

THE IMPACTS OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON IRANIAN WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACTS OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON IRANIAN WOMEN

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This thesis aims to analyse the impact of unilateral and multilateral economic sanctions towards Iran upon the economic, political and social lives of Iranian women. It will reflect more on gender impacts of the sanctions instead of the impacts of these measures on state behaviour which is the much discussed aspects in the literature. This thesis problematized the economic sanctions implemented against Iran after 2010, and their effects. The gender impacts of the economic sanctions will be provided with general literature review of economic sanctions, Iran and feminist International Relations theory. Previous literatures demonstrate that women are affected by sanctions in different ways, and to different extents. This study argues sanctions beget women-specific effects in Iran, too. It additionally argues Iranian women are already in subordinated and unequal position because of their gender; sanctions deteriorated their situation at hand. This thesis shows that there is a strong causal relation between economic sanctions and deprivations experienced by Iranian women; and there found women specific effects of economic sanctions.

Keywords: Economic sanctions, Iran, Iranian women, Gender.

ÖZ

EKONOMİK YAPTIRIMLARIN İRANLI KADINLAR ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

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Bu tezin amacı İran İslam Cumhuriyeti'ne yönelik tek ve çok taraflı ekonomik yaptırımların İranlı kadınların ekonomik, siyasi ve sosyal yaşantıları üzerindeki etkilerini tahlil etmektir. Tez yaptırımların literatürde çoğunlukla ele alınan devlet davranışı üzerindeki etkisi yerine toplumsal cinsiyet etkisini tartışacaktır. Çalışmada İran'a yönelik 2010 yılından sonra uygulanan ekonomik yaptırımlar problematize edilmiştir. Ekonomik yaptırımların İranlı kadınların ekonomik, siyasi ve sosyal yaşantıları üzerindeki etkileri genel bir literatür taramasıyla ortaya konulması amaçlanmıştır. Bu çalışma da yaptırımların İranlı kadınlara özgü etkileri olduğunu öne sürmüştür. Ayrıca İranlı kadınların cinsiyetleri nedeniyle hâlihazırda ikincil ve eşit olmayan bir konumda olduklarını ve ekonomik yaptırımların mevcut durumlarını daha da kötüleştirdiğini iddia etmiştir. Bu çalışma yaptırımların İran ekonomisi ve toplumun genel refahında neden olduğu hızlı çöküşün yarattığı dalgalanma etkisiyle kadınları ekonomik, siyasi ve sosyal yaşamda daha kırılgan ve savunmasız hale getirdiğini; ve kadınlara özgü etkilerinin bulunduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ekonomik Yaptırımlar, İran, Kadın, Toplumsal Cinsiyet.

To my family



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of 1979, Iranian people attracted the attention of international media for their thriving revolution. They have toppled Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and his strongest military in the region. The crowd groaned the streets with a few slogans, which are now so familiar to the scholars of Iranian studies, '*Merg ber Amrika*' (Down with the USA) and '*Merg ber Ísrail*' (Death to Israel). These slogans foreshadowed the beginning of entanglement between the U.S. and Iran, who were friends back in the days. After the Shah left country on 16 January, Islamic religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran on 1st of February from his 15 years exile. The US-friendly monarchy soon became Islamic Republic of Iran. However, the chaos in the streets has not been settled even after the Shah fled Iran. Protests have remained. In November of 1979, students stormed the US Embassy in Tehran crippling all kinds of US-Tehran relations for the future. Unilateral U.S. sanctions have started as an immediate response to Iran hostage crisis. However, the sanctions against Iran were not lifted after hostages were relived. They were prolonged based on various reasons or claims such as Iran's support for armed factions and terrorist groups, efforts to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles and its human rights abuses. Subsequently, the United Nations and European Union have jumped bandwagon of US's Iran politics to impose sanctions. As a result of economic sanctions, Iran's economy and Iranian people especially to those who are already vulnerable, such as children, women, and elderly and sick people have suffered genuine hardship.

1.1. Research Problem and Sources

This thesis aims to explore how economic sanctions affect Iranian women disproportionately, and to reveal the specific effects on women in comparison with men. Economic sanctions affect both men and women, but it affects them in different level and way. I attempted to discover how economic, political, and social lives of Iranian women are influenced under sanctions regime. I argued that Iranian women are already in subordinated and unequal position because of their gender, which is distinguished as an identity in a state that is governed under the religious rubric of law and order; therefore, sanctions deteriorated their situation at hand. As a result, I found ripple effects that the economic collapse induced from sanctions make women more vulnerable in their economic, political, and social life. I acknowledged that sanctions are not the only cause to the deprivations of women in Iran; but as it will be shown there is a strong casual relation between economic sanctions and deprivations experienced by Iranian women. In this regard, the study examines by asking two main questions: how sanctions affected the Iranian society and how this effect is reflected on the Iranian women's economic, political, and social lives.

