BOOK REVIEWS

Petroleum Economics: Issues and Strategies of Oil and Natural Gas Production by RÖGNVALDUR HANNESSON. (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 1998), 163 pages. ISBN 1-56720-220-9.

This is a short book of high quality. Rögnvaldur Hannesson prepared it from a course in petroleum economics he has given for several years at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration. Chapter 1 reviews the vital role of oil in industrial countries. Hannesson rightly states "Oil in modern society is like blood in the human body. Without it modern society as we know it would cease to exist." Chapter 2 discusses world markets for oil, natural gas, and coal. Here Hannesson analyses substitution among fossil fuels induced by changes in their relative prices. He reviews world trade in oil and gas, and the heavy dependence of the United States, Western Europe, and Pacific Asia on imported oil. Of course the widdle East is the largest oil exporting region, followed by Africa and the Former Soviet Union. The international market for natural gas is much smaller than that for oil, and Hannesson explains why. He also reviews the geographic distribution of oil and gas reserves and production. In 1996, the Middle Eastern countries held 65% of the world's oil reserves, North America (including Mexico) 8.3%, South and Central America, 7.6%, and Western Europe a scant 2.0%.

Chapter 3 focuses on natural gas. Hannesson clearly spells out the costs of transporting natural gas by pipeline and in liquified form over varying distances. Average and marginal costs increase linearly with increasing distance.

How do unit costs vary with different volumes shipped a given distance? Most of the cost of transporting gas by pipeline is fixed capital cost. In the United States, for example, fixed costs of acquiring land and laying the pipeline account for more than 90% of total transportation costs. The consequence is straightforward: Declining average fixed cost combines with decreasing average variable cost of larger volumes to create a natural monopoly in gas transmission. These cost conditions create an opportunity for transmission companies to charge their customers a two-part tariff: The first fee is the customers' payment to use the pipeline (an access fee); the second is payment for shipping costs.

As a regulated monopoly, a pipeline company sold a "bundle" of services to its customers: transportation, storage, and the gas itself. However, as gas markets have become deregulated in the United States and United Kingdom, pipeline companies were required to unbundle these services to make clear what costs are due to transportation, storage, and the gas itself. Hannesson discusses in clear English and then in simple linear models how unbundling has been achieved and how it works.

Chapter 4 is devoted to oil production. Here Hannesson sets forth the physical principles that cause a given reservoir's oil production rate to decline. He includes a lucid explanation of general hyperbolic decline curves, and their special cases: harmonic and exponential decline. He briefly touches on the effects of rock permeability, oil viscosity, and declining reservoir pressure on the oil production rate. Hannesson also analyses the common property problem when oil in a given reservoir can be produced from wells located on different people's land. If land ownership above an oil reservoir is fragmented, each landowner has an incentive to drill fast and produce hard. This practice of "stealing your neighbors' oil before he steals yours" is wasteful, because it prevents maximum recovery of oil originally in place.

Chapter 5 discusses Hotelling's model of production and price for an exhaustible resource, but with far gentler math than in Hotelling's original work. Hannesson rigorously derives the familiar Hotelling rule (with no new discoveries): the price of the exhaustible resource will rise over time according to the real rate of interest. He then carefully explains the reasons why this elegant theoretical result is seldom found in real world markets.

Chapter 6 centers on ways used by governments to tax oil (gas) production: license fees whose values can be determined by competitive bidding; royalties; and taxes on private firms' profits from production. His case study of Norwegian petroleum taxes is a model of clear writing. Chapter 7 is a crystal clear essay on proper management of a petroleum fund designed to benefit a region's inhabitants. Proper management boils down creating inter-generational equity. Oil and gas produced today cannot be produced in the future. So how can the rents obtained from producing these depletable resources today be invested in physical capital and education that will benefit future generations as well as today's? Hannesson explains how, using as an example the Alaska Permanent Fund.

