

The Character of Petroleum Licences – A Legal Culture Analysis is the sixth book in the Edward Elgar's "New Horizons in Environmental and Energy Law" series. It revisits the original study into the legal character of petroleum licenses in the relation between the licensor and licensee as of Daintith's 1981 monograph *The Legal Character of Petroleum Licences: A Comparative Study* (University of Dundee, Centre for Petroleum and Mineral Law Studies, ISBN: 0906343089), and it looks at how it has been developed since then. The book incorporates not only the original jurisdictions – Australia, Canada, Norway and the UK – but also those of USA, the Netherlands, Uganda, Russia, Mexico and China. The introduction chapter pays attention to the fact that although the term "legal character" has been used in the 1981 monograph, little attention has been paid to its difference with regard to "legal culture", which considers that politics, economy and law are intertwined, and displays the characteristics and internal relationships of the reviewed petroleum regimes.

Each chapter is self-standing and, if one has the particular task of comparing some of the petroleum laws, this may prove to be very hard or even impossible, due to the different approaches of the authors, associated with the peculiarities of each of the States.

Chapters 2 to 11 consider the petroleum licensing systems of the above-mentioned countries. The general model of presentation is the following: legal system, types of ownership of petroleum and the process of licensing. Thus, the reader may obtain knowledge and understanding on the step-by-step process of licensing and State participation in petroleum production. In addition, the chapters look extensively at who owns the natural resources; whether and when ownership passes to the licensee; what rights the petroleum licences grant – administrative, contract, property or hybrid; the stages of petroleum production and the types of licences for the particular stage; revocation and change of the terms of the petroleum contract.

With the exception of Uganda, which is land-locked, the other nine jurisdictions are coastal States and, thus, they also refer to the seabed exploration and production, albeit focusing on either to a different degree. In other words, some of the authors concentrate on the offshore, others on land-based activities, and the third group on the two types concurrently. The reasons are grounded in the fact that seabed petroleum development has started later in time, while in some jurisdictions it is not sufficiently developed, or that the land-based petroleum resources have already been exhausted. That is why, it is important for one to pay attention to the historical development of the industry in order to comprehend the peculiarities of the legislation in the States under consideration.

The final chapter includes the concluding remarks by Terence Daintith, the editor of the

1981 predecessor of this book. He agrees that petroleum law, similar to the other bodies of law, is not static but develops to be in line with the current tendencies in terms of environmental issues as well as the protection of the interests of all stakeholders. In addition, States do not follow the same trajectory in developing their petroleum laws, which leads to the impossibility of putting them under a common denominator. But it does not mean that the industry has reached its peak and that future developments are impossible.

The book is written in an easy-to-comprehend language. And although there is no link among the chapters with the exception of the introductory and concluding parts, the reader may obtain a synthetic understanding of the various approaches used in governing the different stages of petroleum law. The only criticism is that the introduction of some chapters does not describe their structure and it may take some time for the reader to understand that it would be better to skip it and focus on the main part instead. But having in mind that the potential audience of the book encompasses a broader category of people than only those engaged in researching petroleum law, it is not of major concern. And the reason for this conclusion is that the book may serve a good starting point for the researchers in constitutional law to get a general understanding of the way the different States function as well as the historical links among them in this particular field.

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