While there is considerable amount of literature how civilian populations suffer as a result of sanctions, women, as a category, has systematically been neglected in sanctions and feminist IR literature. This gendered standpoint to rethink the effect of economic sanctions aims to contribute the study of women's rights and gender. My particular focus, as is clear, will be on Iran; however, I will make use of scarce literature on this specific issue, which can be found in Iraq, Cuba, Haiti and Myanmar case.

To proceed the study, only secondary resources such as books, reports, working papers, articles, thesis, news, documentary and videos from Internet will be of use. Louise Cainkar has rightly argued that feminist IR theory can pave the way for an feminist analysis of economic sanctions and I take Feminist IR theory as a basis for an investigation of the impacts of sanctions on Iranian women. Accordingly, first of all, I adopted gender as a category of analysis to make women's experiences more visible. Secondly, I acknowledged the fact that physical and structural violence

impacts women and men differently because of unequal gender structures in a society. Drawing from this stance, I examined the impacts of economic sanctions on Iranian women.

1.2.Limitations and Encountered Problems

There were several problems I encountered in writing this thesis. First, I am aware of the fact that the topic I intend to investigate is in need of field study; however, it has been impractical to conduct a field research due to the spread of coronavirus during the writing of this thesis. Second, the topics; economic sanctions, feminist theories and Iran, are quite large in terms of their scope, which compelled me to grasp in its fullest sense. The last one was credibility of any types of information coming from Iran, which can sometimes be totally absent and sometimes disguised for different reasons by Iranian officials.

1.3.Literature Review

For the sake of this study, I had to conduct a literature review at least in three areas: economic sanctions, the Iran Sanctions Regime and feminist IR theory. Sanctions, be it unilateral or multilateral, are the coercive measures of statecraft, which can appear in different forms such as diplomatic, military and economic (Hufbauer, Schott, Elliot, & Oegg, 2007; Marossi & Bassett, 2015; Wigell, Scholvin, & Aaltola, 2019). They are formulated for different ends. Main framework for the reason behind sanctions in the literature is described as to make targeted state(s) behavior or policy compatible with international law. There can be named more goals. For example, Doxey (1996) has suggested eight political goals: deterrence, compliance, punishment, destabilization, limitation of conflict, solidarity, symbolism and signalling. There has also been attempt by IR scholars for categorization why states invoke sanctions (Askari, Forrer, Teegen, & Yang, 2003). Askari et al. (2003) outlined four categories: purposeful, palliative, punitive and partisan sanctions. However, reasons, objectives or justifications for sanctions vary by country and situation. In sum, to enforce modest/major level change in domestic and foreign policies of target states in the matter of number of topics from human rights

violations to military assault; to change the regime of target country can be listed as objectives behind sanctions.

Although sanctions dated back to the earliest times of conflict where Athens sanctioned Megara in 432 BC, they have increasingly become one of the main means of a powerful state to reach their ends following the Cold War. The 1990's has indeed become "the decade of economic sanctions" (Cortright & Lopez, 2000). It is needless to say, sanctions have evolved over a period of time becoming more overarching and even encouraged under international law. Today's sanctions are the modern sanctions origins of which lie under the League of Nations. Moreover, economic sanctions are the most preferred one among other forms of sanctions. Blocking the import or export of certain goods, trade ban for all kinds of goods from oil to carpets from technological equipment to caviar; restricting or total freezing of loans, credits, property and assets for certain people and companies in targeted states are the examples of economic sanctions. Literature dealing with economic sanctions is mostly focusing on whether they are effective and successful acquiring its objectives (Allen, 2005; Allen & Lektzian, 2013; Baldwin, 1985; Baldwin, 1999; Blanchard & Ripsman, 2013; Escriba-Folch & Wright, 2010; Hufbauer, Schott, & Elliot, 1985; Martin, 1992; Pape, 1997; Wigel, Scholvin, & Aaltola, 2019). Part of these studies, especially written before the 1990s, dealt with the merits and faults of economic sanctions, and proposed specific recommendations how sanctions must be formulated and implemented to meet the ends. In this time period, sanctions as a foreign policy tools were supported in respect to their supposedly non-violent and peaceful nature. Some scholars are still focusing on the specific questions like under what circumstances sanctions effectively work (Blanchard & Ripsman, 1999; Blanchard & Ripsman, 2008; Drezner, 2011; Choi & Luo, 2013; Cortright & Lopez, 1995). Most of those studies registered the low success rate of economic sanctions.

The second main point researchers tend to focus on negative economic, political and humanitarian implications of sanctions in targeted countries (Garfield, 1999; Jones, 2015; Neuenkirch & Neumeier, 2014; Parker, Foltz, & Elsea, 2016; Peksen & Drury, 2010; Peksen, 2011; Shehabaldin & Laughlin Jr, 1999; Weiss, Cortright, Lopez, & Minear, 1997; Wood, 2008). Especially, the deprivations of Iraqi civilians under UN

sanctions regime draw too much attention, and humanitarian effects have started to be frequently studied. In other words, findings from Iraqi sanctions regime led to big debate of morality and its peaceful nature of sanctions. It is now argued sanctions do not hurt the ones intended to be hurt. Evidences from Haiti and Rhodesia contributed to this argument, which means main concerns and debates regarding sanctions has shifted (Galtung, 1967; Gibbons, 1999). In Haiti, because of the economic collapse due to sanctions, so many people had to flee to the US through sea, resulted in drowning in large numbers. There were reports making public that infant mortality, sickness, and malnutrition of the children increased as a result of embargoes in Iraq. The humanitarian implications will be more elaborated in chapter two.

