

Notice of Doctoral Dissertation Examination

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PhD Global Governance

“Governing Chinese Engagement with the Hydrocarbon-Rich Countries; Examining Chinese Investment in the Hydrocarbon Sector of Canada and Russia”

ABSTRACT

Wed April 24th
8:00 AM

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China’s global quest for energy has been one of the most fascinating developments of the past twenty years. As Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have increasingly gone ‘global’ in search of energy resources, scholars have explored the rationale and implications of China’s investment abroad. However, existing studies have yet to examine the ability of Chinese SOEs to complete the intended investment projects. Several studies that have noted this gap suggest that researchers should examine the ability of Chinese SOEs to adapt to different institutional environments (Smith and D’Arcy 2013) and to analyze the responses of local stakeholders to Chinese SOEs’ engagement (Abdenur 2017). Responding to their call, my study aims to explain how domestic political economy (more specifically, institutional arrangements and stakeholder relations) shapes the ability of Chinese SOEs to successfully participate in hydrocarbon projects in a host country.

To answer this question, I conducted a qualitative comparative study of Chinese engagement in the Canadian and Russian hydrocarbon sector. My research consisted of fieldwork, interviews, and library research in Canada and Russia. I utilized within-case studies – by looking at specific

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hydrocarbon projects where Chinese SOEs indicated interest to participate - to examine the reception of Chinese SOEs' investment and loans (or other finance) along the hydrocarbon chain in both countries. My analytical framework combined historical institutionalism with stakeholder theories to analyze the ability of Chinese SOEs to participate in hydrocarbon projects in host societies. My framework proposes that stakeholder politics are shaped by an intervening variable, inter-state relations, which influences the receptiveness of stakeholders toward Chinese SOEs.

My research finds that Chinese SOEs' participation – which includes direct investment, loans, and other finance – in the hydrocarbon industry is determined by host-country institutions and stakeholder politics. Relatedly, Chinese engagement/participation in the hydrocarbon sector varies on the basis of the local needs. I propose that inter-state relations influence the timing of Chinese engagement as they shape stakeholder strategies in recipient countries, while formal and informal institutions interact with stakeholder politics in shaping the ability of Chinese SOEs to participate in hydrocarbon projects. Ultimately, this study explains the responses of investment-recipient countries to foreign direct investment and loans from Chinese SOEs in the hydrocarbon sector. In doing so, it makes theoretical and empirical contributions to the existing scholarship on international business, comparative political economy, and China studies.

Dissertation will be on deposit in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and available for perusal.

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