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Energy security and increasing international interdependence. Israeli energy policy in transition

There is no doubt that the history of Israeli innovativeness, international competitiveness and social as well as economic development is a story of success. Israel is sometimes called a ‘villa in the jungle’ and Israelis a ‘start-up nation’. However, since its establishment in 1948 Israel has faced many developmental challenges and security dilemmas. Historically, Israel has been a net energy importer and energy security has been one of the major considerations in the formulation of governmental policies. Since the establishment of the state of Israel, its subsequent governments have had to face serious socio-economic problems, mainly resulting from the constant military threat from neighboring Arab states and the lack of its own energy resources.

The traditional perception of energy security, focusing on ensuring continuity of energy supply at the expense of its other aspects, primarily economic and environmental ones, changed significantly with the discovery of large offshore natural gas deposits a decade ago. It is estimated that it can cover domestic gas consumption for at least 30 years and simultaneously allow significant surplus exports. For Israel, sometimes referred to as an ‘energy island’, it is the first opportunity for the liberalization of the energy market. The current government is therefore facing a serious dilemma. On the one hand, it wants to maintain the dynamic economic development of the state, driven mainly by hi-tech and international competitiveness, and increasingly based on domestic energy resources. On the other, however, it must do so under conditions of continuous security threats, which justify the interference and even state control over sectors defined as essential for national security.

The research project aims to introduce an analytical framework designed to guide future investigation of energy policy and to shed light on the casual relationships between the national security concerns, the phenomenon of interdependence (both on domestic and international level) and energy policy formulation and implementation in the state of Israel. In our study, we suggest that in the period under review (since 2009), subsequent governments responsible for Israel's energy policy were interested in its far-reaching politicization, resulting in its securitisation. Firstly, we ask questions about the main motivations, interests and goals of the main securitising actor in the Israeli energy policy. Based on preliminary research, we recognize the Israeli government as the main securitising actor. Secondly, we want to investigate whether Israel, is susceptible to securitisation of energy issues, or are there some significant limitations in this regard. Thirdly, considering the normative nature of political processes, we are interested in the consequences of securitisation for the evolving nature of the political system, including the condition and mechanisms of liberal democracy, the free market and multilateral international political order. The research results will be interesting not only for researchers, experts, and politicians but also for European societies that also need to assess the policies of their own states.