direct threats to their national securities (Judge & Maltby, 2017).

It is difficult to locate the energy policy of each EU member state in the logic of securitization theory because they have historically pursued energy policies independently from one another based on their geographical location, availability of resources, infrastructure, geopolitical considerations, threat perceptions, etc. and on top of all, there is no single and standardized gas market in the EU. Scholars that have studied the initiatives towards energy securitization by the CEE nations, with a particular focus on Poland and Hungary, have largely agreed that these countries' energy policies are consistent with the principles of securitization theory advanced by the Copenhagen School (Šabič & Drulák, 2012; Langvad, 2017; Judge & Maltby, 2017). The next chapter of the dissertation provides a detailed discussion of the energy policy discourse of Hungary and Poland at the EU, regional and national levels, providing further support for the claim that the security sectors of these countries have developed in accordance with the rationale of securitization theory, despite taking different approaches to address specific challenges and maintaining a cooperative relationship with energy suppliers.

Summary

In sum, the analysis of the energy interplay between the European Union and Russia has revealed a rich and complex body of literature. Research into the EU-Russian energy cooperation is expanding, which may assist shedding light on the complex dynamics that have led to the present state of EU-Russian (inter)dependent ties and the factors that continue to shape them. As indicated above, the energy interdependence conceptual framework is used by the great majority of scholars when describing the current state of the EU-Russian partnership in the gas sector (Hughes, 2006; Högselius, 2013; Harsem & Claes, 2013; Belyi, 2015; Krickovic, 2015; Proedrou, 2016; Simionov & Pascariu, 2017). While some argue that it has developed symmetrically and the two regions are extremely important to one another for the proper functioning of their economies

(Högselius, 2013; Belyi, 2015; Krickovic, 2015), others, however, stress that Russia still holds an advantage in these relations and that the existing interdependence has grown to the detriment of the EU member state. Because of this imbalance, some academics classify this kind of cooperation as a conventionally asymmetrical interdependency (Hughes, 2006; Harsem & Claes, 2013; Proedrou, 2016; Simionov & Pascariu, 2017). Another layer of studies opens a door to a new perspective to comprehend those complicated energy ties between the EU and Russia. The eastward enlargement of the EU in 2004 and integration of former Soviet and satellite states, which by default have been heavily dependent on Russian gas owing to their historical connections to the USSR, have also impacted the political discourse over the EU-Russian energy relations. The literature portrays the European Union's relationship with Russia, as well as the bilateral connections between certain EU member states and Russia, as unduly dependent (Virág, 2009; Casier, 2011; Güney & Korkmaz, 2014; Urutchev, 2014).

Furthermore, it is important to note that there is a gigantic body of literature providing insight into the evaluation and explanation of the energy security concept, which first surfaced in the 1960s, rose to the forefront in the 1970s due to the oil crisis, and has been brought back to the attention of the scholars and policymakers since the early 2000s and remains one of the most frequently discussed issues today (Luft & Korin, 2009; Chester, 2010; Cherp & Jewell, 2014). While there are several factors contributing to the concept's growing importance, recent geopolitical developments around the gas sector have received the lion's share of attention in the literature (Stevens, 2009; Boersma, 2014). Because of a variety of events throughout the first and second decades of the 21st century, and the subsequent persistence of a number of trends, energy security has evolved as a pressing issue around the globe, but especially in Europe. While many works have tried to explain, define, and zero in on its interlinked dimensions, it is clear that the concept is in a constant state of flux, taking on various forms depending on the context, time, place, situation, and audience for whom it is intended. As a result of its nature, the notion has become convoluted and multidimensional, open to several and often incompatible interpretations (Yergin, 2006; Luft & Korin, 2009; Vivoda, 2010; Sovacool & Mukherjee, 2011; Winzer, 2012; Ang et al., 2015; Mayer & Smith, 2019).

The analysis of the energy diversification concept, on the other hand, shows that it has been evolving in tandem with the energy security concept and has been viewed by many scholars as an interrelated component (Yergin, 2006; Weiner, 2019; Akrofi, 2021). Broadly speaking, scholars argue that diversification is crucial to ensuring the security of the country's energy system by expanding the number of energy producers and suppliers. The notion first emerged in Europe between the 1960s and 1970s, coinciding with the expansion of the gas trade and the necessity to seek out new, sustainable energy sources in the wake of the oil crisis brought on by the conflicts in the Middle East (Proedrou, 2016). Attempts to diversify Europe's energy supply by switching from oil to gas were hampered by subsequent geopolitical developments, despite the fact that increasing gas partnerships with adjacent energy providers had laid the foundation for the growth of gas commerce in Europe. The political turmoil and continuing confrontation with Russia have had a devastating effect on Ukraine's role as a transit country and guarantor of gas supply security (Kropatcheva, 2011; Kuzemko, 2014; Ratsiborynska,

2018). The 2006–2009 gas shortages, the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea and the separatist movements in Eastern Ukraine, are all considered as key catalysts for the urgency of accelerating energy diversification and reviewing energy policy objectives (Proedrou, 2016). The EU has proposed and adopted several directives and strategies outlining comprehensive roadmaps toward energy diversification which include increased import of LNG and the construction of terminals, identification of alternative pipeline routes, broadening the cooperation with new energy exporting countries, etc. to achieve its goal of gradually decreasing its reliance on Russian energy supplies and increasing its reliance on other sources (Slesareva, 2017; Hauser, 2021).

Last but not least, the chapter sheds light on the securitization theory proposed by the scholars of the Copenhagen School (Buzan et al., 1998). The research demonstrates that when the referent object is directly threatened, securitizing actors use securitization speech acts to take extraordinary measures to safeguard it (Wæver, 1995). Several academics have found that developments in the European energy sector are consistent with the patterns specified in the theory (Stoddard, 2012; Wilson, 2019; Hofmann & Staeger, 2019). With the 2006 and 2009 gas crises, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and the subsequent shift in geopolitical dynamics, energy security and gas diversification issues rose to the forefront of the political agenda (Goldthau & Boersma, 2014). Countries used as case studies - Poland and Hungary have increased their security measures and made huge efforts to mitigate challenges and threats resulting from these incidents (Judge & Maltby, 2017). Scholars that have looked into the Central and Eastern European countries' initiatives to securitize energy have widely agreed that Polish and Hungarian energy policies are in line with the tenets of securitization theory (Šabič & Drulák, 2012; Langvad, 2017; Judge & Maltby, 2017). One of the cornerstones of the comparative analysis is the evaluation of the primary data in the form of official documents, which is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II. Data analysis of gas diversification at the EU, regional and national levels

This chapter delves into how gas diversification is entrenched in certain official documentation (target timeframe 2014-2021) as a goal that mandates Hungary and Poland to adhere to and execute. By examining legally binding documents at three levels (EU, regional, national), the primary objective is to demonstrate that the case study countries have formally committed to diversifying their gas routes and sources. More precisely, the section analyzes:

- **EU directives/regulations/strategies and international treaties that reflect on gas diversification and regulations in the sector,**
- **declarations considering gas diversification as a crucial element and a goal to achieve through joint efforts at the regional level (V4, TSI)**
- **relevant national security/energy strategies of Poland and Hungary which also present energy (gas) diversification as a significant pillar in their policies.**

This chapter's collected data would ultimately serve as a basis for comparing to the findings of the following chapter, in which the gas diversification implementation projects are detailed.

EU level

The point of departure of this section is the analysis of EU-level documents that address the development of energy (gas) diversification in the political discourse. Although the thesis is ostensibly focused on the years 2014-2021, it is essential to consider discussing other applicable official documents signed by Poland and Hungary prior to that timeframe for a comprehensive understanding of their gas diversification efforts. Given that the first major gas outages in the EU occurred as of 2006/2009 period, documents addressing those events and consequences are also taken into account. The first one of particular relevance is the Treaty of Lisbon (European Union, 2007) which has expanded the notion of shared competence enabling both the EU and member states to act independently in certain areas, including the energy sector (Arinaitwe, 2014). Energy is the focus of Article 176 A, which also promotes 'the spirit of solidarity' as a core value and sets out aims to increase energy security, which would eventually contribute to diversification and creation of a unified market (European Union, 2007; Braun, 2011). The main takeaway from the treaty is the promotion of the aforementioned EU's shared competence, which has a significant influence on the domestic and foreign policies of the case-study countries and the selection of diverging mechanisms to attain a common objective set by the EU. This is where the puzzle of the dissertation lies. Overall, the treaty's guiding principles have been adopted and used as a reference point in a number of legally binding EU documents which are discussed next.

