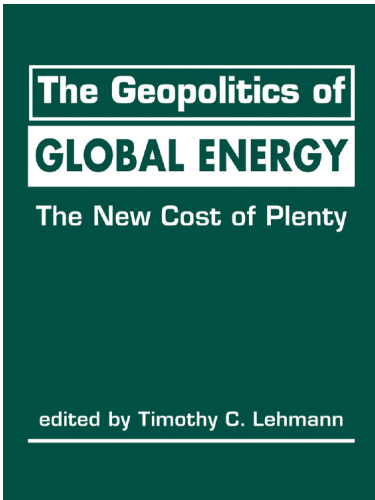




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**Lehmann, Timothy C. (ed.),**  
*The Geopolitics of Global  
 Energy: The New Cost of  
 Plenty*, Lynne Rienner  
 Publishers Inc, Boulder,  
 Colorado, 2017, 283 p.<sup>2</sup>

The volume *Geopolitics of Global Energy: The New Cost of Plenty*, edited by Timothy C. Lehmann, offers a comprehensive overview of the transforming pro-

cesses of the global energy game. As stated, it seeks to explain the geopolitics of energy, defined as “political rivalry between state and private actors over the energy determinants of national economic and military power” (p. 15). The main goals of this volume, emphasized at the beginning of the first chapter (“The Geopolitics of Global Energy”), include assessing world’s energy resources and their impact on the economy and politics, as well as the consequences of the conventional energy system and its ongoing transformation. The volume consists of ten chapters, written by nine authors, and each concerning a different aspect of energy geopolitics.

Conventional hydrocarbon-based energy resources, i.e. oil, natural gas and coal are still considered a quintessential form of energy throughout the volume. Most of the contributors are well-aware of the oil and gas significance and they are predominantly sceptical when it comes to replacing conventional resources with alternative forms of energy. Nevertheless, a few of them are hope-

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ful that transition to renewables is possible. This volume's editor, Timothy C. Lehmann, uses the classification into two interdisciplinary schools – energy pessimists and energy optimists. He, however, finds the stances of both schools to be insufficient, and calls for a more complex analysis, as well as further development of this area in the international relations theories.

One of the leading American experts in this field, Michael T. Klare, agrees that oil and gas play a key role in the competition for power between states. In his opinion, one of the reasons for the struggle over remaining energy resources is derived from the fact that energy provision is deemed as a vital national interest. The other, equally important reason is linked to resource endowment, i.e. the geographical distribution of oil and gas. From his stand of point, the dynamic between the countries abundant with resources and countries facing their depletion or lack has a crucial impact on the outcome of the military and economic power contest.

Both Klare And Lehmann offer a brief historical review of the energy geopolitics, but their findings differ. While Klare (2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, “The Changing Geopolitics of Oil and Gas”) explains the US foreign policy to the Gulf states as a response to the need for securing constant outflow of energy from this region, Lehmann challenges

the conventional wisdom about the US dependence on Middle Eastern oil, stating that domestic consumption never really depended on it (6<sup>th</sup> chapter, “The US Energy Complex: The Price of Independence”). Lehmann suggests, unlike many other authors, that controlling the Middle East has had a sole purpose of upkeeping hegemony – the US has been securing transport routes and energy resources mainly for its allies, not for itself.

Klare addresses the key issue of the current transformation in energy geopolitics, driven by the shale revolution, as well as the increasing number of states intertwined in what he believes is a zero-sum game. De Graaff (4<sup>th</sup> chapter, “Oil Elites and Transnational Alliances”) agrees that there has been a transformation of the conventional energy system, although she focuses mainly on the actors involved in the process, also an integral part of explaining energy geopolitics. The author gives an overview of the rising non-OECD national oil companies and their interaction with existing players on the energy market. She is primarily interested in Chinese national oil companies operating under the OECD established rules, possibilities of state interventionism and hybrid cooperation emerging forms.

Billon and Bridge (3<sup>rd</sup> chapter, “Oil's New Reality”) concur with

Klare that oil represents a strategic commodity, but unlike him, they suggest that oil consumption should be gradually reduced and eventually excluded from the energy supply. Also, they are critical of the optimism adjacent to the shale revolution and the possibility of US gaining energy independence. Opposite to what Klare argues, procuring oil is not a zero-sum game anymore according to Billon and Bridge, but rather a more complex dynamic between conflicting or cooperating interest groups in the “oil’s new reality”, where much of conventional praxis is contested.