Literature regarding Iran sanctions regime is not radically different from sanctions literature. By taking into consideration Iran has been facing sanctions for several years, the scope of this literature is extensively broad. The United States has endeavoured to isolate Iran diplomatically and economically through sanctions from the rest of the world. A great proportion of scholars have dealt with the effectiveness of these sanctions against Iran (Alikhani, 2000; Hufbauer, Elliott, Cyrus, & Winston, 1997; Esfandiary & Fitzpatrick, 2011; Torbat, 2020; Maloney, 2009; O'Sullivan, 2010). As it is the case for Iran, there is no rigid conclusion that sanctions had an influence over the plots the U.S. wanted to change.

Furthermore, a wide range of literature traced the political, economic and humanitarian effects of sanctions against Iran (Kokabisaghi, 2018; Milani, 2010; Moret, 2015; Borszik, 2015; Aloosh, Salavati, & Aloosh, 2019). It has been shown that while political regime and its apparatus in Iran has adopted itself to the sanctions over the course of years; on the other hand, people has mostly suffered in every senses. In recent times, especially effects of sanctions on Iranian people's state of health has over studied among Iranian scholars (Alekbajaf & Ansariyan, 2014; Cheraghali, 2013; Gorji, 2014; Kokabisaghi, 2018; Shahabi et al., 2015; Setayesh & Mackey, 2016). It is widely encountered sanctions literature dealing with Iran has taken patients as a particular group in order to show severity of sanctions' influence. Those studies concluded that sanctions affect certain patients disproportionately since finished products or raw materials for drugs are imported, which proves

humanitarian exemptions do not work as it is defended by pro-sanctions politicians in Washington.

It is now undeniable that sanctions distort the overall quality of life for civilians, create the shortages of essential goods, resulting in black markets for all types of goods; create gangsterism, terrorism and corruption in society. It causes hyperinflation and unemployment. However, the impacts of sanctions do not equally disperse across the country. Indeed, sanctions can impact society differently, depending on different variables such as age, class and gender. This propensity to study differential impacts of sanctions grew more and more especially towards the end of 20th century with the growth of new and more demanding theories such as critical theory, post-modernism and feminism etc. Therefore, it is recognized in the sanctions literature they are “affecting the rich differently and the poor, the governors differently than the governed, the vulnerable differently than the strong” (Buck, Gallant, & Nossal, 1998). Especially, international organizations increasingly shared their concerns that vulnerable sections of the society, children, women, patients and elderly people are disproportionately affected by sanctions. However, this concern remains only ‘expressed concern’ and the impact of sanction on women has not sufficiently been invested in the scholarly literature.

1.4. Gender and Sanctions Analysis

Although images of women and men within a society differ across time and cultures, there have always been gender roles in all cultures which signify specific ways of relations. The term ‘gender’ designates social and cultural constructions of the proper roles, features and identities of women and men in a given society (Scott, 1986). When social and cultural constructions of roles, features, and identities -normative concepts- for women and men are closely examined, it can be seen characteristics identifying women and men are antonym. To put it differently, women and men are imaged as antonyms of each other, as binary opposition such as “public versus private, objective versus subjective, reason versus emotion, autonomy versus relatedness, and culture versus nature” (Tickner, 1992, p. 4). The second of each pair is associated with women. In this image, characteristics associated with women have

traditionally more negative connotations of inferiority and weakness. Gender inequality has been constructed, legitimized and perpetuated through this binary opposition and hierarchical construction. These specific codes of conducts are embodied and operated in a whole system of society, from social to economic relations. Therefore, it is because gender roles incorporate in a whole system and each sex has peculiar roles to display, distressing economic and political circumstances that may be triggered by several incidents occurring both within and outside of a country affect women and men on a different level and way. At this point, it is required to shed light on the everyday life of gendered relations in order to understand gendered-specific effects of international and domestic politics. Based on this, how women relate to economic and social forces and, how international or domestic politics affect women are embedded in how they relate to gendered system of relations. This implies that the effects of international politics are not gender-neutral because of the fact that society, as a whole, is already constructed on the basis of gendered relations. In that sense, there is relatively rich literature on gender in international relations (Enloe, 1990; Hooper, 2001; Peterson, 1992; Runyan, 2019; Sylvester, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Parpart & Zalewski, 2008; Steans, 2013; Tickner, 1988, 1992). Emerging in the late 1980's with the critique of women and women's experiences exclusion in the study and practice of the discipline of International Relations, feminist IR scholars have been giving robust literature to the discipline over the last 30 years. Traditional IR theories mostly engaged in relations between sovereign states. To put it another way, states are regarded as the main actor of international relations. It is not surprising given that IR, as a discipline, developed to understand the reasons of war and to maintain and ensure peace and security between states. Both war and peace were executed by politicians, diplomats, and soldiers most of whom are men. In that sense, Feminist International Relations has emerged as an important critique of traditional IR theories (Atmaca & Ercan, 2018). It started with Ann Tickner's saying in 1988 as "international relations is a man's world" (Tickner, 1988, p. 429). J. Ann Tickner, Cynthia Enloe, Christine Sylvester, Jean Bethke Elshtain, and Sandra Harding are among the prominent figures contributing the feminist IR. They posed stimulating questions with "feminist curiosity" to the IR discipline: "why are the majority of decision makers both in the state or international organizations men? Where are the women in international