Due to the changing geopolitical circumstances of the time, the 2006/2009 gas crises propelled new challenges forward requiring more well-thought-out approaches regarding the EU energy security. As a consequence of these developments, new policies to fulfill the demands of the EU gas industry have been adopted. The Third

Energy Package, enacted in 2009, is groundbreaking since it has produced a highly significant gas directive which still maintains its relevance (European Union, 2009). Namely, the Directive 2009/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 Concerning Common Rules for the Internal Market in Natural Gas and Repealing Directive 2003/55/EC aims to liberalize the market, to reduce the EU's gas dependence by improving internal regulations and contributing to the diversification of infrastructures and sources (Article 36), promoting solidarity among member states, etc. (European Parliament and the Council, 2009) Ten years later the directive was upgraded by the Directive 2019/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 which includes new rules addressing the directive's applicability to cross-border pipelines in order to guarantee that existing and future infrastructural initiatives with third parties do not jeopardize the integrity and security of the EU gas market (European Parliament and the Council, 2019). In addition to strengthening the connectivity of domestic markets, Energy 2020 - A Strategy for Competitive, Sustainable and Secure Energy (2010) necessitates diversification of gas via the development of LNG terminals and expanding the pipeline network (European Commission, 2010). The Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2013 on Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure and Repealing Decision No 1364/2006/E is another pertinent document to review because it not only highlights diversification as a key criterion for pending and upcoming projects in the sector (Article 4), but also specifies certain Trans-European gas infrastructure projects (Annex I), such as the North-South, Baltic, and Southern Gas corridors, where the principles of the regulations should apply and diversification must be a mandatory aspect to pay attention to (European Parliament and the Council, 2013). As indicated further, Poland and Hungary are stakeholders in the majority of these initiatives.

The 2014 Russian *Machtpolitik* campaign compelled the European Union to reevaluate its energy policy and make some necessary adjustments in light of the shifting geopolitical situation. Following the annexation of Crimea and developments in Eastern Ukraine, European Commission issued the 2014 European Energy Security Strategy with an emphasis on certain elements to address the issues concerning supply disruption and dependence on external sources (European Commission, 2014). While acknowledging the accomplishments of earlier efforts to improve energy security and boost diversification initiatives, the document highlights the EU's high vulnerability and states that among other factors, the sustainability in the EU relies on a continuous and ample supply of energy (Ibid., p. 2). With that said, this strategy also puts solidarity on a pedestal and presents diversification of infrastructures and supplies as one of its key backbones (Ibid., p. 3). Point 7 addresses the need of diversifying both supplies and infrastructure, with an accent on the role that LNG may play in supporting to make this happen, and a call to negotiate with new suppliers from other regions as potential partners in this endeavor, while Annex 2 sets out short and medium-term gas infrastructure projects for immediate implementation (Ibid., pp. 22-24). Following the release of the aforementioned strategy, the European Council concludes in its '2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework' that supply and route diversification remains a guarantee for market functioning and urges member states to act together on large-scale gas infrastructure projects (European Council, 2014). Furthermore, the Energy Union Package was

introduced in early 2015 with a progressive climate policy at the heart striving to provide EU consumers with a reliable, inexpensive and secure source of energy (European Commission, 2015). The Energy Union plan is comprised of five intricately linked components aimed at enhancing energy security, sustainability, and competitiveness and one of them is ‘energy security, solidarity, and trust’ which, among other things, further elaborates on energy diversification issues specifying names of potential external partners, new gas infrastructure routes, creation of gas hubs and expansion of LNG terminal networks in different parts of Europe, increased domestic production, etc. (Zajączkowska, 2018) The Paris Agreement (2015) and the European Green Deal (2019) both make diversification of energy sources a core tenet of their respective policies: the former supports efforts to keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius (preferably 1.5) (UNFCCC, 2015), while the latter advocates for climate neutrality by aiming to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 percent by 2030 in accordance with the Paris Agreement’s targets (European Commission, 2019). Evidently, the effectiveness of these initiatives depends on how EU member states implement them. There is potential for natural gas to assist EU members to transition away from coal. Thus, Europe’s energy security is increased by having access to many sources of natural gas rather than just one.

Another regulation that came to the light in the context of the challenges brought by the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is Regulation 2017/1938 of the European Parliament and of The Council (2017) Concerning Measures to Safeguard the Security of Gas Supply and Repealing Regulation (EU) No 994/2010 (European Parliament and the Council, 2017). For this one, the main goal is to guarantee that all required precautions are taken to maintain a continuous supply of gas across the EU, and prioritizes the diversification principles and initiatives indicated in the Energy Security Strategy (2014). The most innovative feature of the regulation is the incorporation of so-called ‘solidarity-mechanisms’ with ‘burden-sharing’ instruments to facilitate cooperation among member states in case of energy emergency (Ibid., 2017). In order to achieve the goal of decreasing dependence on energy imports at the national level, Article 4 of the Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action urges member states to diversify energy supplies and sources (European Parliament and the Council, 2018). Overall, these are the most important documents concerning gas diversification principles and policies, and as members of the EU, Hungary and Poland are bound to adopt and pursue those objectives. The second section narrows down the analysis to the regional level, examining the circumstances in which Budapest and Warsaw are making joint efforts to diversify their gas supplies.

Regional level

To accomplish the required gas diversification and boost energy security, Poland and Hungary have both openly expressed their readiness to cooperate at the regional level as well. The following section takes a look at certain regional organizations, their aims, and formal declarations as evidence of the two nations’ unanimity on the necessity of diversifying gas sources and routes. Particular attention is placed on the Visegrad Four and

the Three Seas Initiative since only within these frameworks the case-study governments have stated their intention to collaborate in the energy sector and considered diversification as an ultimate goal to achieve.

Visegrad Four (V4)

The Hungarian Prime Minister J. Antall, the Czechoslovak President V. Havel and his Polish counterpart L. Wałęsa established a regional diplomatic network known as the Visegrad Group in 1991 (Visegrad Group, 1991; Council of the EU & the European Council, 2016). Using the rhetoric ‘Return to Europe’ to draw attention to the Cold War-era division between them and Western Europe, the partner countries collaborated extensively to establish democratic institutions, strengthen their partnership in the fields of military, foreign policy, economics, culture, etc., and push forward the European and Transatlantic integration (Butler & Ostrowski, 2018). Although their primary goal of joining the EU and NATO as full members was successfully achieved by 2004, V4 is still a functioning political entity providing regional states with an additional platform for cooperation in a wide range of issues, including energy (Kochanek, 2021). As Bouzarovski (2009) notes, due to central planning in the Communist era, all V4 nations heavily relied on energy supplies from the Soviet Union and ‘this dependence was married with political power, and cemented through a peculiar spatial-technical fix’ (Bouzarovski, 2009). Keeping tabs on V4 documents is important in the area of diversification because they indicate when the case-study countries, Poland and Hungary, established cooperation in the sector of energy and officially identified diversification as a shared objective to reduce dependence on Russian imports. Challenges in the energy industry brought about by the 2006 gas shortages were not given the attention they deserved and ‘cooperation among V4 countries in energy security before the 2009 gas crisis was basically non-existent, or at best very limited’ (Mišík, 2012, p. 58). Put another way, it was not until the 2009 Russian-Ukrainian gas crisis that the V4 governments stopped sitting on the sidelines and started proactively collaborating to enhance energy security. Each of the regional nations was hit differently, and their responses to the crisis varied as per their dependence level on imported gas. Hungary, for instance, managed to handle the situation and met the gas demand thanks to deliveries from western neighbors, storage withdrawals, and an increase in domestic production, while Poland stayed mostly unaffected since it used to receive Russian gas supplies via Belarus instead of Ukraine (Dąbrowski, 2014). Nonetheless, the magnitude of the threats elevated the topic to the forefront of the political agenda and made it an urgent matter of concern. Therefore, the 2009 gas crisis not only brought to light the challenges of gas supply and the consequences of political developments in transit countries, but also prompted Visegrad member states to act together and start a dialogue about the security of supply and diversification.

