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Taking the Chinese Petroleumscape Seriously

An historical institutionalism approach

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Abstract

To conduct a thorough investigation into the planning and construction history of China's oil industry, it is necessary to redefine the layers within the Global Petroleumscape (TGP) from a historical institutionalism perspective. The TGP framework, as proposed by Hein, differentiates multiple layers generated by the footprint of the oil industry through three dimensions: spatial, represented, and representational. However, when applying these layers to analyse Chinese cases, it becomes apparent that they have difficulties to accurately pinpoint the transformations in China's oil industry planning. This discrepancy stems from the fact that the planning and construction of China's oil industry chain are under the strict control of state power institutions and only allow market transactions within a very limited scope. To address this issue, the paper proposes adopting a historical institutionalism perspective to study and summarize the institutionalized spaces, representations in the development of China's oil industry. By applying these institutions to extend the usage scenarios of TGP, this research develops a framework more suited for examining the Chinese Petroleumscape.

Keywords

Petroleumscape, Historical Institutionalism, China studies

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