relations or in foreign policy?'. In the following years, feminist scholars have gone further and criticized the main concepts and theories of the discipline of IR. They have created academic work on a very broad range of issues and concepts such as state, security, power, war, violence, migration, political economy, international governance and climate change.

Although, feminist IR remains at the margin in the discipline in practice, feminist security studies is the most prominent research field in feminist IR. Feminist security studies (1) seek to understand the absence of women in international security politics and (2) the idea of protection of women in the times of both war and peace by a state; (3) reject women's unconditional link to peace; (4) lastly, question the concept of masculinity to explicate gendered security and its practices (Atmaca & Ercan, 2018). In this field, the importance of gender in the security studies has been underlined by addressing security matters such as the use of sexual violence as a tool of weapon in time of armed conflict, women's participation in this kind of display of violence, militarization of women, gender-differentiated outcomes of armed conflict, or the role of women in post-war peacebuilding efforts or what the peace is in the first place (Blanchard, 2003; Card, 1996; Enloe, 1983; Enloe, 1990; MacKenzie, 2009, 2010; Parpart & Zalewski, 2008; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2006; Sjoberg, 2010; Skjelsbæk, 2001). By doing so, security's core concepts –war, peace, violence, the state, security— are urged to redefined and reformulated. In this sense, feminist scholars proposed us a new way thinking, for example, about war in which people can not only experience physically but emotionally; and war can indeed has gender-specific effects (Sjoberg, 2010). To give an another example, women are mostly seen only as the symbol and reproducers of the nation (Yuval-Davis, 1997) and this role excludes them to be combatants in the war time; but they can be excluded, for this very reason, from defining the nation as central subjects (Runyan & Peterson, 2014, p. 142). Since women and men have their roles for war, men is the one who should die in the clash; on the other hand, women who got stuck in the war zones became mostly victim of rape. As Cankar (1993) put it, "war will have gender-differentiated outcomes as long as warfare is conducted with a gender-based division of labour". Moreover, feminist security studies re-examined the position of the state, the basic unit of analysis of IR, in providing the security and peace. In turn, it is seen that the

state is itself a gendered entity which can recreate institutionalized violence in a vicious circle (Hooper, 2001). In sum, feminist IR problematizes the main concepts of International Relations, and contributes a new vantage point to rethink.

Having said that gender as a variable in sanctions study is noticeably scarce (Al-Ali, 2003, 2005, 2008; Al-Ali & Pratt, 2009; Al-Jawaheri, 2008; Buck et al., 1998; Cainkar, 1993; Drury and Peksen, 2012; Taheri, 2015; Vuorijärvi, 2009). To put it in other words, feminist IR scholars delved into the variety of issues empirically since 1990's, but sanctions, still, are not sufficiently the part of their research agenda. This rare literature offered us a few case studies and evidence on gendered effects of economic sanctions from Iraq, Haiti, Cuba, Burma, the Former Yugoslavia and Iran. Especially, the case of Iraq has been over studied. As exemplified in those cases, which will be examined in detail in next chapter, there are gender-specific effects of economic sanction, in the same line of Cainkar's reasoning, international politics will have gender-differentiated outcomes as long as politics and daily lives is conducted with a gender-based division of labour. This study will follow the same pattern that previous studies gave, and will highlight gender-specific consequences of economic sanctions on Iranian women.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

Prior to the analysis of gendered specific effects of economic sanctions on Iranian women, the following chapter will firstly focus on different case studies and draw a general picture of how economic sanctions disturbed the well-being of people in general. Afterwards, the chapter will trace gendered specific effects from Haiti, Burma, Former Yugoslavia, Cuba and Iraq cases will be elaborated and draw a framework for the fourth chapter.

The third chapter will offer historical background of Iran sanctions regime. What type of unilateral and international sanctions has imposed on Iran will be covered in detail. In that context, the unilateral U.S. sanctions, the European Union and the United Nations' sanctions will be shed light on. Then, overall impacts of both unilateral and international sanctions against Iran on Iran's economy and Iranian

people will be depicted. The chapter intends to show how sanctions are one of the substantial external factors that affect economic, political and social life in Iran.

