

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SCIENCES
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**MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION PROCESSES
IN THE GLOBAL ENERGY CRISIS**

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Abstract: *Global energy crises are often interpreted as technical supply bottlenecks or economic shocks. This paper, however, argues that energy crises should be understood as complex socio-technical governance problems in which energy, information, and political control are closely intertwined. The central thesis of this paper is that information governance is not merely a supporting factor, but a constitutive prerequisite of modern energy systems. Based on approaches from energy history and social sciences, energy is conceptualized as a structuring basis of social development that is always linked to specific power, knowledge, and information orders.*

The analysis shows that the importance of information processes is growing significantly with the increasing complexity of modern energy systems. Decisions on energy policy and transformation paths are increasingly based on standardized data, scenarios, and institutionally embedded communication processes. Deficits in information governance can impair political decision-making, hamper international cooperation, and exacerbate geopolitical tensions. Furthermore, it is argued that energy crises are always also communication crises, the management of which depends largely on transparent, dialogical crisis communication. The article therefore advocates for a stronger institutional anchoring of information governance.

Keywords: *Information processes; Energy governance; Energy crisis; International energy policy; Socio-technical system*

INTRODUCTION

The current global energy crisis is often described in political and scientific debates as a technical supply problem or as a consequence of external shocks such as geopolitical conflicts, market distortions, or climate-related extreme events. However, such perspectives fall short because they do not adequately capture the underlying structural conditions of modern energy systems. Energy crises are not solely an expression of physical scarcity or technological limitations, but arise from complex interactions between technical infrastructures, social orders, and political control processes.

This work is based on the assumption that energy crises can only be adequately understood if energy is viewed as a socio-technical phenomenon that is always linked to specific power, knowledge, and information orders. Historically, energy systems have never been purely technical arrangements, but have always been organized institutionally, politically, and communicatively. With the increasing complexity of modern energy systems, the importance of information processes that coordinate decisions, stabilize expectations, and enable political action is growing.

Against this backdrop, the work focuses on information governance and strategic crisis communication. It argues that deficits in the collection, processing, and communication of energy-related information are key escalation mechanisms in modern energy crises. Insufficient transparency, information asymmetries, and miscommunication not only impair political decision-making processes, but also undermine international cooperation and social acceptance of energy policy measures.

The aim of this paper is therefore to develop a theoretical framework that conceptualizes energy crises as information-dependent governance problems. Based on a historically oriented literature analysis, long-term developments in energy, information, and power structures are identified and their significance for the current energy crisis is discussed. The paper thus makes a conceptual contribution to energy policy research and provides impetus for a more information- and communication-oriented design of future energy policy.

While energy policy research in recent years has increasingly addressed issues of data availability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making, information processes continue to be treated primarily as a technical or downstream dimension of political governance. This paper challenges this perspective and argues that information infrastructures themselves constitute political structures that significantly shape power relations, options for action, and crisis dynamics.

In contrast to existing literature in the field of energy and management, which treats information processes primarily as a supporting or downstream dimension, this paper argues that information infrastructures are a constitutive prerequisite for modern energy systems. The specific contribution of this work is to systematically analyze information governance as an independent dimension of modern energy systems that is relevant to power and control, and to link this perspective to long-term developments in energy history. This develops a theoretical framework that not only explains energy crises, but also opens up new approaches for preventive energy policy control.

The analysis shows that the global energy crisis, and in particular the transition to hydrogen-based energy systems, is not solely the result of technological or economic constraints, but is significantly influenced by structural deficits in the organization, distribution, and political embedding of knowledge and information.

Theoretical foundations

Based on approaches from energy history and social sciences, energy is understood as a structuring foundation of social development that is always linked to specific power, knowledge, and information systems. Building on this, historical energy eras, fossil energy systems, and the role of information governance and strategic crisis communication are analyzed in order to conceptualize energy crises as socio-technical and information-dependent governance problems. This work situates energy crises in the field of tension between technical development, social order, and political control.

For analytical clarity, a distinction must be made between information governance and data-related energy policy. While data policy primarily refers to the collection, standardization, and availability of quantitative energy data, information governance also encompasses the institutional embedding of knowledge, the interpretation of uncertainties, and the communicative mediation of energy policy decisions. Information governance thus refers not only to the technical management of data, but also to a political control field in which knowledge is selected, legitimized, and made relevant for action.

