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## Editorial: How much energy for healing or poisoning a climate?

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As with four earlier special issues written for the Inderscience journal *IJFIP*, this editorial represents a conceptual *umbrella* under which all contributions to this *IJGEI* special issue entitled “Energy as evolutionary basis for dialogic international policies” – find their appropriate place. This umbrella is the *paradigm of societal transition, enabling a profound energy transition*.

This paradigm means: the materialisation of a system of ethical values based on mutual respect, caring interdependence, fact-based evidence, free approach to information, reliable societal institutions, and cooperative action (Ahamer, 2019) is, among others, also an economy’s energy system based on reliability, equity, and durability for the future (currently named sustainability, meaning a system which can be sustained for long).

In these months (as at any time in history), no all of these prerequisites for a future energy system are available in all countries to the same degree. For a reliable energy system (and for reliable societal procedures at large), public credibility for administrative processes is indispensable. We witness increasing signs that basic trust into the functionality of institutions strongly decreased in countries that are key to global energy supply, most strikingly now in Russia (Dud’, 2020; Navalny, 2021). The subsequent arrest of that documentation’s author (APA, 2021), unusually large numbers of protesters in favour of his relief (BBC, 2021; AP, 2021) and personal expressions of protesters such as “Russia has been turned into a prison camp” or “We are the power here!” (DW, 2021) triggered public institutions to express that demonstrations would be “immediately suppressed”.

On the factual level, the reception of what is ‘real’ in that country differs between society and administrative power. The process foreseen for equilibrating differences in reality perception is to “immediately suppress” (DW, 2021) despite wide evidence (Rogov, 2020) and detain those who express such a difference of views (Troianovski et al., 2021), despite evidence (Standard, 2020; Navalny, 2020; Spiegel, 2020; CNN, 2020, MSN (2020)). Our question now is: what relevance does this have for energy – and for an anticipated structural transition of energy systems?

Evolutionary, smooth and peaceful change of energy systems is posited to be highly necessary based on

- 1 General dynamic evolutionary principles (www.ahamer.com),
- 2 Maintenance of a desirable future for the planet (EU Green Deal, 2020), often named sustainability,
- 3 Operational and structural flexibility of energy-related (and other) institutions to adapt to shifting targets within energy policies and related administrative domains.

The present state of realpolitik in that large energy-producing country does not seem to favour these necessary transitions.

When speaking about the future, the perceptions of population about their future options are more important than past facts. While facts about the mentioned palace were known widely among population, the mentioned video allowed for more crystallised perceptions of the same facts by a population across all Russian cities and beyond. In its answer, the “power system” (vlast, in Russian) resorts to sheer force in the streets (Atlantic Council, 2021). From an outside viewpoint, this harsh reaction even amounts to irrational societal self-mutilation, when taking into account the generally quite high educational level within Russia. Some authors call this tactic even “bombing of Voronesh” (i.e., in response to damage suffered by the leadership class, you hit your own people, especially the weakest) (Saprykin, 2015).

How can an administrative system still preserve its imposed view, even after having lost dozens of percentage points (Zeit, 2019; FAZ, 2018) in public acceptance? The highly informative and well-structured collection of authentic Russian sources dekode.org suggests that “it is well known that democratisation processes are directly related to access to information and to whether people have the opportunity to weigh up alternatives” (Albats and Davydow, 2015). And “propaganda works when it speaks to the very essence of the collective consciousness”. On Russian parallel worlds, Pushkin (1879–1917) during his time remarked so aptly: “It is so easy to cheat on me – and I like to cheat myself so much!” (Travin, 2016, 2018).

Some observers of Russian real-world politics (Korostikov, 2017) see a “honey badger strategy”, namely audaciously attacking other animals even when being visibly weaker than the attacked – that author compared the actually feeble economic weight of Russia with the EU or USA. One year earlier, the political scientist Sergei Medvedev (laureate of the Pushkin House Prize, a political scientist at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, but chased from there in the meantime) noticed that Russia exports one thing above all in addition to oil and gas: *fear* (Medvedev, 2016; Franke, 2017). With this export good, this actually weak country appears omnipotent to Western countries (Umland, 2004). Meanwhile, the fog veiling such Russian strategies “is gradually clearing; the opponents learn to recognise Moscow’s moves and even to predict, the effectiveness of the method decreases. It is becoming routine for Western intelligence services to track down trolls and hackers. Politicians who are accused of having ties to Moscow drop out of the race earlier and earlier and receive fewer and fewer votes” (Korostikov, 2017).

However, substantial economic (or even political) success is not brought to a country by such strategy (Frolov, 2020; Bershidsky, 2020; Baev, 2020), neither by election fraud (Shpilkin, 2020) or continued disinformation (EUvsDisInfo, 2021; Polyakova and

Fried, 2020). Last week's diagnosis by the European Union representative Borrell (FAZ, 2021) was that it looks like "that Russia is progressively *decoupling from Europe* and viewing *democratic values as an existential threat*".

The above analysis shows that *flexibility* of present-day societal institutions in Russia might *not exist*. At least not to a sufficient degree to facilitate an *energy transition*.

Even if single communication events take place with a focus on energy do take place, such as the Moscow energy conference in mid-December (Skolkovo, 2020), the overall functionalities in the Russian politico-socio-institutional system do not favour necessary change (BPB, 2018; OVD, 2017) based on insight.

Even if presently much *energy is invested in healing the climate*, until now too much energy got invested in poisoning the same climate of trust – which amounts to any economy's true basis.

As a result, clear but respectful language and proactive clarifications should be the method of choice (Atlantic Council, 2020: 16-19). This special issue analyses to which degree energy transition is already successfully implemented in other countries around the globe.

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