Chapter four, which is the main part of this thesis, will trace the gender impacts of economic sanctions by focusing on economic, political and social areas with specific attention on Iranian women. It will scrutinize what economic, political and social price that Iranian women pay in the face of economic pressure. Chapter five, the last chapter, aims to draw conclusions, and give summary of the thesis findings indicated.



CHAPTER 2

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON SOCIETIES

The use of economic sanctions became common foreign policy tools in 20th century with the establishment of League of Nations. Since then sanctions were designed for different concerns and goals by different state(s) or organization(s). Utilizing economic sanctions, however, became much more common after the 1990's. In fact, there happened a paradigm shift with the preponderant use of economic sanctions by the United Nations. Prior to 1990, in the Cold War period, the UN implied two mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia and South Africa. Then, with the end of the Cold War, there were at least 15 mandatory sanctions approved by the UN including Iraq, the Former Yugoslavia, Libya, Haiti, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. The idea of non-military intervention was apparently well received by the UN on the ground that non-aggressive nature of sanctions. From this standpoint, sanctions could resort and influence on state's behaviour by inducing some kind of pain, mainly economic, without engaging in a military conflict. While sanctions may be pictured as an innocuous and nonaggressive, it is established from case studies that they damage negatively the conditions of people of targeted states and they often fail to reach intended goals. As is mentioned, Iraq was the turning point to be aware of sanctions was undermining human life conditions. Cortright and Lopez (1995) showed that sanctions were not always a humane way over the coercive military action. To what extent sanctions have an impact on societies depends on the level of sanctions (Peksen, 2011); but the consequences of full-fledged economic sanctions can be dramatic.

2.1.Economic Effects

Economic sanctions firstly disrupt the economy of targeted countries in a different ways. There are respectable amount of literature dealing with the measurement of overall economic costs of sanctions. Some focuses on the effect of sanctions on GDP growth (Neuenkirch & Neumeire, 2015); some focus on the reverse relations between trade and sanctions (Caruso, 2003; Hufbauer, Elliott, Cyrus, & Winston, 1997); others had studied the effects of sanctions on stock markets (Biglaiser & Lektzian, 2020); and some analysed the impact of sanctions on investment (Coleman, 2000). The relations between economic sanctions and banking crises were also studied (Hatipoglu & Peksen, 2018). Accordingly, sanctions imposed by the United Nations and the United States reduced the embargoed countries' GDP by 25 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively (Neuenkirch and Neumeier, 2015). As the GDP is one of the accurate indicators of country's economic growth and size, its sharp and severe decline triggered distressing economic circumstances for the large part of the society, primarily weak members of society. Business investment (production) and consumption are the two main factors in the measurement of the GDP. Economic sanctions clearly damaged the business investment which would result in recession. This would lead to unemployment, high inflation, and ultimately, poverty in the targeted states. Unemployment and high inflation are the two straightforward outcomes of economic sanctions. Al-Jawaheri (2008) investigated the bitter depreciation of the exchange rate of the Iraqi dinar (ID) which escalated the inflation rates. Although Iraqi dinar was one of the strongest currencies in the region during the period between 1960-1970, its value weakened especially in the face of heavy international sanctions. Comprehensive sanctions on Iraq which began as an immediate response to the Iraq's invasion of Kuwait had devastating effects on ID exchange rates which caused 1000 percent inflation rate (Al-Jawaheri, 2008). In its extreme case, as Iraqis, high inflation affected people's ability to meet daily living expenses. In the same line, Neuenkirch and Neumeier (2015) investigated direct impact of the economic sanctions on the target states' level of poverty. They provided quantitative implications of economic sanctions, which ultimately destabilized imports and exports, foreign investments and aid, resulting in shortage in supplies and to secure subsistence. They concluded that U.S. sanctions resulted in

increase in the poverty gap in sanctioned countries; sanctions were impacting the wrong people; and sanctions were in vain to achieve their goals in 65-95 per cent of the cases (Neuenkirch & Neumeier, 2015). Moreover, conventional wisdom held from the case studies that economic sanction mostly contributed to emergence of black market or strengthened already existing black market which was utilised by governing elites (Swindells, 1996, p.1941).

Assessing the economic costs of sanctions is the safest way to analyze overall well-being of societies. Even without further explication, it can be said that economically damaged societies will encounter both poverty and inequality. As Gutmann et al. pointed out, nonetheless, “estimates of economic damage are clearly imperfect proxies for the overall social costs of sanctions” (Gutmann, Neuenkirch, & Neumeier, 2020). In the article of Gutmann et al., the word ‘social’ implies the well-being of civilians in a society. This requires taking into account the other dimensions of living beyond economic dimension since civilians can be deprived of not only economic rights but also political, social and cultural human rights under sanctions regimes (Marks, 1999). In this part, the social costs of economic sanctions, which are compose of health, political-civil, and social effects will be analysed.

