

ABSTRACT

Today energy transition is one of the most urgent issues for both developed and emerging economies. In the case of Hungary, cooperation with Slovakia was launched in the 1970's to build a hydro plant to supply clean energy to both countries. The construction of the plant did start but due to environmental concerns and one of the biggest demonstrations in Hungary among the locals it was stopped, and the landscape was partially restored back to its original form. The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 hit the Hungarian energy market hard, as Hungary is highly dependent on Russian gas, bringing the old hydropower project back to relevance. This thesis assesses whether the local communities and other stakeholders would allow the powerplant to be built now due to the change of energy security and the sustainability agenda.

The study was conducted using a two-phase research design based on stakeholder theory. The first phase of research was quantitative (involving statistical data analysis, document review and expert interviews) and aimed to understand how it would influence the life of locals if the powerplant were to be built. The second phase of the research was based on the results of the first phase and was qualitative in the form of 15 stakeholder interviews.

Data were collected using multiple methods: semi-structured interviews, record analysis, and collection of secondary statistical data. Interviews were conducted with all types of identified stakeholders including locals, NGOs and the government, and calculations were carried out using secondary data. It was found that sustainability is not considered urgent by the local communities, and stakeholders are only likely to support the project if there is a concrete benefit for them. However, when exposed to more information, the community is ready to change and support the hydropower dam if it is built transparently.