



Global Energy Crisis and West Asia Politics: Geopolitical Dynamics, Resource Control, and Future Energy Security

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Abstract

The energy crisis has become an urgent problem of our time, due to the demand for energy far outstripping the available supply. The geopolitical and resource-rich areas in West Asia are central to the world's energy picture. This research paper looks at the relationship of the global energy crisis with political events in West Asia; it includes how geopolitical conflicts, resource control, and global involvement impact energy security. Events in history, such as the 1973 oil crisis and Gulf war, have shown that political instability can disrupt the supply of energy and create volatility in price. Key oil exporting countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates heavily influence the world energy market; OPEC also plays an important role when it comes to controlling oil production to maintain price stability, although political influences can impact these decisions. This research also emphasises that the role of world powers, specifically the USA and China, has created a degree of geopolitical competitiveness within the region. Additionally, the shift toward renewable energy is changing global energy systems, with investments in renewable energy by countries in West Asia to diversify their economies. The research findings also conclude that West Asia will remain a mainstay for the world's energy supply; however, the Political tensions between the United States and China and the renewed focus on a global energy transition are evolving West Asia's role in the global energy supply chain. Continued implementation of sustainable energy policies, economic diversification, and international co-operation will be critical elements necessary for long-term energy security.

Keywords: Global energy crisis; West Asia politics; Energy security; Geopolitics; Renewable energy transition

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Introduction

The key factor that drives innovation, develops industry and drives economic growth in the modern world is energy. Low-cost and reliable energy resources provide the basis upon which the economy is productive, by facilitating infrastructure development, and improving the quality of life for individuals. In contrast, the global energy system has been under increasing pressure due to a mismatch between supply and demand, which has resulted in what is commonly referred to as the global energy crisis; specifically, rising fuel prices, shortages of supply, and increased economic vulnerability, often experienced with increased geopolitical tensions and environmental issues. The modern global energy crisis is a product of a number of structural and situational factors. Rapid industrialisation in emerging economies is driving up global energy demand; increasing population numbers and increasing standards of living put further upward pressure on energy consumption. Disruption to the supply of energy due to global supply chain disruptions resulting from political conflict, pandemic and volatility in the markets and economy continue to restrict energy availability. A recent example of this is the Russia-Ukraine war, which disrupted the supply of natural gas to Europe and catalysed a global search for alternative energy resources, increasing Europe's dependence on oil and gas from West Asia. This highlights the interconnected nature of energy systems and geopolitical developments. The geopolitical significance of the hydrocarbon resources of West Asia is huge, with approx. 50 percent of the oil reserves of the world are in West Asia, as well as a significant portion of the world's natural gas reserves, which means this region is an essential component of the world's energy supply (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, [OPEC], April, 2023). The West Asian countries producing oil, namely the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates, account for a large part of the world's oil production and support most of the world's oil exports. The influence of these oil-producing countries on global supply levels and their production strategies under the OPEC framework produces a considerable impact on future price stability. The geopolitical importance of West Asia is also based on its geographic proximity to so-called "chokepoints" for maritime transport, particularly, the Strait of Hormuz, which is a major trade route used by a large portion of the world's oil, and any disruptions in these shipping lanes (military, piracy, or domestic political tensions) will have quick and large impacts on global energy market prices and will disrupt global supply chains (BP, April, 2023). As a result, securing these shipping lanes has become a priority for both regional and global powers. Political instability throughout the Middle East has historically contributed to many global energy crises. Conflicts, sanctions, and struggles for influence create fluctuations in oil production and exports across this region. For instance, political tensions

between regional authorities, domestic political instability, and international intervention often disrupt supply chains and the physical infrastructure that supply them. Sanctions imposed upon Iran have reduced this country's ability to export oil; as well, conflicts in Iraq and surrounding countries have negatively affected production capabilities. These geopolitical dynamics generate uncertainties within global markets, contributing to increased crude oil price volatility and supply uncertainty (Fattouh & Sen, 2021). In addition to domestic conflicts occurring within the region, the engagement of the world's great powers adds additional complexities between countries involved in energy politics within the Middle East. As an example, both the United States and China have strategic interests in securing energy supplies and maintaining influence in the region through diplomatic, economic, and military means. These US and Chinese stakeholders often determine policy, form alliances, and establish energy trade patterns based upon the aforementioned activities. Competition among great powers for access to energy resources has sharply increased in recent years and illustrates the growing importance of energy security in global geopolitics (Yergin, 2020). The ongoing transition towards renewable and sustainable energy systems represents another major aspect of the global energy crisis. There has been a growing concern over climate change, environmental degradation and carbon emissions that are pushing for the switch from fossil fuel-based to clean energy sources such as solar, wind and green hydrogen. This transition presents difficulties for the economies of West Asia that have depended on traditional oil revenues. Oil-rich places like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have committed large amounts of their resources to developing renewable energy projects and diversifying their economies. However, there is still considerable variation in the rate at which these countries are making these transitions (IRENA, 2023). Moreover, the global movement to decarbonise will likely change energy demand across the globe over the next few decades. An end to dependency on fossil fuels will lessen the geopolitical importance of oil rich regions, while raising the profile of new technologies and sustainable energy investment. At the same time, fossil fuels will continue to be the primary source to supply energy globally over the short to medium term; thus, West Asia will remain a key component of the energy landscape of the world (IEA, 2023). With all of these challenges, it is important to look into the relationships among geopolitical/military circumstances of West Asia and global energy crises. The combination of West Asia's energy resources and geopolitical importance results in a key factor in global energy security. The aim of this research is to analyze the way in which geopolitical tensions, on-going resource conflicts and changing international power structures affect energy markets, and consequently create a global energy crisis. The objective of the

