

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Russian Energy Power and Foreign Relations: Implications for Conflict and Cooperation. *CSS Studies in Security and International Relations* by Jeronim Perovic, Robert W. Orttung and Andreas Wenger

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Source: *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (March 2010), pp. 375-376

Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd.

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27808699>

Accessed: 23-01-2019 09:47 UTC

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assimilate Roma using three quite different examples. Chapter Four recounts the history of the Union of Gypsies–Roma, established in 1968 and dissolved in 1973. The Union was supposed to assist the assimilation and ‘civilisation’ of Roma in Czechoslovakia but the persistent attempts of its members to promote a positive sense of Romani identity led to its demise. This chapter is significant because it tells a part of the story of Roma in Czechoslovakia which has until now been generally overlooked. Chapter Five focuses on the education system and its attempts to both assimilate Roma and to reframe social policies towards Roma as policies tackling social deviance. Romani family life and approaches to parenting were viewed as social pathology, and thus criticism of these practices was socially responsible rather than a form of racial or ethnic discrimination. Finally, Chapter Six focuses on probably the darkest side of the experiences of Roma in communist Czechoslovakia—the sterilisation of women. Sokolova demonstrates how an ethnicity-neutral law came to be used as a crude mechanism to control the size of Romani families, again as a result of how discourses of ‘proper’ family relations and ‘deviant’ Romani sexuality informed local practice.

Sokolova’s excellently researched and cogently argued book is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of Roma under communism. She makes no grand claims that her account can explain the current situation in other formerly communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, however, it is reasonable to assume that parallels may exist and that this study will be relevant to a wider readership. Her use of a constructivist approach to explain the enduring discrimination faced by Roma is crucial reading for scholars of Romani studies as it offers insightful critiques of many current studies and raises a number of questions which merit further investigation. Equally, this book could be of interest to scholars of communist history more generally, given its analysis of how policies made by a highly centralised regime came to be implemented in a manner quite distorted from the original intentions of the policy makers. The examples offered in this book could offer insights into other aspects of policy making and implementation in the period.

Sokolova also makes the important point that when social discourses are properly taken into account, it becomes apparent that the kind of regime in power, whether authoritarian or democratic, can only do so much to address the discrimination experienced by a minority group. If the underlying prejudices and general understandings of what is ‘normal’ stay the same, real change will be practically impossible to achieve. Thus, it should not have been assumed that the fall of communism would lead to better relations between Roma and the majority populations in the states where they live. As Sokolova herself says in the conclusion: ‘Romani discrimination can be reduced in the long run only by a deeper transformation of the way Czech society views itself, defines others and interacts with the Roma’ (p. 261).

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Jeronim Perovic, Robert W. Orttung & Andreas Wenger (eds), *Russian Energy Power and Foreign Relations: Implications for Conflict and Cooperation*. CSS Studies in Security and International Relations. London & New York: Routledge, 2009, xviii + 252 pp., £75.00 h/b.

THIS STUDY IS AMONG THE FIRST BOOK-LENGTH WORKS TO focus on Russia’s ‘energy power’, or the role of energy as a source of influence for the Russian state. This fact alone would make it a worthwhile volume. The work’s well thought out structure, rare for an edited volume, adds to its significance. It deals with three very important areas, each of which makes a major contribution to the literature. The first part of the book focuses on the significance of Russia’s energy power for its domestic politics, an area often overlooked by International Relations scholars. Here successive chapters deal with the role of energy in Russia’s economic growth, its

role in bolstering the authoritarian tendencies of the Putin regime, and its role in the expanding state sector of the economy. The book's second focus is on the role of energy in Russia's foreign policy. In this section chapters deal with Russia's influence in the European energy market, in the Caspian and Central Asian regions, and in the Far East—now emerging as a new focus of Russian energy power. Finally, the book's third section considers the response of other actors to Russia's energy influence. This too is very useful; many studies in International Relations fail to take into account the views of a country's negotiating partners. Here three chapters analyse the responses of Europe, the US and China to Russian energy power.

Several of the chapters make particularly interesting arguments. For example, Philip Hanson's piece, 'The Sustainability of Russia's Energy Power', takes a contrarian approach in arguing that Russian energy power will decline in the future, since the country will not be able to sustain its current oil and gas production. He believes that Russia is not investing enough in new capacity, especially given the inefficiency of its state-owned firms. Foreign companies, discouraged by the Kremlin's arbitrary actions in the oil and gas sector, will not make up the investment deficit. Similarly, Heiko Pleines challenges conventional wisdom in his chapter on the role of state-run firms in the energy sector. In contrast to Hanson, he shows that state-owned companies are not necessarily less efficient than private firms, noting, for example, that in the 1990s many private companies in Russia were victims of 'asset-stripping' by greedy owners. However, he also demonstrates that the Putin regime has failed to set up a legal framework which would make Russian state-owned firms work efficiently. Stacy Closson, in her chapter on Russian energy exports to the European Union, comes to the surprising conclusion that Europe need not fear Russia's energy power. She argues that Russia may well need Europe as a customer more than Europe needs Russian oil and gas. This is particularly true because Russia has failed to find other customers, since it is dragging its feet on energy links to the Far East. Like these, many of the book's chapters are thought-provoking and well documented.

In some areas, though, criticism is warranted. First, one curious omission stands out: while the work includes chapters on the EU, Central Asia and East Asia, it does not include a detailed analysis of Russian policy toward other parts of the 'near abroad'. Most would argue that states such as Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova have been the leading targets of Russia's energy power. For example, Russia's decision to cut off gas shipments to Ukraine in early 2006 was the key event in sparking worldwide anxiety about Russia's energy policies. Yet this dispute, and others with the 'near abroad', are mentioned only in passing in this book, for example in the chapter on Russian–EU energy relations.

Second, while this work does a good job in examining Russia, it could do more to make comparisons with other oil and gas producing states. Only in Robert Ortung's chapter on Russian domestic politics is an effort made to situate Russia within literature on other 'petro-states'. An important question remains: is Russia, like countries such as Iraq (under Saddam Hussein), Libya, Iran and Venezuela, part of a dangerous world-wide trend? Do oil and gas resources generally tend to promote anti-Western governments? Will such states become increasingly powerful as oil and gas become progressively more scarce in the future? What can oil-consuming states, especially in the West, do to change this trend? Such broader questions may not be of vital interest to readers focusing only on Russia, but would interest both policymakers and academics from the broader fields of International Relations and International Political Economy.

Nonetheless, this work makes a vital contribution to the emerging literature on Russian foreign policy in the Putin–Medvedev era. In the days of the Cold War, Kremlinologists focused on nuclear missiles and communist ideology but to truly comprehend Russia's role in the world today, one must understand gas pipelines and oil fields.