They argue that a new form of global oil governance is much needed and offer three distinct strategies states use as a response to new reality: *liberalism*, *statist interventionism* and *adaptation and innovation beyond oil* (pp. 52-53). Advocating for the third strategy, they thoroughly address environmental issues in this part of the volume, as well as the price volatility and the social impact of conventional energy resources. The authors of this chapter conclude bit too optimistically that the new oil reality should deliver a “fairer, more ethical” system, a system that would delink the energy supply from the military needs, and ultimately transform towards the world “beyond oil” (p. 62).

One of the authors of this volume, also enthusiastic about the re-

newables is Andrew DeWit. In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter (“Energy Transitions in Japan”) he provides an overview of Japan’s energy policy, with nuclear energy as a focal point of the chapter. One of the main goals of his paper is showing that energy paradigms can shift, which he demonstrates through Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan.

Even though this volume is supposed to explain geopolitical aspects of global energy, it fails to encompass all the relevant interrelations emerging from the struggle for energy resources. In many ways it is US-oriented, focusing mainly on the shale revolution, which wouldn’t be a problem if there was a more thorough examination of the impact of that revolution to American foreign policy and actions towards other countries and their responses, instead of just exploring domestic affairs. Similar goes to Lauber’s chapter on Germany (8<sup>th</sup> chapter, “Germany’s Transition to Renewable Energy”), which is fully devoted to the process of shaping energy policy during different governments and has renewable energy as a focal point. Considering this is the only European state explored in the volume, the authors should have pointed out geopolitical consequences of such energy policy. Also, Germany’s dependence on Russian gas is merely mentioned in one of the paragraphs. As one of the most important states in energy geo-

politics, Russia should have been given more consideration. As for the Middle East, although there is a detailed explanation of the region's position in the conventional oil era, this volume doesn't fully explain the nascent incentives for transformation in that region.

On the other hand, China's position is carefully investigated in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter ("China's Resource Drive into the South China Sea"), which deals with the energy security of China, given that the rising demand for energy in this country is altering the energy market. This significant transformation is taken into consideration in the chapter, most notably in the gas geopolitics area of inquiry. China is rapidly becoming one of the most prominent actors in the energy game, and the geopolitical implications of China's energy policy are remarkable. One of the examples is certainly the Belt and Road initiative which includes construction of the land energy infrastructure. The other, even more important route for supplying energy is the South China Sea. Not only does it mitigate energy transport, but it is also abundant in oil reserves, according to many authors. However, Erickson and Strange are cautious when assuming that these reserves would easily be exploited, particularly when territorial disputes are taken into account.

The possibilities of territorial disputes as a result of struggle for

energy resources are also notable in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter ("The Scramble for Arctic Oil and Natural Gas"). Claes is focused on the oil and gas-rich regions of the Arctic and the possible outcome of their further exploitation in the context of environmental security. Political implications of drilling in this area are also explored in this chapter, as the sovereignty and jurisdiction claims over Arctic could potentially lead to conflicts. In conclusion, the author thinks there's little prospect for oil and gas extraction in the Arctic region, especially not when there's a shale oil and shale gas exploitation possibility.

In the last chapter (10<sup>th</sup> chapter, "The New Cost of Plenty"), Lehmann examines the structures involved in the energy game, and most notably oil companies with power and far-reaching influence. Lehmann's most impressive contribution in this volume refers to the exhaustive analysis of their tangled and interdependent web of connections. The editor's opinion is that there's a small chance the renewable sector interest groups could replace the well-established "petrochemical concert" (p. 207) and its formidable influence over politics. Lehmann is generally pessimistic of renewable forms of energy throughout the volume, considering that only a negligible part of transporting devices is fuelled by resources other than oil, and that transpor-

tation fuel accounts for a big part of energy consumption. He is also gloomy about the natural gas as an alternative “clean” energy form, and consequently about the possibility of United States of America achieving energy independence.

Regarding the four main questions mentioned at the beginning, this volume has answered some of them, while opening a whole new set of topics. It has provided substantial data on world’s energy resources and some insights into how the economy and politics are

influenced by their current and possible future allocation. In addition, the volume’s main contribution derives from recognizing the array of “oil majores”, i.e. oil companies with transnational power, states and other stakeholders in the energy game. Furthermore, it has provided a brief, but useful review of the conventional energy system and opened many important questions about its transformation, whether towards renewable or unconventional forms of energy.