study is to create an understanding of the evolution of countries in West Asia in shaping energy trends globally and ultimately influencing energy governance in time to come, through the application of both economic, political and environmental studies.

Review of Literature

Energy geopolitics has been a major theme throughout the study of international relations and energy economics. These studies have shown that control of and access to energetic resources, especially crude oil and natural gas, shape both the power and foreign policy of countries. Yergin (2020) notes that energy security, especially regarding crude oil, has historically been one of the leading geopolitical forces driving international alliances, causes of conflict, and their resulting economic strategies. Klare (2012) also notes the increasing competition between countries for energy, particularly as demand continues to rise, and easily accessible reserves begin to dwindle. The body of literature concerning energy and geopolitics has begun to expand its focus to include globalization and the effects of improved technology. According to International Energy Agency (IEA, 2023), due to their ever-increasing interconnectedness within the global economy, energy markets are becoming more susceptible to geopolitical shocks. The recent Ukraine-Russia conflict is an excellent example of how geopolitical conflicts can disrupt the supply chain for global energy, resulting in price volatility and economic instability. There are additional studies being released by IEA focused on the ways in which countries are taking steps to improve their energy security, including diversifying their energy sources and reducing dependence on any one provider. A sizable portion of research on global energy geo-politics has been concentrated on the energy geo-political role of West Asia. The reason for this is that there is a very large amount of hydrocarbon reserves in West Asia. It is therefore a major contributor to energy markets across the globe. The influence of OPEC, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and among other areas, has been widely studied for its influence over production and prices of oil. The decisions of OPEC, with regards to output quotas, have a direct impact on the prices of oil and/or the economic health of many nation states (OPEC, 2023). Recent examples include the work of Academics including Fattouh and Sen (2021) have sought to conduct empirical analysis of the behaviour of oil exporting countries within West Asia and their ability to adjust to market fluctuations, as well as geopolitical pressures, as they move towards diversifying their economies for long-term sustainable economic development. In addition to the more traditional energy geo-political studies, there is increasing interest in how the global movement toward renewable energy, and the corresponding geo-political impacts, will shape energy markets. To combat climate change and promote the decarbonization of the global economy, there have been a dramatic influx of financial investment in renewable energy technologies worldwide. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) reported that West Asian countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, are investing significant financial resources into solar energy and green hydrogen projects (IRENA, 2023). Furthermore, these investment programmes are also part of a global strategy to reduce the national reliance upon oil revenues and adjust their economies and borders to accommodate the changing energy economy. The idea of energy transition is a major factor in the changing geopolitics of energy and the possibility of new global power shifts as countries continue to develop new forms of renewable energy, leading to a potential decline in the "traditional" dominance of oil-producing regions. However, many experts and researchers agree that while the world becomes more reliant upon renewable forms of energy, fossil fuels will remain a significant part of the global energy mix for many years to come (IEA, 2023), thus creating a very complex and dynamic situation where both traditional and renewable energy systems exist side by side, with their coexistence having an impact on global geopolitics. The degree of energy supply chain security (both resilience and reliability) is another critical area of research. In its 2024 report, the World Bank reports that, due to a variety of factors (i.e. political turmoil, trade sanctions, natural disasters) disruptions to the energy supply chain can have a much broader global impact than other economic disruptions. Previous research has shown that countries around the world again are increasingly implementing mitigation strategies (i.e. strategic reserves of oil, diversifying energy imports, or investing in domestic energy production). Recently, multiple studies have been conducted focusing on both the negative environmental impacts (i.e., climate change and environmental degradation) of using fossil fuels when producing or consuming energy, and the need for developing sustainable energy policy in light of those problems. Balancing environmental sustainability with economic growth is considered by researchers to be one of the most significant challenges facing global energy systems (IRENA, 2023). In addition to addressing the climate and environmental degradation issues associated with fossil fuel energy use, West Asia will also need to find a way to maintain itself as one of the world's major energy suppliers and move toward implementing more sustainable means of generating energy.