Similarly, strategic crisis communication must be distinguished from general political communication. While political communication often aims at legitimization or positioning, crisis communication focuses on stabilizing expectations under conditions of increased uncertainty. It structures perceptions of urgency, responsibility, and fairness, thereby directly influencing the escalation or de-escalation dynamics of energy crises.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This publication is based on qualitative, historically oriented literature research. Interdisciplinary works from the fields of energy and technology history, political economy, social theory, and information science were analyzed, with a focus on publications from the last three decades. The literature was selected based on topics along the analytical axes of energy forms, social order, and information processes.

Methodologically, the work follows a comparative content analysis that aims to identify long-term trends, transitions, and breaks in energy history and interpret their significance for the current energy crisis. The chosen approach allows for a systematic reconstruction of long-term structural patterns that often remain invisible in empirically focused studies. This approach does not aim at causal explanation, but at reconstructing long-term structural conditions of energy governance.

Energy, technology, and social development

In energy history and social science research, energy is no longer regarded exclusively as a physical quantity, but as a central category of social development. Numerous studies show that the

availability, control, and organization of energy have a decisive influence on population development, productivity, technological innovation, and institutional stability (White 1943, pp. 344–399; Smil 2004, p. 549). Energy forms the material basis of human existence and at the same time shapes social, political, and informational orders. The availability and controllability of energy influence population growth, productivity, and technological innovation, and create the conditions for social differentiation and institutional stability. Even early societies developed forms of organization that were directly linked to their energy resources (White 1943, p. 399; Cook 1976, p. 176; Smil 2004, p. 549).

Historians and social scientists therefore describe energy as the foundation of complex civilizations, whose social and political structures are always linked to the dominant forms of energy at the time (Weissenbacher 2009; Goudsblom 2012, p. 408). Where there was stable access to energy, surpluses could be generated that served purposes beyond merely securing immediate livelihoods. These surpluses not only created the basis for the division of labor and specialization, but also fostered the development of administrative structures that relied on systematic knowledge organization, planning, and control. This shows how energy and information are closely linked, because as energy use gets more complex, the need for coordination, knowledge, and institutional decision-making mechanisms also grows.

In the context of this work, information is understood as a socially embedded process of generating, processing, and using knowledge to coordinate complex systems. Information processes thus encompass technical data collection as well as institutional decision-making mechanisms, organizational knowledge, and communicative forms of control. This perspective allows energy systems to be analyzed as socio-technical entities whose stability depends largely on functioning information flows.

Technological upheavals in the energy sector have therefore always led to changes in power and information structures. Control over energy sources meant control over production processes, social resources, and decision-making spaces. Energy thus functions less as a mere technical factor of production and more as a structured element of social order that stabilizes or shifts power relations and structures information flows.

Historical energy ages

Research identifies several overlapping energy ages, including the hunter-gatherer societies phase, the Neolithic agricultural society, the age of mechanical energy, the industrial use of fossil fuels, and electrification. Each of these phases brought with it new forms of energy production, storage, and distribution, while also changing social structures, the organization of labor, and political power relations (Gimpel 2003, pp. 9–36; Weissenbacher 2009, 11–17–19).

In early hunter-gatherer societies, energy use was predominantly based on somatic energy. Information and power structures were organized in a decentralized manner, social hierarchies were limited, and political control mechanisms were rudimentary (Gopher, Barkai 2017, pp. 203–214). The Neolithic Revolution and the use of biological energy fundamentally changed these structures. Sedentary lifestyles, food storage, and agricultural production required new forms of information processing, for example, for planning harvest cycles, managing resources, and enforcing property and power claims (Weissenbacher 2009, pp. 11–17; Larsen et al. 2015, pp. 27–68).

The transition to mechanical forms of energy, particularly hydro and wind power, reinforced these developments. Energy became increasingly concentrated in specific locations and technically mediated, requiring new forms of organization and institutional control mechanisms (Gimpel 2003, p. 14; Smil 2004, p. 553). As energy density increased, not only did dependence on technical systems grow, but so did the need for specialized knowledge and organizational control. Historical energy eras are therefore not just stages of technological development, but mark fundamental changes in the way societies organize information and exercise power.

Fossil energy and geopolitical order

With industrialization, energy transformed from a locally bound resource into a geopolitical power base. Coal, oil, and electricity enabled industrial mass production, global mobility, and military supremacy, but at the same time led to new dependencies, environmental pollution, and

international conflicts (Cherp, Jewell 2011, p. 202). Fossil energy systems promoted a high degree of centralization of production, capital, and political decision-making power. This definition follows organizational and systems theory approaches, in which information is understood as a prerequisite for collective action and institutional control.

