

BOOK REVIEW

REGINA M BUONO, ELENA LÓPEZ GUNN, JENNIFER
MCKAY AND CHAD STADDON, *REGULATING WATER
SECURITY IN UNVONCENTIONAL OIL AND GAS*
(SPRINGER UK, 2020)

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Recent national focus together with increasing global attention to water security and gas extraction makes this book a timely addition to the scholarly literature. This is a book that presents twenty chapters organised into five parts, a majority of which are framed as case study contributions to this broad and important topic. With its varied geographical representation as represented by the detailed case studies, the book is an accessible and comprehensive text for scholars working in this area.

There are a few notable remarks to be made on the contents of the book. The organisation of five parts, as i) framework and context; ii) Acquiring water for fracturing: conflicts and regulatory issues; iii) what comes next? Disposing of water from hydraulic fracturing; iv) regulatory regimes and issues: regional perspectives and v) conclusions and recommendations is useful given the wide-ranging geography represented. This framing is also very targeted in that it provides the reader with a clear précis of in-depth engagement in water security, the role of water in oil and gas extraction, and the varied regulatory frameworks that attempt to manage these processes. The editors are to be commended for their apparent purposeful approach in engaging with scholars from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives as well as global north and global south coverage. This makes for a rich volume of case study material including from less frequently represented locations, including Poland and the Ukraine. The geographic focus was also well symbolised with a proportionately high volume of maps as visual aids – these appear on pages 5, 93, 115, 118, 137, 139, 157, 164, 183, 246, 313, 324, 369, 370, and 385.

There is throughout the book an explicit approach to engage with the case studies through a critical socio-legal lens, though broader claims are made with

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respect to attempts to engage in transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives across many of the chapters. This idea and approach is to be applauded, though I would have liked to see more detail on what the chapter authors – where relevant – meant when they said they were engaging in ‘transdisciplinary’ research. This is because there is a growing body of literature on this topic, particularly in the sustainability sciences field, and the definition and use of that term is not well settled. There was a clearer grasp on when and why multidisciplinary could be beneficial to research of this nature. Likewise, there were nods to literature in political economy scholarship, but I had hoped some of the chapter authors who opened this door would walk down this path a little more and explain why scholars would want to engage with political economy literature.

Given the topic range and the clear ‘law and geography’ framing, from my perspective the lack of explicit engagement in the vast, global, legal geography literatures this is a lost opportunity for this book. Nonetheless, the approach to the diversity of case studies and the dominant (broader) law and geography framing throughout means that effective comparisons between the case studies in this book, and indeed in future research projects, are possible. Such comparisons can enable an examination of distinct legal and regulatory regimes, itself an important endeavour as societies face the greatest of challenges in climate change impacts.