2.2.Social Effects

The social dimension of costs of economic sanctions is increasingly studied in the literature; and a detailed research is available (Barry, 2000; Garfield & Santana, 1997; Gibbons & Garfield, 1999; Parker, Foltz, & Elsea, 2016; Shehabaldin & Laughlin Jr, 1999; Gutmann, Neuenkirch, & Neumeier, 2020; Swindells, 1996). Those studies are case studies in which an in-depth research regarding a sanctioned country conducted. Based on these studies, the effect of economic sanctions on people can be observed from the decrease in life expectancy to the decrease in social services; from the increase in violation of human rights to increase in unlawfulness and violence in a society. That is to say, sanctions have wide range of impacts on welfare of people.

Marks (1999) put forward the civil impact of economic sanctions as human rights violations in all areas by using studies prepared by public health specialists and specialized agencies of the United Nations. He investigated the major field work findings by a team of 11 public health and medical professionals and concluded that “the deprivations of civilian populations under sanctions regimes often are violations of economic, social, and cultural human rights” (Marks, 1999, p.1509). Gutmann et al. show us how sanctions can have dramatic consequences on life expectancy by covering 98 less developed and newly industrialized countries (Gutmann, Neuenkirch, & Neumeier, 2020). They concluded that there were multiple reasons why sanctions could have adverse effects on the life expectancy of the target state’s population. Accordingly, first of all, sanctions could damage the country’s health infrastructure by limiting the import for medical supplies and various goods and services. Secondly, government which faced severe economic sanctions could constrain public health expenditures. Private health services could be maintained but increased prices due to sanctions made these services inaccessible to high proportion of a society (Gutmann, Neuenkirch, & Neumeier, 2020, p. 7). Therefore, withdrawal of the state intervention from social programmes firstly damaged its prime beneficiaries (Al-Jawaheri, 2008, p. 135). Thirdly, harsh economic conditions could create an abusive climate where workers had to consent to take up any available jobs, which undermined the conditions of the occupational environment (Gutmann, Neuenkirch, & Neumeier, 2020 p. 7). Fourthly, sanctions could, in the worst case, create shortage of food and clean water which had direct adverse health effects. In fact, in the case of Iraqi sanctions, the right to life was violated. The most comprehensive set of sanctions started in 1990 was resumed with six-week bombing campaign which did not distinguish military and civilian targets. The coalition bombing destroyed all kinds of civilian targets including oil facilities and pipelines, electric power stations, water treatment facilities and water distribution systems, hospitals, storage facilities and irrigation sites (Al-Jawaheri, 2008, p.2). The devastated country was left with comprehensive sanctions till 2003 compounding the effects of the wars since sanctions restrained the reconstruction of the country which resulted in increase infant and child mortality. Richard Garfield (1999), Mohamed Ali and Iqbal Shah (2000), the two most reliable researchers on sanctions in Iraq, conducted far-reaching study regarding child mortality and malnutrition. According

to Gabriel's analysis, the most likely number of deaths among children under five could be 227,000 from 1990 to March 1998. Based on this data, child mortality rates doubled, and most of these deaths could primarily associate with sanctions. Diarrheal and respiratory illnesses were the main cause of the increase in mortality, primarily resulting from "contaminated water, lack of high quality foods, inadequate breast feeding, poor weaning practices and inadequate supplies in curative health care system" (Gabriel, 1999, p.1). Most of these causes were primarily associated with sanctions. Ali and Shah (2000) also found out child mortality rates rose from 56 per 1,000 births for the period 1984-89 to 131 per 1,000 for the period 1994-999 in southern Iraq. Based on field research surveying 40,000 households, they revealed "childhood and maternal mortality in the south/centre increased during the period of the UN sanctions that followed the Gulf conflict" (Ali & Shah, 2000, p. 1856). There were humanitarian assistance programmes to diminish human suffering; but they did not work in practice. The most basic human right, right to live, was violated in the name of economic sanctions in Iraq. While the tragic loss of life of children was occurring, the UN and the U.S. resumed blaming the Iraqi government not to comply with resolution. Reports from U.N. sanctions regime in Haiti were no different. In Haiti, oil embargo impeded the humanitarian assistance in practice which resulted in limiting the transportation of supplies to people, and preventing patients from reaching adequate health services (Swindells, 1996, p.1934-35). Public transportation declined nearly 85 per cent. A dozen of American medical team wrote about what this means for Haitians: "The oil embargo is a defacto embargo on medical and preventative health care for rural Haiti; the oil embargo is a defacto food embargo for rural Haiti" (Swindells, 1994). Overall, the general health of Haiti population suffered, especially women and children as a result of high malnutrition, decrease in access to health services (Swindells, 1996, pp.1936-1939). Education for both sexes, but mostly for girls, in Haiti, Iraq and Cuba has suffered from sanctions (Al-Jawaheri, 2008; Gibbons, 1999; Hidalgo and Martinez, 2000; Swindells, 1996).