Historically, this development is exemplified by the establishment of global oil regimes in the 20th century. Fossil energy systems changed not only economic structures but also international power relations. Access to energy sources and transport routes became a strategic factor in state policy. Energy imports and exports created new dependencies, while energy-intensive industries reinforced geopolitical interests (Cherp, Jewell 2011, p. 202; Yergin 2011, pp. 1–820). Producing countries, transnational corporations, and government institutions became closely intertwined through long-term supply contracts, transport infrastructures, and information-intensive planning processes. Access to reliable data on production volumes, reserves, and transport routes became a strategic power factor that significantly influenced political decisions and geopolitical conflicts.

Recent studies emphasize that fossil fuel energy systems are increasingly information-intensive and would not be functional without complex control and communication processes. Producing countries, transnational corporations, and government institutions became closely intertwined through long-term supply contracts, transport infrastructures, and information-intensive planning processes. Access to reliable data on production volumes, reserves, and transport routes has become a strategic power factor that significantly influences political decisions and geopolitical conflicts. The current global energy crisis is therefore not only a consequence of ecological and technical limitations, but also the result of historically grown energy, information, and power structures that continue to have an impact today.

Although information processes have often been treated implicitly or only marginally in energy policy research, we believe that information should be considered a separate analytical category. Information architectures are conceived not as technical additions, but as structuring prerequisites for control, power, and collective action.

Information governance and international energy policy

The above analysis clearly shows that information processes represent an independent governance dimension of modern energy systems. International energy policy is increasingly dependent on data, scenarios, and forecasts not only being available, but also being collected according to uniform standards, communicated transparently, and embedded in institutions. Decisions on energy infrastructure, security of supply, and long-term transformation paths are based to a large extent on modeling, risk assessments, and the continuous exchange of information between government actors, economic stakeholders, and international organizations. Information processes thus function as a central interface between technical expertise, political decision-making, and social legitimacy.

Deficits in information governance not only lead to inefficient or delayed political decision-making processes, but also exacerbate geopolitical tensions and loss of trust between states (Dreher, Gaston, Martens 2008; Escribano, Valdés 2017). Incomplete, distorted, or politically manipulated information hinders international cooperation, promotes misperceptions about dependencies and scope for action, and increases the risk of escalations in energy policy. Information asymmetries not only distort market mechanisms, but also create political vulnerabilities by systematically reinforcing uncertainties about dependencies, risks, and options for action. In crisis situations in particular, a lack of reliable and shared information can contribute to the hardening of national interests and undermine coordinated approaches to solutions.

From a policy-oriented perspective, this highlights the need to explicitly anchor information management as an integral part of energy security and transformation strategies. Information governance should not be understood as a purely technical instrument, but as a political control area that must be actively shaped. International organizations such as the International Energy Agency (IEA), the United Nations (UN), and the G20 play a key role in this regard by bundling information flows, ensuring the comparability of data and scenarios, and reducing existing information asymmetries between states and regions.

Furthermore, the development of open, transparent, and trustworthy data infrastructures is of central importance. Standardized reporting formats, joint monitoring systems, and publicly accessible data bases can reduce uncertainty and strengthen the basis for cooperative energy policy decisions. Information governance thus becomes a key prerequisite for a functioning international energy policy and a decisive factor in overcoming the global energy crisis under conditions of high uncertainty.

Strategic crisis communication and social stability

Energy crises are not only technical or economic problems, but always also communication crises. Energy policy measures have a profound impact on everyday practices, cost structures, and social expectations, affecting households, businesses, and social groups in different ways. Acceptance and political stability therefore depend largely on how energy policy decisions are communicated, justified, and embedded in existing social patterns of interpretation. Communication does not merely accompany these processes, but structures perceptions of urgency, fairness, and political responsibility.

The dissertation shows that social tensions and political protests arise in particular when energy policy measures are perceived as opaque, contradictory, or socially unjust. Deficient crisis communication increases uncertainty, mistrust, and social polarization and can significantly exacerbate existing crisis dynamics (Chen et al. 2024). In such situations, political actors lose credibility, while simplistic or emotional interpretations gain influence. Communication thus becomes a factor that contributes to the escalation or stabilization of crises.

From a political perspective, this necessitates a strategic, dialogue-based communication practice. This should involve relevant stakeholders at an early stage, make decision-making processes transparent, and openly address uncertainties rather than covering them up in communications. This form of crisis communication helps to build trust as a key resource in energy policy and stabilize it in the long term. Strategic crisis communication thus becomes an integral part of preventive energy governance and a crucial tool for ensuring social acceptance and political capacity to act in phases of profound energy transformation.

