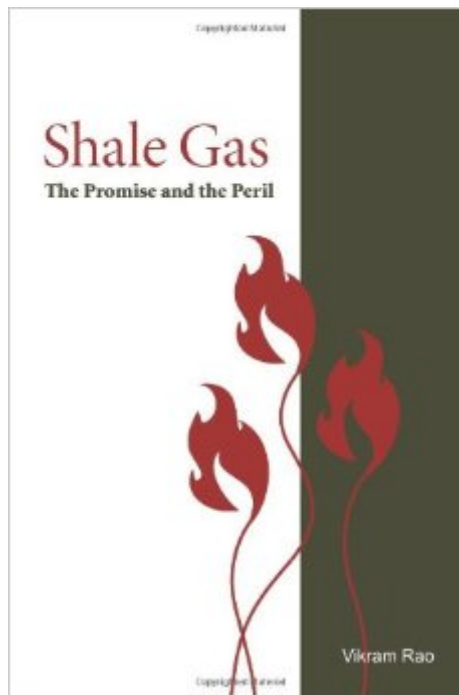


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Shale Gas: The Promise And The Peril (Rti Press Book)



Synopsis

Shale gas has the potential to transform the U.S. energy-based economy in the electricity, transportation, and chemical sectors. U.S. success can be expected to translate to Europe and other parts of the world. Shale gas production is uniquely enabled by hydraulic fracturing, a technique that has come under heavy scrutiny for its potential to cause environmental damage. In this book, Vikram Rao addresses the issues surrounding shale gas in a balanced fashion. The book is intended to inform both sides of the fracturing debate, where currently rhetoric is overtaking understanding. Tailored for a nontechnical audience "with technical chemistry and geology information couched in sidebars" the book culminates in suggestions for research and guidance for policymaking.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the best book on fracking available. The author gives a balanced analysis, with lots of technical details. It is not a diatribe either for or against, but a thoughtful overview of the benefits and risks. Only problem -- it might be a little too technical for the general reader. Highly recommended nonetheless.

Tempted by good reviews, I assigned this short book to an undergraduate class in environmental policy, to my regret. The author seems competent, has a sense of humor, covers a full range of

topics related to shale gas, and though he obviously favors its exploitation, gives respectful attention to objections raised by opponents. BUT the short chapters often seem like a staccato of numbers and chemical terms, making even readers with good backgrounds -- I include myself -- glaze over, looking for big pictures among the tiny details and asides. There is a Glossary, but even that guide is inadequate to make this smooth reading. Though Rao claims to be writing for a general audience, relegating "calculations and chemistry details to shaded boxes, which can be skipped without losing the main thread," I often found the shaded boxes easier to read than the main text. If this book merits a second edition, it would be worthwhile to do a major rewrite, making it more reader friendly.

This well-researched book explores the dangers and the benefits of hydrofracking in the United States. The presentation was impressive. The author examined environmental drawbacks to shale exploration and offered viable solutions for exploiting this natural resource while minimizing negative impacts. He also explores impacts on national security and international relations. A weakness of the book is the redundancy of certain points made in several chapters when once might have sufficed. Some of the technical information and chemistry is probably beyond the average reader, such as myself, but the book is organized so it can be skimmed or skipped. I have read so much on the dangers of fracking. This book enabled me to understand more about the positive impacts it could have. Drilling should proceed carefully and slowly enough to allow the best practices suggested in this book to become widespread. Research on aquifer protection and assessment of environmental impacts need to be fully funded and carried out as quickly as possible. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to understand the issues surrounding shale exploration. The author discloses that he is a lifelong member of the Sierra Club. If he disclosed that he worked for Halliburton for years, I missed it. He currently works for the Research Triangle Energy Consortium. Environmental concerns are listed as two of the group's five goals. Perhaps that accounts for my perception that the book presented both environmental concerns and economic impacts of natural gas exploration. Yet as I considered this book over time, I developed concern that the environmental impacts might be glossed over by an author clearly coming at the issue from the energy camp. Protecting drinking water and the aquifer has to be the number one priority for our country.

This is one of the most rewarding non-fiction books I can recall reading. I've been hearing a lot about fracking in the news media, and I have to admit to having been very confused. Most of the discussion consists of shouting from both sides, or overly-technical jargon that is impossible for a non-scientist like myself to discern. This book presents fracking in a neutral manner that is digestible

to the lay person. Since I finished reading it a couple days ago, my friends and loved ones have been unanimously impressed by my ability to speak intelligently and authoritatively when we debate the approach the American government should take to fracking. But just in case anyone thinks this book is only for Americans, it really isn't, since the same debate could happen anywhere. Great job, Vik Rao. I am really proud of this book, and will recommend vigorously!

It takes a very smart person to reduce a complex area to simple concepts. Vik Rao is the smartest person I ever met, and has a very good readable way of presenting his unorthodox views of approaching the challenges of shale gas. Rao's thoughts are presented in a clear and readable manner that make plain the risk we face as a nation in treating shale gas as business as usual rather than thinking through the management of a strategic resource for the benefit of society as a whole. Almost anecdotally, Rao identifies the key threads to be brought into the policy and planning process at the outset, so as to extract shale in ways that do not cause earthquakes or spoil water. Since most people lack the broad vision of Rao (or at least have narrower incentives) pretty much everyone will disagree with him at some point, which makes it even more fun for all to read.

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