Budapest hosted a summit on energy security in a V4+ format on the 24th of February 2010 which marked the beginning of a new era in V4 energy cooperation (Dąbrowski, 2014). It was the first time that concerted attempts were made to turn energy security anxieties and verbal statements into tangible actions and initiatives. Participants signed a Declaration (Declaration of the Budapest V4+ Energy Security Summit) pledging to cooperate to increase gas diversification practices, including the expansion of liquefied natural gas (LNG)

terminals, the buildout of the NETS and Nabucco initiatives, the promotion of the North-South gas corridor and construction of its interconnectors, etc. (Visegrad Group, 2010) This is a major cornerstone of the drive to diversify energy, and it shows the determination and will of regional governments, including Poland and Hungary, to lend a hand to securitize the gas industry. Furthermore, on the 25th of January 2011, another high-level meeting was held in Bratislava where representatives of the V4 group reiterated their commitment to ongoing cooperation in energy security and advanced the North-South corridor concept by proposing particular measures for successful realization (Mišík, 2012). As a result, another Declaration (Declaration of V4 Energy Ministers) was signed striving to boost the supply source and route diversification endeavors by encouraging the expansion of partnership and the establishment of new projects crucial to integrating the Visegrad region with the surrounding areas (Visegrad Group, 2011). Overall, those documents highlight the declaratory consensus among V4 states regarding gas diversification and the urgency to put efforts together to get certain joint projects off the ground. This was the first time the idea of North-South energy corridor was developed which would later be embraced as the Three Seas Initiative's (TSI) primary implementation target. The next part examines how diversification has been incorporated into the aims of another regional platform.

Three Seas Initiative (TSI)

As previously mentioned, energy diversification has received considerable attention in recent years, and achieving this goal has been perceived as an institutional top priority. The countries located between the Adriatic, Black, and Baltic Seas came up with the so-called Three Seas Initiative (TSI) to improve regional energy security and facilitate dialogue while having energy diversification as a pivotal pillar in their security strategy. A joint declaration trumpeting the establishment of the TSI was signed on the 25th of August, 2016 in Dubrovnik (Croatia) by twelve countries, including Poland and Hungary (Three Seas Initiative, 2016). Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that the majority of the participating nations are either former USSR or satellite republics (except for Austria) that historically followed a divergent development path under the supervision of the Kremlin. As Stonis (2021) argues, the current strategic infrastructures in the region mostly run in the East–West direction, with the intent being to link transportation routes and pipelines between the former Soviet Union (now Russia) and Europe (Stonis, 2021). Nowadays, those nations lack an adequate energy and transportation infrastructure connectivity to other EU member states, consequently creating a parallel North-South corridor serves the region's economic and political interests. Furthermore, the gas shortages caused by the disputes between Russia and Ukraine in 2006 and 2009 had a substantial impact on the vast majority of regional states: they have been and continue to be dependent on Russian gas as their primary source due to a shortage of alternative resources which makes them vulnerable (Bieliszczuk, 2017). Undeniably, interest in the TSI, launched by Croatia and Poland, may be attributed in large part to the shared goal of fuel diversification (Borówka, 2020).

The TSI's main objectives are to improve the area's economic development and stability via the expansion of its technological, transportation, energy infrastructures in the North-South direction to forge a more solid

linkage between other regions of the EU, to make it more attractive and favorable to potential investors, to increase competition, to promote integration and partnership among the regional nations in accordance with EU principles, and to strengthen the security of energy supply and routes by intensifying diversification efforts (Three Seas Initiative, 2022). Such measures will ultimately boost not only the region but also the EU as a whole. Each TSI country has independently chosen a subset of projects in which to participate: while certain initiatives require the joint efforts of several countries and aim to meet their demands, others are tailored to the unique requirements of a single country (Stonis, 2021). With that said, large-scale investments and funding from international partners are essential if such ambitious projects are to be put into action. The Three Seas Initiative Investment Fund was set up to serve as a financial mechanism. Additionally, the TSI has piqued the curiosity of both the EU and the US as potential investors, and it has even hosted high-profile leaders, including President Trump, during summits (Pawłuszko, 2021). Overall, the platform is viewed as an additional complementary mechanism of regional collaboration rather than a replacement for existing frameworks, since all of these proposals are consistent with the goal of unifying EU gas markets (Musialek, 2020). Unquestionably, Poland has been one of the most significant driving forces behind the Initiative striving to motivate other regional governments to join the platform for a shared goal and catch the eye of international stakeholders (Soroka & Stępniewski, 2019). When describing the Initiative's role in Hungarian foreign policy, Héjj (2019) argues that the country has gained a reputation of a hesitant partner and 'treats the TSI, much like the V4, instrumentally - as a tool for securing its interests, not in the least business-related' (Héjj, *The Three Seas Initiative in the Foreign Affairs Policy of Hungary*, 2019, p. 130). All told, the specified nations continue to collaborate within the framework of those platforms and are in ongoing negotiations to expand the scope of partnership and diversification efforts. The next section of the research shifts away from the EU and regional policies to instead concentrate on how Poland and Hungary have articulated their gas diversification strategies in their respective national documents.

National level

Hungary

Several official documents will be addressed below that outline the Hungarian government's energy policies and its views on how to enhance national energy security via diversification. The first one that is put under the microscope is the National Security Strategy (NSS). Hungary released the original document in 2012 and was operating under it up until recently (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2012). However, the strategy appeared to be outdated in light of certain developments such as the Russian-Ukrainian war (since 2014 until present), the refugee crisis (2015), the COVID-19 pandemic (2020), etc. As a result, the Hungarian government adopted Resolution 1163/2020 on Hungary's National Security Strategy to revise its policies and rename it 'A Secure Hungary in a Volatile World' (Government of Hungary, 2020). A comparison of the two texts reveals that the notions concerning the energy sector and diversification are not significantly different. Both documents acknowledge Hungary's vulnerability to multiple risks and threats due to its economic

openness and landlocked geographical positioning and agree that establishing security measures requires careful deliberation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2012; Government of Hungary, 2020). The emergence of energy supply crises due to disruptions in imports is one of the 17 challenges/threats highlighted in the updated NSS (Varga, 2021). The latter addresses energy-related issues in several sections, however, points 34, 35, 40, 77, 102, and 155 stress Hungary's heavy dependence on energy imports and shortage of sufficient alternative supply routes and sources, and simultaneously place a premium on diversification as a long-term goal and the most efficient tool to enhance energy security (Government of Hungary, 2020). It also emphasizes Hungary's engagement in infrastructural initiatives leading to EU energy market integration, as well as capturing greater opportunities in the gas sector and increasing the usage of renewable energy sources as potential means of attaining energy sovereignty (Varga, 2021).

The National Energy Strategy 2030 (2012) is an additional key source that elucidates Hungarian policies for energy diversification in an elaborate way (Ministry of National Development, 2012). The 'State of Affairs' chapter and the 'Gas Market' section under the 'Economic Feasibility Study' discuss gas dependence on a single supplier and the urgency to diversify routes and sources (Ibid., 2012). Most importantly, the document acknowledges it is impossible for Hungary to be completely self-sufficient in terms of its energy needs, thus it suggests working toward energy independence to assure an uninterrupted and secure energy supply and find alternative mechanisms to reduce energy dependence (Szlavik & Csete, 2012). While the strategy supports Hungary's commitment to the EU's ambitions in the energy sector, it highlights that 'interests and potentials must be kept in mind when determining the burdens to be undertaken by Hungary concerning the targets for the whole of the European Union' (Ministry of National Development, 2012, p. 25). It also predicts that in the foreseeable future, imports will continue to make up the bulk of Hungary's energy supply, thus increasing supply source diversification via regional partnership with an eye toward infrastructural integration is crucial for weaning Hungary off of its reliance on imported natural gas (Ugródsy & Sándor, 2015). In accordance with the document, Hungary cannot ensure its energy security on its own, consequently, Budapest should ramp up its diversification efforts by working more closely with its immediate neighbors to construct a North-South interconnector networks and connect to LNG terminals, and by participating in the implementation of projects linked to the Southern Gas Corridor (Ministry of National Development, 2012, pp. 26-30). Given Russia's strategically significant role as Hungary's primary energy trading partner, the text emphasizes the need of Budapest's continuing stable relations with the Kremlin (Ibid., 2012, p. 27). With that said, the Hungarian government confirms its short-term dependence on Russian gas and strives to preserve cordial relations with Russia while having in mind diversification of sources as a long-term goal.