RESULTS

Theoretical analysis shows that energy crises should not be understood in isolation as technical supply problems or economic shocks, but rather as an expression of deeper socio-technical and information-related structural problems. Across all historical energy eras, it can be seen that the stability of energy systems depends significantly on the ability to coordinate energy flows, knowledge, and decision-making processes.

A key finding is that as energy density and system complexity increase, so does the importance of information processes. Even in early forms of energy, energy availability and social organization were closely linked. With industrialization and the dominance of fossil fuels, this dependency intensified: energy systems became increasingly information-intensive, globally interconnected, and politically sensitive. Access to reliable data on production volumes, reserves, transport routes, and demand trends developed into an independent power factor that influences political capacity to act and geopolitical positions.

The results also show that shortcomings in information governance are key escalation mechanisms in modern energy crises. Where data is fragmented, opaque, or politically exploited, international cooperation mechanisms come under pressure. Misperceptions about dependencies and scope for action reinforce national interests and make coordinated political responses more difficult. Information asymmetries between states and groups of actors thus contribute significantly to the instability of global energy systems.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that energy crises are always also communication crises. Political measures in the energy sector do not only have an impact through technical or economic effects, but also through their social perception. Deficient crisis communication increases uncertainty, mistrust, and polarization and can exacerbate existing lines of conflict. Acceptance problems and social protests are less an expression of irrational rejection than the result of inadequate,

contradictory, or perceived unfair communication processes.

In summary, the results make it clear that energy crises escalate particularly where both information governance and strategic crisis communication are insufficiently developed. Information processes thus function as a key mediating dimension between energy, politics, and society and are crucial for the stability and controllability of modern energy systems.

DISCUSSION

The results of this work suggest that energy crises need to be fundamentally reconceptualized. Instead of interpreting them primarily as a consequence of physical scarcity, technological limitations, or external shocks, it seems more analytically fruitful to understand them as information-dependent governance crises. The energy, information, and power have always been historically intertwined and that this entanglement has become even more pronounced in modern energy systems.

Conceptualizing energy crises as information-dependent governance crises shifts the analytical focus away from short-term scarcity and toward the institutional organization of knowledge, data, and communication. Energy crises thus appear less as exceptional circumstances and more as moments of structural stress on existing control and information systems.

Against this backdrop, it becomes clear that political governance deficits are less attributable to a lack of technical knowledge than to institutional and communicative weaknesses. Information governance is proving to be an independent field of political action that has often been underestimated in energy policy research and practice to date. Without transparent, comparable, and institutionally anchored information structures, international energy policies lose their ability to coordinate, especially in crisis conditions.

At the same time, the findings highlight the central role of strategic crisis communication for social stability. Energy policy decisions have a profound impact on social order and generate distributional effects that must be moderated through communication. Where communication obscures uncertainties or fails to openly address conflicting political goals, it undermines trust and exacerbates political polarization. Crisis communication should therefore not be seen as a downstream accompanying measure, but as an integral part of preventive energy governance.

The discussion also shows that international organizations such as the IEA, the UN, and the G20 can play a key role in institutionalizing information governance and communication standards. This is exemplified by recent developments in European energy and gas markets, where insufficient transparency regarding availability, pricing mechanisms, and political intervention has contributed significantly to uncertainty among market players and the general public. Standardized data bases, joint monitoring systems, and transparent scenario communication would not only improve the quality of political decisions, but also strengthen trust between states and social actors.

Implications for energy policy and transformation governance

The results of this work have direct implications for the design of energy policy control and transformation processes. If energy crises are understood as information-dependent governance crises, the institutional design of information and communication processes itself becomes the focus of political action. Energy policy is then not limited to setting technological targets or economic incentive structures, but also encompasses the active organization of knowledge, uncertainty, and social expectations.

For transformation governance, this means that political control is increasingly taking place under conditions of high uncertainty, long-term conflicts of interest, and pluralistic knowledge bases. In this context, information governance acts as a mediating infrastructure that allows different forms of knowledge, scientific expertise, economic forecasts, social experiences, to be integrated into political decision-making processes. Without such institutionally anchored information structures, transformation processes risk failing due to a lack of coordination, declining acceptance, or political blockades.

At the same time, the findings underscore the importance of dialogical communication formats for legitimizing energy policy decisions. Transformation processes require not only agreement on specific measures, but also the long-term willingness of social actors to bear uncertainty, costs,

and distributional effects. Strategic crisis communication should therefore be understood as part of a broader transformation communication strategy that systematically promotes transparency, participation, and trust. The ability to steer energy policy is thus increasingly becoming a question of successful information and communication architectures.