Political rights and civil liberties is another area that economic sanctions have affected and connected with. A significant amount of qualitative and quantitative analysis emerged investigating the negative relations between the economic sanctions and the level of respect for political rights and civil liberties (Adam &

Tsarsitalidou, 2019; Escribà-Folch & Wright, 2010; Peksen, 2009; Peksen & Drury, 2010; Wood, 2008). These contributions found that economic sanctions induce the increase in the level of state repression, and the decline in the level of democracy. There is a conventional reasoning which suggests that autocratic regimes facing sanctions cannot be able to acquire the economic and military resources used as instruments employed for repression of domestic opposition. Additionally, it is believed economic hardship will likely to harm political legitimacy of the incumbent regimes. In fact, it is the intended way of functioning of economic sanctions by sanction-sending countries or organizations. In this line of reasoning, economic sanctions must resulted in the decline of repression against dissidents and political legitimacy. This reasoning proved to be wrong in several ways. Firstly, the regime can instrumentalize sanctions distributing enemy propaganda to consolidate its power. To put it differently, sanctions, as a form of war, could induce patriotic response and create the rally around the flag effect (Adam & Tsarsitalidou, 2019; Peksen and Drury, 2010, p. 241). That is to say, economic sanctions can hardly harm the political legitimacy of government. Secondly, as is shown above, a large body of literature has sought to reveal that economic sanctions mostly hurt the civilian population economically rather than rulers and the elites supporting these rulers. On the contrary, rulers and the elites remained to accumulate wealth through crony capitalism, corruption, black markets, and trade deals with third countries, which are the likely results of economic sanctions. That is to say, while sanctions damage the well-being of average citizens, they failed to reduce the economic and military capacity of the regime. As a result of this, economic sanctions strengthened the regime's hold on power by monopolizing and controlling the remaining resources in the face of economic hardship. In this case, the regime could furnish their economic and military power; but they would have the reason for economic hardships for citizens whose life has been disrupted by sanctions. The key elite groups which were the main supporters of the leadership became more dependent on the regime in order not to forfeit those resources. Therefore, it was seen that this created an environment in which scarce resources and loyalty were reciprocally exchanged. As a result of sanctions, in turn, the allegiance of prominent groups was boosted (Peksen & Drury, 2009, p.399). In the case of Iraq, for instance, the UN economic sanctions did not majorly harm the Saddam Hussein rule, and boosted the allegiance Sunni minority

elites to the regime as the costs of economic sanctions fell on to the Iraqis (Reuther, 1995). On the other side of the scenario, if frustration among people resulted in anti-government protests, the government would have any means to suppress it since the regime has the essential resources to stay in power. The regime will not face any difficulty to divert its resources to repression, and for patronage spending. Thirdly, as Gershenson and Grossman (2001) suggest that authoritarian rulers give response to increasing international foreign pressure with increasing repression, which is one of the two main survival strategies of dictators along with the buying loyalty. Dictators/autocratic leaders, who lost the resources helping to obtain patronage networks (buying loyalty), are more inclined to use repression to retain power (Escribà-Folch & Wright, 2010, p. 344). To put it differently, economic sanctions are likely to create incentives for targeted regimes to become more repressive since the target leaderships do not want to be seen as weak giving into the sender's demands, and to permit to the creation of an environment where the opposition group, who is likely to believe it has support from another country, is emboldened (Drury & Li, 2006; Peksen & Drury, 2009). Giving into another country's demand will be seen as a sign of weakness in an authoritarian regime whose legitimacy is not popular. Moreover, those groups opposing the regime are likely to see economic sanctions as a foreign support and signal. Both the sign of weakness and supposedly foreign support can embolden an opposition group. This is the situation what the targeted regime wants to preclude it from occurring. To this end, the regime is inclined to employ more repression, and restrict political liberties in order to preserve its accountability and maintain its power. In short, as sanctions cannot disturb the economic and military resources to the targeted regime, they will give an incentive for the regime to become more authoritarian in the face of foreign pressure (Peksen & Drury, 2009). From the case studies, it has shown that extrajudicial killings, torture and imprisonment increase inside the country at the time of sanctions (Peksen & Drury, 2009, p. 403-409). It can be concluded with the help of these arguments that the overall conditions of targeted society is in danger in the face of economic sanctions. In other words, although there is the utilitarian assumption regarding sanctions that argues that political gain will outweigh the human pain (Marks, 1999, p. 1510), the physical well-being of people –including health, political and civil and economic— is highly constrained under the sanctions. The reason for this is because sanctions

undermine the functioning of the state in all fields from social services to economic services which will definitely threaten the citizens rather than political elites who monopolize economic resources of the state.

2.3. Gendered Effects

In the above section, I addressed the impacts of sanctions on societies as a whole. It is now undeniable that full-fledge sanctions have highly negative impacts on everyday lives of people in every aspects. In this highly disrupted environment, women are placed among the group of people who are hit hardest by economic sanctions (Al-Ali, 2003, 2005; Al-Jawaheri, 2008; Drury and Peksen, 2012; Fathollah-Nejad; 2014). Women are more vulnerable in the face of economic sanctions because of their relative lack of access to health and education, their poor or null voice in economic and political decision making process. While this inhibits women's social, political and economic empowerment, it concomitantly allows the maintenance of hierarchical structures in a society. Therefore, they pay more price than in a sanction-induced unstable and volatile environment. Especially, economic hardship can be the exacerbation of rooted problems of women. At this point, it is important to illustrate the casual chain of how economic disruption of sanctions affects women.