As mentioned above, events on a global and regional scale have an impact on the domestic energy market, thus the Hungarian government makes an effort to keep up with the latest developments and adjust its energy policy to the changing realities. The introduction of a new National Energy Strategy 2030 with an Outlook to 2040 (original in Hungarian 'Nemzeti Energiestratégia 2030, Kitekintéssel 2040-ig') in 2020 is yet another step to modify energy policy (Innovációs és Technológiai Minisztérium, 2020). The new NES aims to solidify

energy sovereignty by decarbonizing energy production, decreasing the demand for energy imports, and enhancing connectivity to regional infrastructure networks in order to guarantee competition, a diversified energy portfolio, and reasonable pricing (Ibid., 2020). Getting less dependent on imported energy and increasing the variety of available import sources are the two mainstays of energy independence which is expected to be achieved via extensive diversification of routes and sources (Ibid., p.10). In the case of natural gas, such measures could be deepening partnership with neighboring countries to build interconnectors, reaching the Black Sea to connect to gas hubs, importing LNG from other regions, multiplying the use of gas storage capacity, etc. (Ibid., p.11) This will, according to the strategy, improve the country's bargaining leverage with Russia, the main gas supplier. It also predicts that Hungary's dependence on foreign gas supplies might drop to 70% by 2030 and even lower by 2040 and also envisages at least four gas import infrastructure routes from Western Europe, Romania, Russia, and LNG (Ibid., p.20). As a result, this will encourage competition for the lowest possible gas price. The document also anticipates that as of 2021 Russian gas will commence flowing from the south in addition to the existing route via Ukraine necessitating the expansion of infrastructures. All in all, as expressed in those documents, Hungary is committed to revitalizing its gas market and diversifying supplies and infrastructures via several routes and the increase of collaboration with neighboring states. While Budapest is aiming towards energy independence, it is crucial to maintain cordial relations with its principal gas partner, Russia, since the country is landlocked and has few alternatives at hand.

Poland

In order to detect diversification approaches in the Polish domestic political discourse, two documents are analyzed. National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (2020) is the starting point: the document replaces the 2014 NSS and addresses topics pertaining to the most recent global trends and challenges (Government of Poland, 2020). It is a holistic framework that takes into account every dimension of Poland's security and indicates certain mechanisms to strengthen them. It is important to note that in the 'Security Environment' section of the document, Russia's neo-imperial ambitions are highlighted as the greatest threat to European security (Government of Poland, 2020, p. 6). Furthermore, in the same segment, it is also stated that the Polish, CEE, and Balkan markets are excessively dependent on Russian fossil fuels (including gas), and the lack of sufficient infrastructures and underutilization of storage capabilities are major obstacles to energy security (Ibid., p. 8). The latter is more thoroughly discussed in the final Pillar (IV) under the 'Social and Economic Development. Environment Protection' title. The majority of the outlined measures here to bolster the energy sector are consistent with the objective of diversification. The strategy calls for enhancing import capacities of the Świnoujście LNG terminal and other storage and transmission facilities, establishing new access points via the construction of the Baltic Pipe (from Norway to Poland) and the Gdańsk LNG terminal, maintaining engagement in the North-South infrastructure projects of the Three Seas Initiative to achieve the desired diversity in the gas industry (Ibid., p. 34). Interestingly, it also urges to keep using

diplomatic channels to prevent the progress of any infrastructure project aiming to expand the CEE countries' reliance on Russian gas (Ibid., p. 34).

Another key document that helps to unfold the Polish diversification plans is the Energy Policy of Poland until 2040 (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2021). As no exception, this strategy has also been adjusted to account for how developments and challenges in the international arena affect the domestic energy market. As noted in the abstract, the Policy provides all the necessary parameters and tools for the country's energy transformation and strengthening energy security in line with the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement (Ibid., pp. 5-6). It establishes a total of eight specific objectives to meet the state criteria for the energy transition. While Objectives 1, 4, 5, and 6 briefly reference diversification as an auxiliary instrument to execute particular goals in a certain category, Objective 3 is entirely dedicated to gas and oil diversification endeavors and infrastructural projects (Ibid., pp. 33-41). It is noted here, that the shortage of alternative gas routes and overdependence on a single gas provider (Russia) have stunted price competition and increased possibilities of political pressure, that is why diversification is seen as the only way out of the situation. The strategy overall repeats the same measures outlined in the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (2020) to diversify the gas market providing a more detailed description. Therefore, it is unnecessary to present them in this paragraph again. In addition, the Policy asserts that Poland has already taken certain steps to safeguard the gas supply toward the end of 2022 when the Russian-Polish gas deal (Yamal) expires and highlights the importance of contractual diversification in addition to the infrastructural one. Evidently, the country's advantageous geographical location and access to the sea have been crucial in its diversification efforts (Ibid., pp. 34-35). Poland, in contrast to Hungary, benefits from a more favorable geographical position, making it possible to diversify gas supplies and routes more rapidly and drastically. The dedication and drive outlined in those official documents are already bearing fruit in the form of significant moves toward gas market diversification. What progress has been made by these two nations and how exactly the gas markets are regulated by the governments are discussed in the next chapter.

Summary

The aim of this chapter was to illustrate the strategic commitments and political will expressed by Poland and Hungary to diversify their gas routes and sources by analyzing official documentation pertaining to energy (gas) diversification at the EU, regional, and national levels. The section sheds light on the following legally binding documents at the EU level: Treaty of Lisbon (European Union, 2007), Directive 2009/73/EC (European Parliament and the Council, 2009), Directive 2019/692 (European Parliament and the Council, 2019), Energy 2020 - A Strategy for Competitive, Sustainable and Secure Energy (European Commission, 2010), Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 (European Parliament and the Council, 2013), European Energy Security Strategy (European Commission, 2014), 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework (European Council, 2014), Energy Union Package (European Commission, 2015), Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015), European Green Deal (European Commission, 2019), Regulation 2017/1938 (European Parliament and the

Council, 2017), Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Parliament and the Council, 2018). It is important to note that Poland and Hungary are obliged to comply with and implement all of the gas sector regulations and diversification strategies outlined in those documents. In order to emphasize the shared aspirations of Poland and Hungary to pursue gas diversification at the regional level, the Declaration of the Budapest V4+ Energy Security Summit (Visegrad Group, 2010), the Declaration of V4 Energy Ministers (Visegrad Group, 2011), Dubrovnik Declaration (Statement) (Three Seas Initiative, 2016) are analyzed since they coordinate their gas relations only within the V4 and TSI platforms. The two organizations have established a number of mechanisms and infrastructural projects to jointly achieve gas diversification and integrate the CEE into larger European gas networks. And lastly, to evaluate the gas diversification policies of case-specific countries at the national level the chapter explores nuances of the national security/energy strategies of Poland and Hungary. Namely, National Security Strategy (Hungary) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2012), A Secure Hungary in a Volatile World (Government of Hungary, 2020), The National Energy Strategy 2030 (Hungary) (Ministry of National Development, 2012), National Energy Strategy 2030 with an Outlook to 2040 (Hungary) (Innovációs és Technológiai Minisztérium, 2020), National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (2020) (Government of Poland, 2020), Energy Policy of Poland until 2040 (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2021) are examined. While both governments acknowledge their vulnerabilities owing to a shortage of alternative resources and infrastructures, they have made energy (gas) diversification a central tenet of their respective policies and laid out detailed agendas for accomplishing this goal. Although Hungary and Poland share certain common diversification strategies, each country's specificities have had and will have a profound impact on the evolution of the gas market: geographical location and access to additional resources are among them. Furthermore, Poland sees the geopolitical revisionism of Russia as a threat and has mapped out a strategy to become entirely independent from Russian gas, while Hungary aims at keeping its energy partnership with the Kremlin and to continue using Russian gas in the foreseeable future. These are the most salient discrepancies gleaned from the official documentation which provide a springboard for further research into the identification of the factors leading to diverging energy policies.

Synopsis of the primary sources used in the analysis:

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|------------------------|---|
| <p>EU level</p> | <p>Treaty of Lisbon (European Union, 2007), Directive 2009/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (European Parliament and the Council, 2009), Energy 2020 - A Strategy for Competitive, Sustainable and Secure Energy (2010) (European Commission, 2010), Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (European Parliament and the Council, 2013), the 2014 European Energy Security Strategy (European</p> |
|------------------------|---|

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| | Commission, 2014), Energy Union Package (European Commission, 2015), Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015), Regulation 2017/1938 of the European Parliament and of The Council (2017) (European Parliament and the Council, 2017), Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council (European Parliament and the Council, 2018), the European Green Deal (European Parliament and the Council, 2019). |
| Regional level | The Declaration of the Budapest V4+ Energy Security Summit (Visegrad Group, 2010), Declaration of V4 Energy Ministers (Visegrad Group, 2011), the Dubrovnik Declaration (Three Seas Initiative, 2016). |
| National level | National Security Strategy 2012 of Hungary (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2012), the Resolution 1163/2020 on Hungary's National Security Strategy (Government of Hungary, 2020), the National Energy Strategy of Hungary 2030 (2012) (Ministry of National Development, 2012), National Energy Strategy 2030 with an Outlook to 2040 (Innovációs és Technológiai Minisztérium, 2020), National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland (2020) (Government of Poland, 2020), Energy Policy of Poland until 2040 (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2021). |

CHAPTER III. Differences in the implementation of gas diversification in Hungary and Poland

In what follows, gas diversification implementation efforts from 2014 through 2021 undertaken by the Hungarian and Polish governments are examined in this chapter. To be more specific, the first part of the study centers on the Hungarian infrastructure projects that aim to diversify the country's natural gas imports. The importance of gas in the domestic/foreign politics of Hungary is also highlighted, and the discussion is expanded to examine the role of the ruling Fidesz party in those processes. The second part of the analysis follows the same logic and focuses on the achievements of Poland in its gas diversification strategy while evaluating PO and PiS parties' contribution to the gas sector and pending developments. The purpose of this chapter is to examine Poland's and Hungary's determination to diversify not merely the routes but also the sources of their imports by exploring the nuances and tactics of gas diversification implementation in each country. This section also details the progress they have made so far in their quest to replace Russian gas and conform to the EU's overarching ambitions to reduce dependence on Gazprom and find alternative partners.