Rögnvaldur Hannesson has written a first-class book for economics and business students. He covers a wide range of important topics. His writing is admirably succinct. And because of succinctness, the book is short. The next time I teach an energy economics course, Hannesson's *Petroleum Economics* will be the main text.

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Designing Competitive Electricity Markets edited by HUNG-PO CHAO AND HILLARD HUNTINGTON. (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), 224 pages. ISBN 0-7923-8282-X.

This volume of papers, originally presented at Stanford in March 1997 in a conference sponsored by the Electric Power Research Institute, examines

several questions about the restructuring and deregulation of electricity markets. Its stated goal is to present guiding principles for evaluating proposals to restructure the U.S. electric power industry. While a collection of essays is perhaps not the best place to lay out guiding principles, the volume does contain a great deal of learning about restructuring.

The first essay is a reprint of Paul Joskow's excellent article in the Journal of Economic Perspectives. Most readers of The Energy Journal will be familiar with Joskow's views, which I will not repeat here. I will, however, take the opportunity to make some comments. Joskow's basic concern, which dates at least from his classic book with Richard Schmalansee (1983), is that restructuring threatens to take away the efficiencies generated by horizontal and vertical integration. In particular, the rules by which Independent System Operators (ISOs) are to be governed remain hazy, and regulators have little direction on how to oversee these newly formed creatures.

Joskow's concerns are well founded. Yet I found myself with two thoughts: First, can we learn anything from the experience in the several countries where restructuring has already taken place? Obviously, the power generation grids "work" in those countries, though to what degree of efficiency is unclear. Second, would it be possible for system operators to be owned by distribution companies, with such companies divested completely out of the generation business? This would seem to create the best of both possible worlds. Joskow hints at an answer to these questions when he notes that in the U.S. certain solutions are difficult because restructuring deals with private firms that have (implicitly) political power, rather than the government-owned corporations in other countries. Unfortunately, this is not quite an economic answer.

An essay by William Hogan on the debate between zonal and locational pricing is next. Like all such discussions, the text gets very complicated very fast. One longs for the day when such issues can be explained cogently to the average regulator (and perhaps below-average book reviewer). Hogan, however, makes two interesting points that may add to the debate.

First, in crunch time zonal pricing may become locational pricing. Hogan tells the story of what occurred in the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland (PJM) grid in June 1997. When the system became constrained under zonal pricing, the predicted inefficiencies occurred. To alleviate the problem, the ISO operator had to quickly change the rules of the transmission grid to locational pricing. Thus, if zonal pricing will collapse into locational pricing during periods of difficulty, why have zonal pricing at all?

Second, Hogan, I suggest correctly, asserts that zonal pricing would actually generate more market power problems than locational pricing. I believe the key intuition on this point, which Hogan does not state clearly, is that locations will compete against each other for customers. By wrapping several locations in a zone, zonal pricing will serve to reduce that competition.

In a short note, Paul Kleindorfer lists the various governance schemes which other countries that have restructured have used to govern system operation, access to the market for power, and transmission ownership and pricing. This, of course, creates a whole series of questions. Which governance programs work best? And how do we define the word "best" in this context?

One difficulty with the book, as well as the debate in the U.S., is that it fails to draw adequately upon the international experience. Unlike airline deregulation, Americans are not the leaders in the game of electricity restructuring. The advantage of this is we can draw upon the experience in many other countries. Regrettably, with the exception of some research conducted on the market in England and Wales, we have not done so.

In his chapter, Shmuel Oren lays out the potential areas over which an ISO could have authority. In the end, what authority to give to the ISO depends on one's confidence in market forces versus one's confidence in centralized authority. Oren does suggest that an important trade-off exists between long-run efficiency (represented by a minimal ISO) and short-run efficiency (generated by a maximal ISO). This may have particular importance in a world where regulators have short-run political interests. The political imperative would seem to imply a maximal ISO, and a degradation of long-run investment in exchange for short-run lower prices.

