

International Scholar Award. It is a perfect read for sociology and international relations students and academics, as well as anyone curious about the unequal opportunities that

any national citizenship offers outside of the nation's recognized state borders, or what has been referred to as "inequalities at the transnational level" by the authors (p. 169).

## Energy Politics in the MENA Region: From Hydrocarbons to Renewables?

By Valeria Talbot

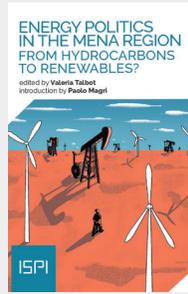
Milan: Ledi Publishing, 2022, 125 pages, €12.00, ISBN: 9788855268233

Reviewed by Mustafa Altıntaş, Qatar University

The book *Energy Politics in the MENA Region: From Hydrocarbons to Renewables?*, edited by Valeria Talbot, brings together well-researched chapters that provide a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the energy landscape in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in response to Europe's energy crisis.

European Union (EU) has come across an energy crisis because of the Russia and Ukraine war. In the short run, the EU must replace gas coming from Russia with another source. In the long run, the EU aims to abandon fossil fuels completely. The significance of this topic extends beyond the EU's energy security, as it also has significant implications for global energy politics. Such a landscape increases the importance of MENA countries. The book, which is presented as a report, tries to show possible roadmaps for the EU.

The book consists of five chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion. The book begins by discussing the EU's energy crisis and its consequences for the MENA area, setting the stage for a thorough examination of the complex interaction between energy resources, geopolitics, regional cooperation,



and the quest for sustainable energy alternatives. The EU faces several challenges to convert its energy toward renewable ones. In general, the book also highlights that the MENA region may be a renewable energy source, as most of the countries have a suitable climate for solar energy.

The first chapter sets the stage for the subsequent chapters by emphasizing the MENA region's relevance as a crucial partner for the EU in terms of energy security. With its huge hydrocarbon reserves, established export infrastructure, and closeness to European energy markets, the MENA area is considered a vital partner in this endeavor. Any cooperation of the EU with MENA countries to diversify its energy sources and reduce reliance on conventional hydrocarbon suppliers such as Russia could be a solution for the current energy crisis both in the short and long term. The chapter also emphasizes the importance of regional stability and economic growth in guaranteeing the long-term viability of this cooperation.

Chapter 2 analyzes Algeria's renewable energy development potential, including good

solar and wind power conditions. Despite this potential, renewable energy deployment in Algeria has been modest, and the country's large hydrocarbon income makes it less inclined to engage in renewables. The chapter also discusses the barriers to attracting international investment, such as local content regulations and funding needs. The role of Europe and the U.S. in pushing Algeria to realize its renewable energy potential, including prospective efforts such as collaboration to deploy additional renewable energy capacity and co-investment prospects in Algeria's hydrocarbon industry, is also highlighted.

Chapter 3 discusses the territorial sovereignty disputes between Greece, Cyprus, and Türkiye in the Eastern Mediterranean, which are now linked to the production and marketing of natural gas. The exclusion of Türkiye from regional energy cooperation could lead to an armed confrontation, but recent diplomatic outreach efforts by Türkiye to Egypt, the UAE, and Israel have resulted in potential natural gas cooperation. The EU, Israel, and Egypt have signed a deal to export natural gas from the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe, and incorporating Türkiye into the regional marketing and delivery mechanisms could make the marketing of Eastern Mediterranean gas more efficient. The chapter also highlights the potential of green hydrogen as a carrier and storage system for renewable energy. The Eastern Mediterranean is precariously poised between escalation and cooperation over the region's natural gas resources, and the development of renewable energy could facilitate greater regional cooperation.

Chapter 4 investigates Saudi Arabia's status as a significant worldwide oil supplier as well as its present position in the oil market. It also discusses the country's regional ties, its position on the Ukrainian war, and its efforts to

diversify its energy mix and economic base while reaching climate commitments. Saudi Aramco has set intermediate goals to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, spending extensively on renewable energy and carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS) projects. The chapter underlines the significance of energy security, particularly for nations that have not yet reached net-zero objectives, and confirms Saudi Arabia's status as the world's de facto oil sector leader.

Chapter 5 covers the prospects and difficulties for the UAE and Qatar considering the EU's attempts to minimize reliance on Russian energy supplies. This chapter tries to demonstrate how the EU's energy security concerns might impact these Gulf states' objectives and actions. The chapter investigates the UAE's and Qatar's initiatives to diversify their economies and invest in renewable energy technologies such as solar power and green hydrogen generation. The chapter also emphasizes the significance of regional cooperation and international frameworks in ensuring energy security and sustainable development.

The book finishes by highlighting the importance of Europe diversifying its energy sources and investing in MENA countries' stability and development. The conclusion connects the ideas explored throughout the book, presenting a logical and persuasive case for the relevance of energy politics in the MENA area. On the one hand, while the book covers a couple of themes and case studies, addressing the roles of China and Russia in influencing energy policies in the MENA region could further deepen the study. As these countries play significant roles in the global energy market and have their regional strategic interests, a deeper understanding of their influence would have added an extra layer of depth to the discussion. On the other hand,

as the book is designed as a report, it primarily mentioned potential scenarios about the future of energy politics in the MENA region and its effect on the EU. Although this attempt is valuable in providing a prudential perspective, the book could have also given a more detailed analysis of the underlying factors that may drive these scenarios, such as economic trends, or technological advancements. This additional layer of analysis would have offered readers a more comprehensive understanding of the forces shaping the future of energy policies in the region, as well

as potential avenues for collaboration among the involved countries.

Overall, *Energy Politics in the MENA Region: From Hydrocarbons to Renewables?* could be a good resource for scholars, students, and even politicians interested in understanding the possible effects on the EU of MENA's energy sources. The book is well-organized and academically rigorous, and it provides relevant insights into the problems and potential of energy diversification, as well as the implications for the EU's energy security.

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## Informal Politics in the Middle East

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*Edited by* Suzi Mirgani

London: C Hurst & Co Publishers, 2021, 336 pages, £21.99, ISBN: 9781787384829

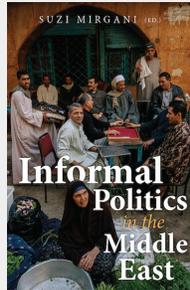
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*Reviewed by* Mustafa Fatih Yavuz, TRT World

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In her latest work, *Informal Politics in the Middle East*, Suzi Mirgani, and the other writers who contributed to the book, delve deep into the complex and often misunderstood world of informal politics in the region. Covering a wide range of political actors, from women associations to tribal leaders, Mirgani's edited study is a fascinating and highly informative account of the forces that shape the Middle East's political landscape.

The book is organized into ten well-researched and highly engaging chapters, each focusing on a different aspect of informal politics. Through a combination of historical analysis, case studies, and interviews, writers paint a vivid picture of the intricate web of relationships and power dynamics that exist within the region's informal political sphere.



Chapter 1, “Defining Informal Politics,” sets the stage for the rest of the book by providing a comprehensive definition of informal politics and exploring the factors that contribute to its prevalence in the Middle East. Mirgani goes into two types of classification in the book and the study's organization. In the first classification, informal structures in the Middle East work in harmony with the dominant element, the state or regime. Informal structures resolve the conflict with the formal structure or structures, which are the state and its extensions, through mediation with mostly traditional ways. She calls this classification or model as “converging formal and informal politics.” In the second classification, which Mirgani prefers to call “diverging formal and informal politics,” writers present examples of states in which formal and informal politics