Hungary's gas diversification efforts and the policy of the Hungarian government (2014-2021)

Ever since the gas dispute broke out between Moscow and Kyiv, the Hungarian government's attempts to diversify the gas market have been noticeable. Directly impacted, Hungary was forced to adjust its energy strategy accounting for the changing geopolitical landscape. According to Kaderják's (2009) analysis of the 2009 gas crisis, Hungary was severely affected by the 13-day disruption, resulting in a loss of 30 mcm gas daily and an overall €70 million financial damage (Kaderják, 2009). Although the government managed to handle the situation by making use of strategic storage, switching to alternative fuels and calling on the public to conserve gas, the given crisis also exposed Hungary's vulnerabilities and the shortcomings of its infrastructure (Ibid., 2009). Hungary has made significant efforts to diversify not only the routes but also its gas sources, nonetheless those initiatives have mostly backfired. The Nabucco pipeline (set to carry gas from the Caspian, Middle Eastern, Central Asian regions to Europe), and the South Stream pipeline (a rival project to Nabucco), are two examples (Ámon & Deák, 2015; Tamás, 2021). Due to economic and geopolitical calculations, Nabucco was scrapped in 2013 in favor of developing the Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) (Dempsey, 2013). Despite Hungary's backing, the EU's Third Energy Package principles were alternated by the South Stream pipeline project: this, together with sanctions imposed on Russia for the Crimea annexation caused Russia to terminate it in late 2014 (BBC, 2014). The abandonment of once-promising gigantic projects such as Nabucco and South Stream has significantly contributed to the rise of regional cooperation and the search for alternatives in the immediate neighborhood (Szőke, 2018).

Hungary's commitment to hasten gas diversification processes was reinforced by the aforementioned political turmoil surrounding Ukraine in 2014. Reduced demand for Russian gas and increased energy imports from the West would make the initial steps toward diversification feasible. The development of interconnectors with almost all bordering states was in line with Budapest's proactive response to diversify the sector (Langvad, 2017). As a part of the North-South Corridor, the 113-kilometer-long Slovak-Hungarian

interconnector has been operational since 2015 and has played a significant role in Hungary's endeavors to construct alternative gas routes to circumvent Ukrainian transit pipelines and secure its energy supply (Hydrocarbons Technology, 2015; EURACTIV with Reuters, 2015). Since 2016, the Arad-Szeged pipeline, (originally launched in 2010 with a limited capacity), has been expanded to serve as a strategic interconnector between Romania and Hungary (4.5 bcm annual capacity), to reduce the latter's reliance on Russian gas and link the Hungarian market to broader European gas networks (Hydrocarbons Technology, 2016). While Plinacro has been in charge of the Croatian leg of the Croatian-Hungarian Interconnection Gas since it became functional in 2011 (Offshore Technology, 2021), the reverse flow was not activated until 2020 (Plinacro, 2020). In terms of Austria, gas has been transported to Hungary via the Hungaria-Austria-Gasleitung (HAG) pipeline since 1996, when an agreement was reached with the Baumgarten gas hub (Anadolu Agency, 2016). Another important cross-border interconnector between Serbia and Hungary has been functional since 2021, enabling natural gas transit via the TurkStream (regulated by the Russian Gazprom) with maximum 8.5 bcm gas flow annually (Ralev, 2021). Moreover, Hungary is now a part of the Southern Gas Corridor, a network of gas pipelines that also incorporates the Trans-Anatolian (TANAP) and Trans-Adriatic (TAP) pipelines. Hungary could join the Southern Gas Corridor by an interconnector linking to the Greek-Bulgarian-Serbian gas grids and may gain access to the Azeri gas no earlier than 2023-2024 (Reuters, 2019; ACE Group Consultants, 2021).

A momentous development in Hungary's gas industry occurred on the 27th of September 2021, when the Hungarian government signed a new gas contract with Russia, ensuring an annual supply of 4.5 bcm to be delivered through new and additional import routes (RFE/RL's Hungarian Service, 2021). Once piped in via the Ukrainian-Hungarian border hub, gas is now transited through Serbia (the Serbo-Hungarian connecting pipeline and TurkStream) and Austria (Héjj, Consistent Increase in Hungary's Energy Dependence on Russia, 2021). As Héjj (2021) notes in his report, the efforts made by Hungary to broaden its access to natural gas have been simulative for the most part: the country's failure to import gas from a variety of sources and boost its natural gas output has forced it to rely more heavily on Russian imports (Ibid., 2021). Last but not least, it is important to highlight the only initiative Hungary has put toward source diversification so far. In 2021, Krk LNG Terminal in Croatia signed long-term contracts with two Hungarian state-owned firms (MET and Hungarian Gas Trade Ltd), solidifying Hungary's position as Krk's primary customer receiving 250 mcm for the following 7 years (Embassy of Hungary Washington, D.C., 2020). For Hungary, this deal with Shell marks the first ever long-term gas agreement with a western corporation (Hungary Today, 2021). The priority the Hungarian government gives to its cooperation in Krk LNG is shown by the country's new National Energy Strategy (MVM CEEnergy Zrt., 2021). Natural gas imports into landlocked Hungary have diversified in recent years as the country has established cross-border interconnectors with the majority of its neighbors and secured gas agreements, including one with Shell through a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Croatia. Until signing the Shell contract, Hungary's natural gas imports came exclusively from Russia via Ukraine (Reuters, 2021).

Once Fidesz came to power in 2010, the party was voicing opposition to energy privatization policies: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán identified energy as one of the most strategically significant areas to re-impose stronger national regulations by taking dominating positions over foreign companies (Sadecki, 2014). The fact that Hungary is resource-poor and heavily reliant on energy imports compelled Hungarian public opinion to believe that energy security could only be ensured and consumers protected from excessive price inflation if the government played a more active role in the market (Isaacs & Molnar, 2017). While most of the energy companies had been privatized in the 1990s by the previous post-Communist governments, the incumbent Fidesz party was striving to reclaim control over the energy sector which led to the effective renationalization of the gas industry by the end of 2013 (Voszka, 2018). In other words, Fidesz used the 2010-2013 period to transform the energy sector from private and competitive into re-nationalized and centralized ownership. In particular, the gas industry has become highly politicized as a result of the state-owned MVM company's acquisition of exclusive rights from E.ON to carry out negotiations and forge international deals without the engagement of private or foreign companies (Sadecki, 2014, p. 39).

It is worth noting that Fidesz and Russia were also undergoing a crucial transformation in their relations during this period. Once an outspoken opponent of the Russian Federation, Orbán has become one of Moscow's most vociferous advocates (Langvad, 2017). He introduced 'Eastern Opening' in 2010, which, in a nutshell, is a foreign policy orientation designed to enhance trade cooperation, particularly with Russia, China and other East Asian markets (Végh, 2015). This is when his 'U-turn' toward Russia can be clearly traced laying the groundwork for a deeper partnership with the Kremlin (Buzogány, 2017). Overall, this shift is a result of Orbán's nationalist and populist policy, and his pivot towards Russia has substantial economic underpinnings since the party's foreign policy is heavily influenced by economic interests and pragmatic foreign policy (Müller & Gazsi, 2022). It came as no surprise when the Hungarian Foreign Ministry was renamed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to better accommodate the role of commerce in the new direction of foreign policy. One of the earliest accomplishments of the new era in Russian-Hungarian energy cooperation was marked in 2014 when Hungary signed a major contract (Paks deal) with Rosatom to construct two new nuclear blocs (Sáfián, 2015).