Materials and Methods

This study adopts a qualitative and analytical research methodology to examine the complex relationship between the global energy crisis and political dynamics in West Asia. Given the multidimensional nature of the topic, the research integrates perspectives from political science, energy economics, and environmental studies to provide a comprehensive and interdisciplinary analysis. The methodology is primarily based on secondary data sources, systematic literature review, and geopolitical analysis.

1. Data Sources-The study relies extensively on secondary data obtained from internationally recognized organizations and institutions. Key sources include reports and statistical databases from the International Energy Agency (IEA), the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and the World Bank. These sources provide reliable and up-to-date information on global energy production, consumption patterns, price fluctuations, and policy developments (IEA, 2023; OPEC, 2023; World Bank, 2024). Additionally, data from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) have been utilized to assess trends in renewable energy transitions and sustainability initiatives.

2. Literature Review Approach-A systematic review of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and policy papers published between 2000 and 2025 was conducted to establish the theoretical and empirical foundation of the study. Academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect were used to identify relevant literature. Keywords including "global energy crisis," "West Asia geopolitics," "energy security," and "renewable energy transition" were employed to retrieve scholarly publications. Priority was given to high-impact journals and recent studies to ensure the inclusion of current and credible research findings (Fattouh & Sen, 2021). The literature review focuses on identifying key themes, including the geopolitical significance of energy resources, the role of oil-exporting countries, and the implications of energy transitions. This approach allows for a critical synthesis of existing knowledge and highlights gaps that the present study aims to address.

3. Geopolitical and Policy AnalysisThe study incorporates a qualitative analysis of major geopolitical events and policy frameworks that have influenced global energy markets. Events such as conflicts, sanctions, and international agreements are examined to understand their impact on energy supply and demand dynamics. Policy documents, strategic plans, and international agreements related to energy security and climate change are also analyzed to assess their implications for West Asia and the global energy system.

This component of the methodology emphasizes the role of political decision-making and international relations in shaping energy outcomes. By examining both regional and global perspectives, the study captures the interconnected nature of energy geopolitics.

4. Analytical Framework-The research employs an interdisciplinary analytical framework that combines concepts from political science and energy economics. The political science perspective focuses on power relations, state behavior, and geopolitical conflicts, while the energy economics approach examines market dynamics, pricing mechanisms, and resource allocation. This integrated framework enables a holistic understanding of how political and economic factors interact to influence global energy trends.

Results and Discussion

•Historical Energy Crises- The analysis of historical energy crises reveals that geopolitical events have consistently played a decisive role in shaping global energy markets. The 1973 Oil Crisis marked a turning point, demonstrating the ability of oil-producing nations to exert control over global supply and pricing. Oil prices increased nearly fourfold, triggering inflation and economic instability worldwide. Similarly, conflicts such as the Gulf War led to disruptions in oil production and transportation infrastructure, further highlighting the vulnerability of global energy systems to political instability. These events established a strong correlation between geopolitical tensions and energy price volatility.

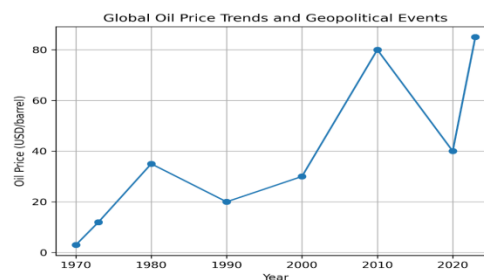


Fig. 1. Oil price fluctuations driven by geopolitical events

•Role of West Asia in Global Energy Supply- West Asia remains the cornerstone of global energy supply due to its vast hydrocarbon reserves. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and United Arab Emirates contribute

significantly to global oil exports. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries plays a central role in regulating oil production through output quotas aimed at stabilizing global prices. However, the results indicate that OPEC decisions are not purely economic but are often influenced by political considerations, including alliances, sanctions, and regional rivalries. This dual influence of economics and politics makes global energy markets highly sensitive to developments in the region.