Unfortunately, there will be more than one price in a fully restructured market. Robert Wilson's short essay lays out the problems caused by other prices. In particular, Wilson focuses on the market for reliability. To ensure that the supply of electric power remains stable, firms will have to be compensated. As Wilson points out, devising that compensation scheme is not simple, and may conflict with the desire to keep power prices as low as possible. Put another way, we do not know (at least yet) what the demand for reliability is. Given this, it is difficult to give instructions to a system operator on how much reliability to purchase.

The chapter by Stephen Rassenti and Vernon Smith is both intriguing and disappointing. It starts by asserting that bilateral trading should never be allowed, implying that a mandatory pool should be established. The rationale for this position (hidden at the end of the chapter) is that pool trading creates a positive information externality. Given this, however, one wonders why bilateral trading should be allowed in other markets, say the markets for flour or Microsoft stock. Rassenti and Smith also present interesting ideas on the ownership of transmission lines (through a jointly owned network) and bidding strategies (by requiring demanders to bid as well as suppliers). Unfortunately, these ideas are not fleshed out.

The second part of the Rassenti and Smith essay reviews the experimental literature on electricity markets. Such learning can be very important in designing markets. Unfortunately, there is no adequate summary

of the literature. Given this, it is difficult to know what to take away from the reading. Overall, far too much is crammed into this chapter.

A reduction in regulation may increase the incentives for technological innovation. Martin Baughman suggests a number of ways by which costs of transmitting and storing electricity may be reduced. Perhaps unfortunately, there is now reduced funding from the historical sources of research grants in this area. Baughman suggests that electricity and gas producers be required to contribute to a fund that will generate research and development. One wonders, however, why this should be the only industry in the economy where firms are required to make such a commitment, and what would be the incentives for the body that received these funds. Perhaps what may be more important would be to create a regulatory system that generates profits for successful innovation.

Robert Wilson returns to the volume with a chapter on institutional design. In it, he lays out the pros and cons of, for example, bilateral trading versus a mandatory pool. This is a well-written chapter of various alternatives regulators have in restructuring. What again would perhaps be helpful would be a presentation of some method of determining which system is "best."

To end the volume, Hung-Po Chao and Stephen Peck present an extension of their earlier work in the *Journal of Regulatory Economics* showing how markets for transmission rights would work in a transmission grid of three points. The presentation is clear, and convinces at least this reader that a market system in transmission involving three nodes is feasible. Unfortunately, the number of paths grows quickly with the number of nodes. Thus, three nodes imply three paths, but eight nodes imply 28 paths. (The relevant formula is N(N-1)/2, where N is the number of nodes.) It might be interesting to apply this model to a real, but relatively simple transmission grid, say in New Zealand or Chile, before tackling this problem in the U.S.

Together, the book says a great deal about the economic issues surrounding restructuring. While the book promises to be accessible, regrettably much of it is not. But perhaps this is inevitable. Fifteen years ago game theory was accessible only to high theorists. Today, as the rash of game theory textbooks makes evident, game theory can be taught to undergraduates. While today's work on deregulated electricity markets is not terribly clear, it is still a young field. Let us hope that in fifteen years it will have evolved in the same way the presentation of game theory has.

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Reference

Joskow, Paul L, and Richard Schmalansee (1983). Markets for Power: An Analysis of Electric Utility Deregulation. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Managing the Oil Wealth: OPEC's Windfalls and Pitfalls by JAHANGIR AMUZEGAR (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd.; New York: St. Martin's, 1999), 266 pages. ISBN 1 86064 292 6.

This book is literally and figuratively the epitome of the vast literature on the ramifications of energy economics. In particular, Amuzegar, modestly termed on the dust jacket as a distinguished economist, surveys the work on the consequences of oil windfalls on the OPEC countries. As his bibliography shows, the author seeks to recapitulate numerous studies of the impacts of oil revenues on the OPEC countries. Several studies each exist on most OPEC members.

This literature, in fact, is part of an even broader one that treats all the issues related to world oil. Numerous books deal with the politics. These include works assessing the implications for the rest of the world, others simply examining the countries, and still others exploring various issues.