Another aspect worth emphasizing is the impact of Russian gas and its price on Hungarian domestic politics. As mentioned earlier, Hungary's hopes for gas diversification from megaprojects ended in disappointment, prompting the government to instead prioritize maintaining and strengthening its existing cordial partnership with Gazprom as the only reliable supplier and keeping energy prices low for the wider population (Ámon & Deák, 2015). By the end of 2013, Gazprom had already implemented price reductions for the LTC, and with the finalization of the Paks agreement in early 2014, Gazprom enacted more concessions under the contract's take-or-pay measures (Müller & Gazsi, 2022). As a consequence of these efforts, the gas price was significantly lowered, reducing the burden on the national budget, and providing Fidesz with a chance to gain the popular vote in the forthcoming 2014 parliamentary elections (Politico, 2020). In other words, the gas campaign became central to the Fidesz party's agenda, and the pledge of affordable utility rates was used to

great effect in the party's effort to win over supporters and to convince them that favorable partnership with Russia guarantees an uninterrupted flow of cheap gas to the country. Meanwhile, the decline in LNG prices and its overproduction owing to the Covid-19 pandemic are the reasons for importing LNG from Croatia via the Shell deal (Elliott, 2020). Aside from that, Russia is still Hungary's primary gas supplier, and that is not likely to change anytime soon.

Poland's gas diversification efforts and the role of the Polish governments (2014-2021)

Similarly to Hungary, Poland also faced damages by the gas crises of 2006 and 2009 which profoundly changed the course of the country's energy security strategy. While Russian gas imports into Poland via the Drozdowicze station (at the Polish-Ukrainian border) decreased by 14% in 2006 and 16% in 2009, demand was mostly covered thanks to the supplies through the Yamal pipeline (via Belarus) and withdrawal from storages (Posaner, 2020, pp. 112-114). Although not as devastating as in Hungary, these events accelerated governmental efforts to arrive at energy independence from Russia. To ensure the success of gas diversification initiatives, Poland used the period following those crises to boost its gas security and lay the foundation for key megaprojects. The advancement of transmission capacities of the Lasów hub at the Polish-German border, the establishment of a reversible system for the Yamal pipeline from Germany to Poland, as well as the buildout of the Cieszyn interconnector with the Czech Republic, and the construction of the Świnoujście LNG terminal, are all examples of notable achievements in the period from 2009 to 2014 (Młynarski, 2016). Furthermore, one of Poland's top priorities was securing short and long-term LNG contracts with new suppliers to minimize Russian gas in the energy mix (PGNiG, 2016; Weiner, 2019). In 2009, a 20-year deal was reached with Qatar's Qatargas to begin receiving LNG shipments as of 2014 (although the first carrier arrived in 2016) and volumes were doubled from 1 to 2 mtpa by contract amendments in 2017 (PGNiG, 2016; Reuters, 2017). Additional 20-year contracts were signed in 2018 with several American companies: the Venture Global subsidiaries - Plaquemines and Calcasieu Pass to buy 2 mtpa of LNG (Venture Global LNG, 2018), Port Arthur LNG for 2 mtpa (PGNiG, 2018), and a 24-year contract with Cheniere Marketing International LLP for 0.52 mtpa (PGNiG, 2018). PGNiG's website also provides information about certain spot purchases and short-term deals with other LNG exporters. For instance, a 5-year contract was signed with Centrica (USA) in 2017 (PGNiG, 2017), a deal with Statoil (Norway) in 2017 for an LNG cargo to be shipped (PGNiG, 2017), a 2-year agreement with LOTOS (Norway) in 2019 (PGNiG, 2019), etc.

By allowing gas to flow in several directions along the North-South Gas Corridor, the completion of the Świnoujście LNG terminal at the end of 2015 ushered in a new era aiming to become a major game-changer in the gas diversification endeavors and vastly revolutionize the market (Hebda, 2021; International Energy Agency, 2017). The Corridor is not only of strategic importance to Poland but to the EU as a whole, as its expansion will allow breaking the Soviet East-West infrastructure system in Central European countries by linking to other LNG terminals, pipeline grids and interconnectors (Weiner, 2019). The Baltic Pipe, an

infrastructural project linking Poland to Denmark and Norway, is another ground-breaking initiative. In 2017, Gaz-System (Poland) and Energinet (Denmark) - two primary stakeholders, signed a deal committing to build the pipeline, which is a part of the North-South Gas Corridor project, with the financial assistance from the European Commission (Górski, 2020; Voytyuk, 2022). With that said, the northern part of the project, comprising the Świnoujście LNG terminal and the Baltic Pipe, is of vital importance to Poland with the objective of replacing Russian gas imports by 2022 (Weiner, 2019; Kamola-Cieślak, 2020). While PGNiG and Gaz-System (TSO) are the main state-owned entities regulating the sector, PGNiG has got the lion's share to manage gas contracts, negotiations, imports, to handle logistics and other technical arrangements (International Energy Agency, 2017; Weiner, 2019). PGNiG signed its first deal with Gazprom (the Yamal contract) in 1996 which was prolonged until 2022 (International Energy Agency, 2022). This agreement, however, was disadvantageous for Poland because it tied the country to an annual 10-11 bcm gas purchase at a price single-handedly set by Gazprom (Notes from Poland, 2019). Interestingly, their partnership has not been the easiest: over the past several years, gas pricing disagreements have escalated into a number of lawsuits (Weiner, 2018). In 2020, for instance, Poland succeeded in an arbitration case against Gazprom (The Warsaw Institute Review, 2020). PGNiG, having ensured sufficient alternative gas supplies, announced in 2019 that it would not be extending the LTC with Gazprom beyond 2022 and would ultimately terminate it (PGNiG, 2019).

As already mentioned, the CEE countries have been heavily reliant on Russian gas deliveries owing to their historical ties. As a central part of the region, Poland has developed a strategic path toward ultimate energy sovereignty, primarily through gas diversification initiatives, nonetheless, those efforts varied in form and intensity depending on the domestic/foreign policy agenda of the ruling party. From 2007 Prime Minister Donald Tusk presided over the country as the leader of the majority governing Civic Platform (PO) party (Markowski, 2008). Despite the above-mentioned achievements until the end of their office (2014), Civic Platform made crucial decisions on the energy industry and foreign policy that would have profound effects on successor governments (Kowalski, 2017). Specifically, the PO had frozen progress on the Norwegian pipeline, slowed down the completion of the LNG terminal in Świnoujście, showed little to no resistance to the Nord Stream project, and, in 2010, prolonged the LTC with Gazprom, obligating Poland to receive Russian gas until 2022 (Ibid., 2017). However, following the victory in the 2015 parliamentary elections, right-wing populist PiS party has had sway over Polish politics ever since and has taken a pivotal role for boosting energy security not only in Poland but also beyond its borders with the goal of minimizing the region's dependence on Russian gas (Żuk & Szulecki, 2020). It was anticipated that with PiS in power, the energy industry would come under greater government control (Szulecki & Ancygier, 2015). Prime Minister of Poland at the time, Beata Szydło, reinstated and intensified the execution of the diversification initiatives in cooperation with the President Andrzej Duda (Kowalski, 2017). Revived construction of the Norwegian (Baltic) pipeline, the opening of the Świnoujście LNG terminal in 2016, and, most importantly, the announcement of the Yamal Contract termination after 2022 have all revitalized endeavors to end Russia's stranglehold on the CEE and

Polish gas markets (Weiner, 2019). PiS may claim credit for the previously discussed four long-term LNG contracts as well signed between the state-owned PGNiG and Qatar/US (Polityka Insight, 2019). As noted by Balcer (2020), Russia's proportion of imports has dropped significantly under the rule of PiS, and this decline is expected to persist (Balcer, 2020). Another important contribution to the gas diversification efforts has been made by the incumbent government in the face of the President Duda by playing a leading role in the creation of the TSI platform aiming to improve energy infrastructure and extend the regional cooperation among 12 EU countries (Kafkadesk Kraków Office, 2022). With that said, PiS party has prioritized geopolitical goals in its economic policymaking with an emphasis on infrastructural development and establishment of cooperation with worldwide partners to make Poland a regional powerhouse and an energy hub (Ryzak, 2020). Additionally, the current Polish authorities are highly concerned that the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline would compromise the regional energy security (Reuters, 2019; EURACTIV, 2020). Therefore, the Polish government has undertaken a number of initiatives to minimize its dependence on Russian gas supplies, and has repeatedly voiced its opposition to the project, arguing that it would only serve to bolster Gazprom's already dominating position and views it as a threat to its national security (Pipeline Technology Journal, 2021). Overall, the PiS party has a record of rhetorically challenging Russia, and on the basis of memory politics and presence of historical references in their political discourse they have been constructing political/energy relationships with the Kremlin (Siddi, 2020; Jaskulowski & Majewski, 2022). The perceptions of Russia's neo-imperial agenda as a threat is also reflected in the latest National Security Strategy of Poland (Government of Poland, 2020). Undoubtedly, the Smolensk presidential plane crash tragedy in 2010 has had a profound impact on further development of the Polish-Russian relations as well (Janke, 2020). Thus, Poland's determination to seek out political and economic partnership outside of the immediate neighborhood stems from a number of factors, including the gas crises of 2006/2009, unreliability of Russia as an energy supplier, the events in Ukraine in 2014 and beyond, the increasing tensions and threat of growing Russian influence in the region, certain historical memories that also come into play etc. The current Polish administration, which is making great strides toward energy independence and becoming a regional hub, claims that the country has had a great deal of success with its gas diversification efforts thus far and has multiple options to make up for the gas it would no longer receive from Russia (Hillebrand, 2022).

Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to shed light on the accomplishments Poland and Hungary made in gas diversification over the specified period of the thesis (2014-2021). While the 2006/2009 Russian-Ukrainian gas crises were critical in forcing a shift in energy policy both in Warsaw and Budapest, the magnitude and efforts toward gas diversification varied widely across the two nations. Despite being landlocked and having limited infrastructural resources, Hungary has effectively diversified its gas routes, established interconnectors with neighboring states to obtain the same Russian gas bypassing the Ukrainian territory, and prolonged the LTC with Gazprom until 2036. The agreement with Shell to import LNG from Croatia is the only initiative to purchase gas from a different provider. As argued above, Fidesz deftly used the 'gas card' during elections to

convince voters that they could maintain low prices for the commodity in a long run and, on top of all, a stable partnership with Moscow would be to the country's advantage.

Poland, on the other hand, has taken the lead to diversify its energy supply and is working toward the status of a regional gas hub. It has not only been able to effectively diversify its gas routes, build an LNG terminal, and import gas from the United States and Qatar, but it has also made substantial efforts to construct a pipeline linking the country to Norway through Denmark. Warsaw also revealed its intentions to discontinue the LTC with Gazprom and cease getting Russian gas after 2022. It is noteworthy that the current Polish government and the PiS party, which has a majority in the parliament, also deserve credit for their endeavors to upgrade the country's gas infrastructure through the establishment of closer partner relations with neighboring countries. Over the years, the party's leadership has come to view Russia as a major threat to national security and has taken an increasingly assertive position toward the imperialist ambitions of Moscow. Among key factors that have affected the stance and relations of the Polish authorities with Russia one needs to emphasize the previous gas crises, the Smolensk incident, the 2014 annexation of Crimea and developments around Ukraine, Russia's growing aggressive foreign policy, the Nord Stream 2 project and its implications on regional security, etc.

CHAPTER IV. Discussion: comparative analysis

The final chapter of the thesis offers a comparative perspective on discrepancies between formally declared policy alignment and actual practice of gas diversification by providing a wider picture of trends in the gas sectors of Poland and Hungary in light of recent regional developments based on existing literature and textual analysis of relevant official documents. This chapter, overall, addresses the main research question of the dissertation, including its sub-questions, and culminates in the dissertation's concluding remarks. Several key elements and factors, explained in detail in previous sections, form the foundation of the comparative analysis. The thesis' discussion of several EU-level documents and international treaties that legally bind Poland and Hungary to achieve the common objectives in the field is intended to demonstrate the formal unanimity between the two countries on gas diversification policies. Furthermore, Warsaw's and Budapest's stated desire to cooperate towards gas diversification issues is supported by the declarations and ambitions of regional organizations such as the Visegrad Four and the Three Seas Initiative. In contrast, the energy and national security strategies of the case study countries, as well as the implementation and accomplishments in gas diversification initiatives have been evaluated, together with the role of ruling parties and incumbent governments to demonstrate policy inconsistencies in practice.

To illustrate empirically the declaratory consensus Poland and Hungary have achieved, it is essential to briefly touch upon the following points:

- Although the period covered by the thesis spans from 2014 till 2021, it was necessary to include certain documents from previous years in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the gas diversification strategies and common goals of Poland and Hungary. First and foremost, the Treaty of Lisbon (European Union, 2007) has drawn a great deal of attention since it is one of the primary sources for the concept of shared competence, which keeps EU member states free to take variety of measures in the energy sector to work toward a common objective. Poland and Hungary would sign a plethora of agreements in such a context, and they would make decisions on how to achieve those goals based on their national interests - independently of one another. Similarly, EU institutions would develop policies that Poland and Hungary, as member states, would be obligated to adhere to and incorporate them into the respective national strategies. Aiming to liberalize the market and diminish the EU's reliance on Russian gas through diversification, the Third Energy Package was introduced in 2009 (European Union, 2009), together with its supporting Directive 2009/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on 13 July 2009 (European Parliament and the Council, 2009) which presented a direct response to the 2009 gas crisis. Similar goals can be identified in the Energy 2020 - A Strategy for Competitive, Sustainable and Secure Energy (European Commission, 2010), along with The Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2013 (European Parliament and the Council, 2013).

- The 2014 European Energy Security Strategy (European Commission, 2014) and the 2015 Energy Union Package (European Commission, 2015) could both be seen as significant contributions to diversification policy in response to turbulent geopolitical environment of the EU and its immediate neighborhood as a result of Russia's annexation of the Crimea and its hybrid warfare in Eastern Ukraine. Another essential policy document that needs to be taken into account here is the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015) which makes energy diversification a central component. While Regulations 2017/1938 (European Parliament and the Council, 2017) and 2018/1999 (European Parliament and the Council, 2018) of the European Parliament and Council incorporate the diversification principles outlined in the Energy Security Strategy (2014), Directive 2019/692 of the European Parliament and Council of 17 April 2019 (European Parliament and the Council, 2019) brings in new rules and pathways for attaining gas diversification and regulating relations with third-party suppliers. It is also crucial to underline the European Green Deal's (European Commission, 2019) significance in promoting energy diversification and the acknowledgment of the latter as a key value. That being said, Poland and Hungary are signatories to these official documents and hence are bound to follow the guidelines set out therein.
- Furthermore, Poland and Hungary have officially committed themselves to jointly contribute at the regional level to diversify their gas markets via measures such as infrastructure expansion, the construction of LNG terminals, increased collaboration with alternative suppliers, etc. Both the Declaration of the Budapest V4+ Energy Security Summit signed by the Visegrad nations in 2010 (Visegrad Group, 2010) and the 2016 Dubrovnik inaugural statement of the Three Seas Initiative (Three Seas Initiative, 2016) uncover such objectives and determination by Warsaw and Budapest.

Despite the converging goals of the gas diversification policy, it needs to be emphasized that there were several factors that predetermined the course of energy policy in each country, which, in turn, resulted in growing divergences. A thorough analysis of the energy strategies of Poland and Hungary shows that geographical location has had a major impact on diversification efforts. While access to the sea gives Poland the privilege to widely expand the range of energy partners from all over the world, build LNG terminals at the seashore and put together colossal underwater projects (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2021), Hungary's landlocked location and shortage of alternatives limit the country's opportunities to merely adjusting to short-term diversification projects and planning on transformations in the long run (Ministry of National Development, 2012; Innováció és Technológiai Minisztérium, 2020). Another crucial factor to consider is diverging status and perception of Russia's impact on respectively Poland's and Hungary's national security strategies. While Poland views Russia as a revisionist power and an immediate threat to national and international security both in the CEE region and the EU (Government of Poland, 2020), Hungary unhesitatingly proclaims that Russia has been and will continue to be the country's major partner in several fields, including energy, and that retaining cordial relations with the Kremlin is of strategic importance (Government of Hungary, 2020). Since the 2006/2009 gas crises should have prompted decision-makers to

