

Energy resources in the grand strategy of Russian Federation

The number of studies that investigate the role of energy resources in Russian foreign policy has become countless over the last 15 years, as the rise of hydrocarbon prices in the first decade of the 21st century is generally recognized as a fuel for aggressive behavior of Russia. Though, most of these studies are undertaken in the field of political economy, in both aspects - relations with the hydrocarbon receivers, (like the European Union or China) and sectoral analyses of oil and gas sectors. Therefore, these pieces of research are unable to explain what exactly is the role of hydrocarbons for Russia's strategic behavior.

To offer an alternative, this paper applies the concept of grand strategy to analyze the role of hydrocarbons for Moscow. This approach was for the first time proposed to be used for energy security analysis by (O'Sullivan, 2013). The paper is to be divided into several sections. Firstly, the concept of grand strategy is to be introduced along with its connections with energy resources. Secondly, the role of energy for grand strategies of other great powers (the US, the UK, Germany, China), Russia's competitors, will be briefly examined. Three other sections will be devoted to each of the constitutive parts of the most accepted definition of grand strategy, namely: ends/objectives, way/tool, means/resource, following the structure that (O'Sullivan, 2013) proposed in her paper.

The first part will show that energy is neither an end nor an objective of Russia's grand strategy. This is because of a simple reason – the pursuit of something by definition implies lack of it. In the case of hydrocarbons this is totally opposite in Russia. According to EIA.gov it is the second-largest exporter of natural gas as well as the third-largest exporter of petroleum. It also has globally significant resources of coal. The second part looks at energy as a way/tool. There are two aspects of that grand strategy element, which are usually analyzed separately, even though they should be seen as two sides of the same coin. Firstly, Moscow uses energy resources (gas) as a political weapon, to influence what is called its "near abroad". These countries which emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, are connected with Russia with by infrastructure (pipelines) and therefore dependent to a large degree on its supply. Secondly, and less often mentioned, Moscow is also using energy resources to forge alliances. The examples include Belarus and (especially) China. The third part looks at energy as mean/resource. This also has to be broken up into two issues. On a general level, hydrocarbons accounted for 25 percent of Russia's GDP, 75 percent of exports and 50 percent of government revenue for most of the past decade (Rutland, 2018). On a specific level, Moscow used surging energy export revenues to invest in military. When the price of oil went down over the least few years Russian defense expenditures have not escaped cuts. In conclusion, the paper makes discusses the role of hydrocarbons for Moscow in the future, in the contexts of climate change, rise of China and the rise of renewables.

O'Sullivan, M. L. (2013). The entanglement of energy, grand strategy, and international security. In *The Handbook of Global Energy Policy*, 30-47.

Rutland, P. (2018). The Political Economy of Energy in Russia. In *The International Political Economy of Oil and Gas*, 23-39