Overall, the results and their discussion underscore that overcoming the global energy crisis is failing less due to a lack of technical solutions than to the inadequate political organization of knowledge, information, and communication. A sustainable transformation of energy systems therefore requires not only technological innovations, but above all institutional reforms that systematically understand information processes as the basis for collective action.

CONCLUSION

This work has shown that energy crises cannot be understood solely as technical supply problems or economic shocks. Rather, they are complex socio-technical governance crises in which energy, information, and political control are inextricably intertwined. Historical and theoretical analysis makes it clear that energy systems have always been based on specific knowledge and information systems and that the importance of functioning information processes increases with growing system complexity.

The central finding is that information governance is an independent and hitherto underestimated dimension of international energy policy. Deficits in the collection, standardization, and communication of energy-related data have a direct impact on political decision-making, international cooperation, and geopolitical stability. Against the backdrop of increasing digitalization, data-based energy models, and AI-supported forecasting systems, this dimension is becoming even more important as issues of transparency, democratic control, and institutional embedding of information processes continue to gain relevance. In crisis situations in particular, information asymmetries, lack of transparency, and politically instrumentalized data can exacerbate existing conflicts and undermine coordinated approaches to solutions.

Furthermore, the analysis underscores the key role of strategic crisis communication in achieving social acceptance and political capacity to act. Energy policy measures are effective not only through their material effects, but also through their social perception. Where communication is perceived as opaque, contradictory, or socially unjust, the risk of social tensions, protests, and political polarization increases significantly. Trust thus proves to be a central resource of modern energy policy that must be actively built and stabilized.

Against this backdrop, the paper advocates for a stronger institutional anchoring of information management and crisis communication in energy policy strategies. International organizations such as the IEA, the UN, or the G20 can play a central role in this by promoting open data infrastructures, establishing comparability, and strengthening dialogical communication formats. Sustainable management of the global energy crisis therefore requires not only technological innovations, but above all a political reorientation that systematically takes information processes into account as the basis for collective control.

The analysis suggests that political learning processes in the energy sector have so far lagged behind technological and economic dynamics. Finally, the increasing digitalization of energy policy control processes creates a need for further research and policy action. Energy models, scenarios, and forecasts are increasingly being generated by algorithmic processes, AI-supported analyses, and automated decision support systems. While these developments increase the analytical performance of energy policy planning, they also raise questions of transparency, traceability, and democratic control.

Against this backdrop, information governance takes on an additional dimension: not only the availability of data, but also the comprehensibility, explainability, and communicative embedding of algorithmically generated knowledge are becoming central prerequisites for political legitimacy. Future energy policy therefore faces the challenge of embedding digital and AI-supported control instruments in institutional and communicative structures in such a way that political accountability, social participation, and trust are maintained.

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УПРАВЛЕНИЕ НА ИНФОРМАЦИОННИТЕ ПРОЦЕСИ ПРИ ГЛОБАЛНАТА ЕНЕРГИЙНА КРИЗА

Резюме: Глобалните енергийни кризи често се тълкуват като технически затруднения в доставките или икономически сътресения. В тази статия обаче се твърди, че енергийните кризи трябва да се разглеждат като сложни социално-технически проблеми на управлението, в които енергията, информацията и политическият контрол са тясно взаимосвързани. Основната теза на тази статия е, че управлението на информацията не е просто поддържащ фактор, а съставна предпоставка за съвременните енергийни системи. Въз основа на подходи от историята на енергетиката и социалните науки енергията се концептуализира като структурираща основа на социалното развитие, която винаги е свързана с конкретни порядки на власт, знание и информация.

Анализът показва, че значението на информационните процеси нараства значително с увеличаването на сложността на съвременните енергийни системи. Решенията относно енергийната политика и пътищата за трансформация все повече се основават на стандартизирани данни, сценарии и институционално заложените комуникационни процеси. Дефицитите в управлението на информацията могат да затруднят политическото вземане на решения, да възпрепятстват международното сътрудничество и да изострят геополитическите напрежения. Освен това се твърди, че енергийните кризи винаги са и комуникационни кризи, чието управление зависи до голяма степен от прозрачна, диалогична кризисна комуникация. Статията следователно се застъпва за по-силно институционално закрепване на управлението на информацията.

Ключови думи: информационни процеси; управление на енергията; енергийна криза; международна енергийна политика; социално-технически системи

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