CHINA COAL POLICY DATABASE

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Overview

China is now the world's largest energy user and the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Its cities have experienced headline-grabbing poor air quality which has become a serious health problem. In large part this is because of China's high coal dependence. 67% of China's total primary energy comes from coal. Forecasts of future consumption have varied greatly. As the economy grows, coal's position as a low cost, abundant and domestic fuel leads some to argue that its use will also continue to grow. The worsening pollution and surrounding political rhetoric has led others to argue that coal use will curtail. Understanding how coal policy is formed and what factors have driven its evolution in the past can help us understand how new policies might dictate coal's future.

One of the major barriers to policy research on China's energy sector is the lack of available data presented in the systematized way. To address this issue, we are constructing a policy database as a way to aggregate, co-ordinate and systematise energy related strategic plans and major regulations at national and provincial levels. This method has been applied in categorizing and analysing a wide range of regulations worldwide, but its current application to energy policy research is relatively limited, primarily covering renewable energy and energy intensity. Country wise, the majority of studies remain focused on the OECD group, with occasional research efforts devoted to China or India. Moreover, existing energy policy databases often lack the required level of detail.

The goal of our study is to develop a comprehensive China coal policy dataset (as a sample of our future China energy policy database) and analyse its potential to provide deeper insights into China's energy policy, specifically, the policy evolution process and interaction with external factors such as world fuel prices, domestic energy production / consumption, and pollution levels.

We first present a brief literature review and thendescribe the coal policy database.We present the database structure, the criteria used to identify the data sources, and the resulting list of major coal industry-related policies in China. We then explore applications of our method for policy analysis using an identified policy scope as a sample. We conclude with a summary of our findings and implications for further research.

Methods

Document analysis and systematization; descriptive and explanatory case studies; statistical analysis.

Results

We identified and categorized major policies related to coal industry in China for the period covering 11-th and 12-th Five-Year Plans. The policy database is presented to facilitate systematic analysis of China's energy sector regulations and strategic plans. We defined the scope of policy-related topics within the China's energy sector, which can be addressed by the suggested methodology, and outlined directions for further research.

Conclusions

The China coal policy database facilitates research on energy and policy by providing a consistently organized dataset structured in exclusive and exhaustive categories. This tool can be used for various policy analysis applications including identifying major policy focus areas and their evolution, policy coherence, econometric analysis, and developing forecasts based on determined patterns. The usability and broad range of research implications conduce continued expansion of the database to embrace the other China energy subsectors, specific energy policy focus areas, and provincial level regulations.

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