Amuzegar tries first to render the essence of OPEC in a short space. He starts with an effort simply to characterize the objectives of OPEC. This concludes with a list of the alleged OPEC-wide goals for sustainable development and national security. Many complaints can be directed at this vision. The fatal one is that the rest of the book makes clear that the countries showed little signs of coherent decision making. One does not have to be as libertarian as I am to recognize that what is implicitly being covered by Amuzegar is yet another example of the failure of central planning. (His silence on this point is yet more evidence that economists are too shy about expressing their inherent distrust of central planning. Writers less concerned than Amuzegar about the defects of planning are aware that a nod to Hayek is appropriate).

He next presents (and does not really use) a short "Framework of Analysis." This proves a melange of assorted observations of wildly variable validity. His discussion of revenues begins with the howler that the allocation of revenues to governments depends on land ownership, as if he had never heard of severance taxes. He does recognize that real governments fall short of the idealizations raised in favor of redistributive policies. His third chapter is an even more superficial and unsatisfactory review of the history of OPEC. The

^{1.} Such studies continue to emerge. The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies has a continuing series that has already covered Venezuela, Nigeria, Indonesia, and Libya.

^{2.} For example, Geoffrey Kemp and Robert E. Harkavy, Strategic Geography and the Changing Middle East. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace with The Brookings Institution. They deal with the nonoil security issues, the prospects in the former Soviet states, and Middle East oil problems.

^{3.} For example, Naji Abi-Aad and Michel Grenon, *Instability and Conflict in the Middle East, People Petroleum and Security Threats*. London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's. Each chapter treats a separate problem arising in the region.

For example, The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research's 1999 anthology Privatization and Deregulation in the Gulf Energy Sector.

treatment repeats standard questionable slogans and, like the rest of the book, lacks any economic framework.

Then (p. 48), Amuzegar starts the heart of his study. The remainder of the book examines the use of oil revenues. In chapter IV, he presents a synopsis of the policy climate in each of the thirteen OPEC countries treated. The group includes the countries that exited OPEC. Then chapter V gives surveys of economic performance in each of these countries. The combined treatments are thus less than ten pages per country. Chapter VI presents comparisons of country performance in eight areas from "physical and social infrastructure" to care of the environment. The next chapter examines performance in additional realms. Then a summary is provided. By the time he is done, Amuzegar has recognized that the high hopes that he approvingly discussed in early chapters were not realized. Everything critics of the world oil price rises warned about came true. The countries frittered away their incomes.

Clearly, this is a great deal to pack into the space, and it shows. What is provided is evidence country by country and then criterion by criterion, that the ambitious ambitions were not attained. Ironically, he leads his last chapter, the summary, with the assertion "No outcome in the annals of this century's economic forecasts humiliated (even if it did not humble) renowned soothsayers so much as OPEC's fate." This is doubly wrong. The failures to recognize the depth of the Great Depression and the persistent expectations of a repetition after World War II surely far exceed the supposedly universal fears of OPEC. Second, "orthodox" economists, particularly Adelman whom Amuzegar lists in the bibliography but not in the index, saw OPEC as a cartel prone to the weaknesses of all cartels. Adelman also made the patent weaknesses of the OPEC country governments the center of his normative criticisms of the income transfers produced by higher oil prices. Amuzegar goes on to list the failures as stressing domestic opportunities, haste, overstress of industrialization, lack of policy coordination, excessive military expenditure, and overoptimism.

As already suggested, this is a topic that is decidedly secondary to energy economics. Ultimately, the story, at best, is more journalism than economics. My prior comments imply that Amuzegar has failed to overcome the intrinsic drawbacks of venturing into the topic. Indeed, by not adopting a rigorous economic framework, he has made the presentation even weaker. However, on balance, his deliberate superficiality is the book's most attractive feature. He provides a quick overview and an extensive bibliography. This then is a book for those who want a quick introduction to the efforts and can overlook the defective analysis.

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REFEREE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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