

Book Review

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RUSSIAN ENERGY SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Editors: Adrian Dellecker and Thomas Gomart

Russia, according to Adrian Dellecker and Thomas Gomart, is *the* energy behemoth par excellence, sitting on the largest natural gas reserves in the world and the eighth largest oil reserves. The editors of the book assert that in Eurasia, 'energy and geopolitics are closely intertwined' (p. 1), and accordingly seek to answer the key research question of the book, how energy influences Russian foreign policy. Given that hydrocarbon-based energy (oil, gas and coal) is dominantly used in modern industrialised economies and increasingly in newly industrialising nations, security of supply is a foreign policy issue, mandated by a country's geographical position and control over the resources it is naturally endowed with or the lack thereof. The concept of 'energy security' is hence the key dimension of the book.

Dellecker and Gomart seek to examine their research question in eleven chapters, divided into three parts, written by internationally recognised experts on Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including economists, political scientists and practitioners. Russia's recent annexation of Crimea, a former Ukrainian peninsula in the Black Sea, has led to increasing discussions about Europe's dependence on Russia's resources and its according foreign policy lever. Hence, the research question is eminently important, not only for an academic audience, but also for decision-makers in the areas of foreign and security policy, energy and environmental policy. Russian energy and foreign policy is an immensely complex issue, as it entails multiple dimensions such as geology, commerce, law, economics and politics. The editors navigate the complexity well at the introductory level, providing a clear structure and orientation: they divide the book into examinations of the link between Russia's domestic and foreign energy policy, its relations with other suppliers in the post-Soviet space (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), and its relations with transit countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine).

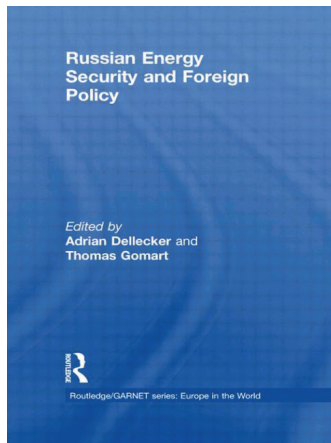
However, the promised structure is not always delivered on to best effect and the contributions to the book vary in quality, coherence and relevance to the research question. As a result, the collection leaves out key issues and dimensions, and focuses on some issues repetitively. For example, Ukraine is a key transit country for approximately 80 per cent of Russian gas to the EU, only briefly examined in chapter 10: 'After the war: the Southern Corridor' by John Roberts. However, because of Ukraine's centrality as a transit country, it deserves a more detailed account. Meanwhile, there are three chapters examining Central Asia, chapters 2: 'Hydrocarbon production and exports in Central Asia' by William Tompson, chapter 4: 'The role of Central Asian gas: is it possible to bypass Russia?' by Maureen Crandall and chapter 9: 'Russia, Gazprom and the CAC: interests and relations' by Leonid Grigoriev. Since Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are addressed separately in chapter 5: 'Ups and downs of the Russia-Turkmenistan relationship' by Vladimir Milov and chapter 7: 'Uzbekistan: central Asian key' by Andrew Monaghan, the region is disproportionately covered, where Eastern Europe and China could receive more attention. That said, in respect of Central Asia, the Milov and Monaghan chapters are real highlights of the book and very valuable contributions to the field.

The book's lack of a domestic link to foreign policy is its key weakness. Frank Umbach briefly elaborates the question in chapter 1: 'Energy security in Eurasia: clashing interests' but it is insufficiently executed in terms of defining energy security and how it applies to relations between Russia and the rest of the world. The chapter would have benefited from a clearer discussion of the connections made between Russia's domestic policy and its relations with the rest of the world. For example, the author introduces terms such as 'resource nationalism' and 'spheres of influence' to describe Russia's relations with the Central Asian states, the EU and China, saying 'traditionally, energy has always been considered, and wielded, as a key tool of Moscow's foreign policy' (p. 36). Yet key questions remain unanswered, for example, how and why Moscow does so, what its principal energy policy vision is and how it developed during the re-structuring of the Russian energy sector in the 1990s. This does not suffice to draw the necessary link between domestic and foreign policy, as other works have done. For example, in his masterful account of the oil and gas industry after the Soviet Union's fall in *Wheel of Fortune* (Harvard University Press, 2012), Thane Gustafson shows how competition for acquiring the nation's sources of wealth led to the emergence of a state-centered business model under President Vladimir Putin that used control over the oil and gas industry as a tool to finance its foreign policy ambitions. The Dellecker and Domart collection would work better with more such context.

The book's key strength is the originality of the individual contributions it combines. For example, chapters like Tompson's 'Hydrocarbon production and exports in Central Asia: the impact of institutions and policies', taken on their own, explain a very complex issue with clarity, richness of data and sufficient coverage of the key dimensions of production, ownership, rule of law and key role for policy for investment climate. Likewise, the above mentioned contributions about Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and especially Uzbekistan are rare in the field, since those isolated countries are difficult to research. In his chapter on Uzbekistan, Monaghan convincingly argues that 'while Russia is an important regional actor, the region should be understood on its own terms, not simply through the prism of Russia/USSR' (p. 131). Beyond that, the author is able to show how complex the nature of Russian foreign policy can become in a region that is often far off Western policymakers' scope and where Russia-China competition is likely to increase. However, other contributions lack this quality. For example, chapter 3 'How to get a pipeline built: myth and reality' by Jérôme Guillet promises to lay out the business perspective, itself a valuable aspect, often lacking in comparative foreign policy approaches. However, the chapter required a more rigorous editing process; it lacks a coherent line of argumentation other than the simple truism that projects have to be economically viable for both sides. Improvements would have come with some case study reference or regional insight.

One criticism applies to the collection as a whole. While the use of data and methodology differs in quality, one key visual feature is missing almost entirely: maps. Since the region is geographically vast, it would have been useful to illustrate pipeline networks, key transit routes and the location of oil and gas fields. There is only one map of this kind in the entire book, on Kazakhstan's major oil and gas pipelines.

In conclusion, the book is recommended to specialists in the field who are keen to find original and important contributions to understanding Russia's foreign and energy policy. In its entirety, however, the book omits key dimensions of the research question and the contributions differ in quality, coherence and relevance. More content about China-Russia relations, key transit states such as Ukraine and recently intensifying tensions with the European buyer states are necessary for wider comprehension. However, as the issue of Russia's foreign and energy policy seems to increase in importance, the collection is a valuable contribution to a field which warrants further attention from researchers.



BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

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