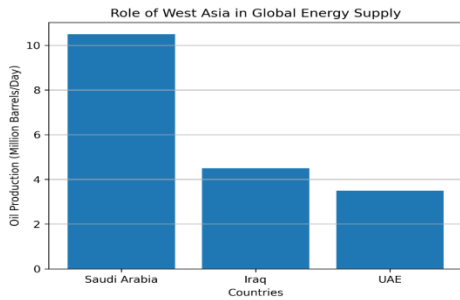


Fig.2 West Asia oil exports dominate global energy supply and markets

•Geopolitical Conflicts and Energy Markets- Geopolitical conflicts in West Asia have had a direct impact on energy production and distribution systems. Ongoing instability in Syria and Yemen has damaged critical infrastructure, reduced production capacity, and disrupted supply chains. The findings suggest that even localized conflicts can have global repercussions due to the interconnected nature of energy markets. Increased uncertainty leads to speculative trading, which further amplifies price fluctuations. Thus, political instability in West Asia continues to be a major driver of global energy crises.

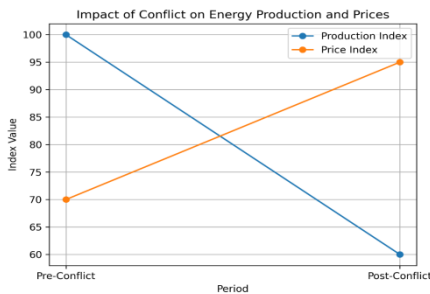


Fig.3 Conflicts reduce production while increasing energy prices significantly globally

•External Powers and Energy Politics- The involvement of global powers such as the United States and China underscores the strategic importance of West Asia in global energy security. The United States has historically maintained a strong military and political presence in the region to secure oil supply routes, while China has expanded its economic and energy partnerships through investments and long-term contracts. These external engagements have intensified geopolitical competition, influencing energy policies, trade routes, and regional alliances. The results indicate that global energy governance is increasingly shaped by the strategic interests of these major powers.

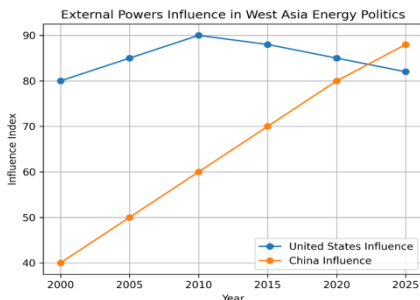


Fig.4 US dominance declining while China influence rising in energy politics

•Energy Transition and Future Trends- The shift toward renewable energy represents a significant transformation in global energy dynamics. West Asian countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, are investing in solar power and green hydrogen projects to diversify their economies. The results indicate that while fossil fuels remain dominant in the short term, renewable energy is gradually gaining importance. This transition is expected to reduce long-term dependence on oil, potentially altering geopolitical power structures. However, the pace of change varies across countries, and challenges such as technological limitations and economic dependence on oil revenues persist.

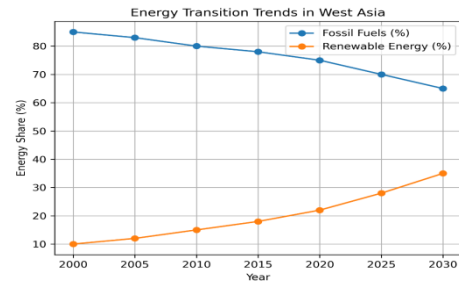


Fig.5 Renewable energy rising while fossil fuel dominance gradually declines globally

Conclusion

The global energy crisis is intrinsically linked to the complex political dynamics of West Asia, a region that continues to play a pivotal role in global energy supply due to its vast reserves of oil and natural gas. Historically, geopolitical conflicts, strategic rivalries, and external interventions in West Asia have significantly influenced global energy markets, leading to fluctuations in supply, price volatility, and economic instability. The dominance of major oil-producing nations such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and United Arab Emirates underscores the region’s continued importance in ensuring global energy security. However, the findings of this study indicate that the traditional energy landscape is undergoing a significant transformation. Increasing geopolitical tensions, regional conflicts, and the involvement of global powers have added layers of complexity to energy governance. At the same time, the global shift toward renewable energy is gradually reshaping the role of West Asia in the international energy system. Investments in solar power, green hydrogen, and sustainable energy infrastructure reflect a strategic effort by regional economies to diversify and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Despite these advancements, challenges remain. Economic reliance on oil revenues, technological limitations, and uneven progress in renewable energy adoption pose significant barriers to a smooth energy transition. Moreover, the persistence of political instability and strategic competition among global powers continues to create uncertainties in global energy markets. Achieving long-term energy security requires a balanced approach that integrates sustainable energy policies, economic diversification, and geopolitical stability. Strengthening international cooperation, promoting technological innovation, and ensuring equitable energy access will be critical in addressing future energy challenges. As the global energy system evolves, West Asia’s ability to adapt to changing dynamics will determine its continued relevance in shaping the future of global energy governance.

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