

Call for Papers

Hydrocarbons and societies: histories of labor, social relations, and industrial culture in the oil and gas industry

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Special Issue Editors

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Workers, engineers, technocrats, and managers have played a central role in the development of the hydrocarbon industry. Concentrated in refineries, oilfields, pipeline stations, off-shore drilling platforms, oil tankers, and gas stations, human labor has played a central role in hydrocarbon history. As well as capital and technology, human workforce has contributed to the development of extraction, production and distribution activities, fostering fossil fuels consumption and shaping the flows of carbon energy. Despite the recent turn in the scholarship away from energy diplomacy and financial revenues, towards the study of what has been termed variously an 'oil complex' or 'oil assemblage', studies emphasizing the material structures and technical organization of the oil and gas industry are raising attention to the social and labor histories of oil.

The aim of this special issue is to put the human element at the heart of the analysis of the history of hydrocarbons in the 19th and 20th centuries. Drawing on newly available materials in corporate archives and other collections and adopting the approaches of social and cultural history makes it possible to analyse the emergence of oil-related industrial cultures, professional identities, and political contestation in the different sectors of this industry. What kinds of social and cultural encounters shaped processes of oil extraction and consumption? How did hydrocarbon industry jobs become professionalised and diversified? Who are the men and women who worked in this sector? How have they contributed to the development of technical knowledge and expertise in the field of hydrocarbons? What role have workers and labor organizations played in transforming the politics of carbon energy? How have the business strategies pursued by oil executives, notably in areas of marketing and communications, shaped everyday experiences and practices of energy consumption?

We particularly welcome submissions related to the following themes and topics:

- Technical expertise and the structuring of scientific and professional networks
- The interaction between the oil and gas industry and the natural environment
- Processes of decolonization and the emergence of social and environmental demands on the oil industry
- Urban history and the built environments of oil and gas

- Labor histories and the lived experiences of workers
- The role of race and racial strategies of labor management in the development of the industry

Submission Details:

To have your paper considered for this special issue, please send an abstract of no more than 500 words and a short CV to Radouan Mounecif (radouan.mounecif@hotmail.it) and Natasha Pesaran (npesaran@gmail.com) before January 1st, 2022. Abstracts will be reviewed by the co-editors and authors will be notified by January 10th, 2022.

Timeline

- January 1st, 2022 : deadline for abstract submission
- January 10th, 2022 : selection of authors
- April 15th, 2022 : submission of the first draft
- April-May 2022 : peer reviewing
- 1st June, 2022 : submission of edited version to the Journal of Energy History
- June to October 2022: peer reviewing
- October-December : copy editing and publication by the Journal of Energy History (early release mode)