carefully consider a further partnership with Moscow, it has also been very critical to look back and analyze the reactions in each country and the subsequent development of bilateral relations with Russia. Poland has taken steps toward energy independence by progressively securitizing against Russia and laying the groundwork for large-scale diversification initiatives to increase cooperation with international partners and decrease economic-political engagement with Russia (Żuk & Szulecki, 2020). Hungary, on the other hand, was left with no viable alternatives to meet its domestic gas demands after the failure of South Stream and Nabucco projects (Szóke, 2018). Consequently, Budapest opted to strengthen partnership with Russia instead within the parameters of its 'Eastern Opening' policy and safeguard the existing platforms of cooperation with Moscow in order to stabilize the country's gas market and avert potential risks (Végh, 2015). Against this backdrop, the implementation of diversification initiatives in the respective countries has taken various forms. Hungary has mostly diversified its gas routes via the construction of interconnectors with neighbors to obtain the same Russian gas and bypass the territory of Ukraine (Héjj, Consistent Increase in Hungary's Energy Dependence on Russia, 2021), with the most recent contract with Croatia to import LNG being the only exception (Hungary Today, 2021). Counter to this, not only has Poland diversified its gas transit infrastructures, but also it has extended the list of suppliers, including those from Qatar, the US, and Norway (Weiner, 2019). Furthermore, the enormous and decisive weight of ruling parties and governments in efforts to diversify the gas market is clearly evident. Since the early 2010s, the Fidesz party's foreign policy has taken a decidedly pro-Russian stance, ostensibly out of economic necessity and pragmatism (Müller & Gazsi, 2022). In parallel, the transition from the PO to the PiS party in Poland resulted in an increase in the number of measures aimed at reducing Russia's presence in its economy and taking the lead in coordinating efforts of regional countries to improve infrastructure connectivity and counter Moscow's influence (Żuk & Szulecki, 2020). The intentions over the LTCs with Gazprom also reflect divergent attitudes toward Russia: Hungary prolonged the contract with Gazprom for the next 15 years in 2021 (Reuters, 2021), while Poland unveiled its plan to terminate the deal after 2022 (PGNiG, 2019). Importantly, the Polish and Hungarian gas companies involved in those LTCs and negotiations with Gazprom are state-owned, meaning that all decisions are made compatible with and in the self-interests of the respective governments (Deák & Ámon, 2015; Polityka Insight, 2019). As already observed, Fidesz has been successful in remaining in power by appealing to the hearts of Hungarian voters thanks to, among other things, its close ties with the Russian political elite, advantageous contract terms, and the 'cheaper gas card' (Posaner, 2020). PiS, opposed to this, has intensified its policy of geopolitical containment of Russia and its monopoly on gas supply by reducing any form of dependency on it by using memory politics, emphasizing traumas relevant in their agenda and the growing concerns emanating from the Ukraine crisis (Hillebrand, 2022) and risks the Nord Stream 2 project poses to the region (Pipeline Technology Journal, 2021). In addition, the party has been eager to highlight Poland's latest achievements as evidence of its potential to become a regional gas hub and energy giant (Ryzak, 2020).

Largely, those are the elements identified in this thesis in pursuit of answering the primary research question: **despite declaratory consensus over European energy security policy and diversification objectives, what**

factors contribute to the increasingly diverging implementation approaches between Poland and Hungary? In a nutshell, geographical location and access to alternative resources are seen to have a key role in shaping diversification policies. Prioritizing different aspects of diversification (routes, sources) have also been influenced by factors such as threat perceptions and the quality of bilateral relations with Russia. Moreover, in light of recent geopolitical transformations in the region, the significance of the ruling parties/governments in Poland and Hungary and the extent of their involvement have undoubtedly affected the diversification implementation tactics and the determination to dis/continue partnership with Russia. Finally, the relevance of geopolitical, economic, and historical considerations in both domestic and foreign policies has also been highlighted to illustrate their importance in formulating diversification strategies.

Synopsis of the findings (factors) leading to diverging energy policies:

- Geographical location and access to alternatives resources,
- Threat perceptions and strategic status of bilateral relations with Russia,
- Focus on different aspects of gas diversification (routes, sources),
- Role of the ruling parties/governments and the extent of their engagement,
- Willingness to dis/continue partnership with Russia in light of recent geopolitical shifts in the region,
- The impact of Russian gas in domestic and foreign policies,
- Geopolitical, economic, historical considerations.

CONCLUSION

This thesis' major aim was to offer a time-relevant comparative analysis on the gas diversification policies of two Central European countries - Poland and Hungary. Firstly, it provides a state-of-the-art of the main research concepts - energy (inter)dependence, energy security, and energy diversification to demonstrate the logical interconnection and cause-and-effect linkage among these three elements. Poland and Hungary, both former Communist satellites with centrally planned economies and strong ties to the USSR, used to be a transit zone for the East-West flow of Soviet (Russian) gas into Europe. The extensive infrastructure network created for this purpose would leave the specified countries gas dependent after the fall of Communism. According to the study's findings, the gas shortages of 2006 and 2009, precipitated by disputes between Russia and Ukraine, as well as Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and its growing geopolitical aspirations in the region, were major catalysts for the acceleration of gas diversification initiatives and the reduction of the portion of Russian gas in the energy mix aimed at bolstering energy security. The literature review indicates that the trends in the energy sector and particularly the gas diversification policies of the case study countries are commensurate with the tenets of the securitization theory put forward by the scholars of the Copenhagen School. Energy has become a key security issue in both nations, prompting them to prioritize diversification measures and take proper steps to address the challenging geopolitical developments.

To explain the formal alignment and willingness of the two countries to diversify their gas markets, the research continues with a discussion of relevant strategies, directives, regulations and international agreements that have legally bound Poland and Hungary, as EU member states and regional actors, to the responsibility of incorporating gas diversification objectives in their national policies and implementing them. In contrast, the study delves further into the analysis of the factors leading to the expanding discrepancies in the gas diversification implementation approaches of Poland and Hungary in order to answer the main research question and its sub-questions. National and energy security strategies, diversification implementation projects and their methods, bilateral relations with Russia and the role of the ruling parties/governments, geopolitical, economic, and historical considerations, etc., are all areas where policy differences have been identified.

Several aspects, which the thesis aimed to throw more light on, explain the inconsistencies in gas diversification implementation policies. First and foremost, Polish and Hungarian gas diversification strategies are impacted by their geographical locations and the availability of alternative energy supplies. Poland's proximity to the sea and the abundance of opportunities it provides make it possible for the country to achieve energy independence from Russia, whereas Hungary's landlocked position leaves it with limited options. Furthermore, the Polish National Security Strategy classifies Russia's aggressive foreign policy in the region as a threat, which further justifies the country's increased endeavours to diversify its gas supply. In contrast, Hungary actively works to maintain amicable relations with Russia, its largest energy supplier. Additionally, Poland has constructed new infrastructures to strengthen energy sovereignty, and its spectrum of energy partners now stretches from the United States to Qatar and Norway. Meanwhile, Hungary also

attempted to diversify its suppliers through massive gas projects; but, following their fiasco, Budapest was left alone with Gazprom and did its best to extend the existing partnership with more beneficial contract terms. That is to say, Poland has prioritized diversifying both its gas routes and sources, whilst Hungary has concentrated primarily on route diversification in order to import the same Russian gas via other pipeline networks. As gas companies engaged in diversification efforts are state-owned both in Poland and Hungary, the study deems it necessary to explore the participation of ruling parties and governments in diversification procedures since most of the decisions have been made under their direct supervision. While Fidesz has taken a more pro-Kremlin stance and has been vigilant to preserve the cordial nature of Russo-Hungarian relations for the sake of Hungary's national and economic interests, the PiS party has been vocal about the threats posed by Russia and has done a lot to wean Poland off of its energy dependence on Moscow. The prolongation of the LTC between Gazprom and Hungary in 2021 and the determination of the Polish government to terminate the LTC with Gazprom in 2022 are immediate consequences of this configuration. Russian gas has also been essential in shaping both countries' domestic and foreign policy agendas. While Fidesz has attempted to keep its parliamentary majority by promising low utility prices thanks to its close ties with Russia, PiS, on the other hand, is espousing its work to diversify the country's energy sources and reduce its reliance on Russian gas as a major accomplishment and a source of confidence to turn Poland into a regional gas hub. The Polish government has also used the politics of memory and its objections to Russia's regional activities, including NS2, to effectively legitimize Warsaw's growing estrangement from Russia and the decline of the latter's political-economic influence in Poland. Taking all this into account, the causes behind the widening gap in the Polish and Hungarian gas diversification implementation approaches can be better understood.

As previously stated, the presented study seeks to offer a valuable contribution to the field of energy studies. The central research question and key findings of the thesis leave space for further extension of the analysis. Since it provides a thorough evaluation of the EU energy policy, it may also merit the attention of European policymakers. The EU is committed to diversifying its gas sector, as shown by the assessment of its strategies, regulations, directives and treaties. Nonetheless, the formal agreement on gas diversification among member states does not prevent them from pursuing common goals differently. There is no homogeneity in the gas markets, thus each country chooses independently how to meet its domestic energy demand and with whom to cooperate. This model emerges from the EU's shared competence principles, which allow member states to make decisions unilaterally in certain domains. With that being said, this dissertation demonstrates, yet again, that EU member states prioritize their national interests when developing their foreign policies. On the basis of such differing approaches, energy security strategies take on a variety of forms and contexts. With the assessment of multiple factors that come into play, the thesis generally fulfils the initial aims of the research to explain the diverging energy policies of Poland and Hungary.

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