There are basically three economic aspects of how economic crises affect women differently than men (Akgöz & Balta, 2015). First of all, crisis has an impact on labour force participation rate. As it has been mentioned above, unemployment is the most visible manifestation of crises both for men and women. But women are usually the first victims of unemployment. There were examples that women were the first ones who were made redundant in time of crises (Seguino, 2010). This is in view of an understanding that if employment opportunities are scarce, men are the primary beneficiaries. The reason why women are the first to be sacrificed in the labour market and why men have more right to labour than women can be built around the patterns of employment and entitlements which appraise men as a 'breadwinner' in most of the society (Elson, 2011). Second point is that the need for women labour force can increase in the time of crisis (Akgöz and Balta 2015, p.4). This implication

is exact opposite the first implication of economic crisis for women but this increasing trend in the need for women labour force should also be evaluated in terms of gender relations. It is firstly because women are considered as the 'last option' in time of economic crises. Secondly, they are also considered as 'cheap labour' in the labour market and crises are the perfect time when cheap labour opportunities are available. This resulted in women are employed in a more flexible and precarious way. Third point is that there is still an ongoing understanding of acceptable female jobs in most of the cultures, especially among developing countries (Al-Jawaheri, 2008, p.36). From this point of view, women have historically been the one who are prime beneficiaries of public sector employment and social welfare. Therefore, that basic principle adopted to overcome economic crisis is mostly reduction of public expenditure will have destructive influence on women's employment in public sector (Al-Jawaheri, 2008, p.39; Akgöz & Balta, 2015, p.4).

To put more shed light on these processes, it will be useful to look at sanction case studies. When the U.S. implied sanctions against Burma, it was the textile industry hit hardest (Seekins, 2005). Women comprised large portion of the textile industry. As a result, they disproportionately lost their jobs and were forced to work in informal market including illegal sex market. Devin and Dashti-Gibson (1997) also illustrated very similar findings from the case of UN sanctions against the Former Yugoslavia. According to a household survey, sanctions mostly affected the types of jobs occupied by women such as trade, catering, tourism. As a result, "women were more likely to be unemployed than men during the sanctions period" (Devin and Dashti-Gibson, 1997, p. 169). The very similar findings were encountered in Haiti, Iraq, and Cuba. In Haiti, economic sanctions had substantial impacts on export industry responsible for manufacturing clothes, sport supplies, toys and garments (Gibbons, 1999). Women were unsurprisingly the hardest hit groups as they were making up 80 per cent of the industry workers. The serious decline in the women's participation in the work force does not only mean the loss of jobs; but rather means the loss of self-empowerment and personal autonomy which will utterly beget deterioration of overall status of women in a society. In other words, economic crises do not only echo in economy. It has been argued that both sexual violence and

gender-based violence increase in crisis conditions. Since, many women especially those with children would compel to remain with abusive partners or families. Furthermore, those women were forced to seek illegal works to survive the crisis. They either was forced into prostitution or felt obliged to commercial sex work -even prostituting their daughters- in Haiti (Gibbons, 1999, p.17). In Cuba, which endured total and comprehensive unilateral U.S. sanctions for a long time, women again were disproportionately impacted. During the sanctions regime, women were asked to fully participate in the labour force as outlined in social plan of Cuba while they were simultaneously expected to play main role in domestic area. The observable effect of this expectation was 16 per cent decline of women in the labour force. While women's participation in the formal sector has declined, they were very active in the informal sector (Hidalgo and Martinez, 2000, pp. 109-111).

Iraqi case is vital to address gender-specific effects of economic sanctions since Iraqi case is the most elaborative one in the literature. Iraqi people who experienced three war and a decade long full-fledged international sanctions suffered to a profound extent. Despite this legitimate generalisation, a closer look revealed more nuanced picture about how international sanctions affected Iraqi women and men differently as a result of the fact that they were not a homogenous group. During the time of sanctions, most of the Iraqi population, about 60 per cent of them, became dependent on the governments' food ration and food aid by the oil-for-food programme (Al-Ali, 2005, p. 746). In this kind of scarcity, feeding their children and husband became the major worry and focus of many women. Nadje Sadeg Al-Ali (2005) reported an Iraqi women noted that she often stayed hungry since she fed her children and husband first. There were mostly no leftover foods for her. Moreover, household management in the face of denied food, clean water and electricity turned into a much more time-consuming, exhausting and frustrating labour (Al-Ali, 2005, p. 746). High inflation and unemployment rate exacerbated the situation. Many women went back to homemaking skills in the context of sanctions-induced scarcity. For example, they had to make their bread on a daily basis since bread was too expensive to buy. Those problems were not for women of low income, the broad and well-off middle classes of Iraqi women also suffered. Unemployment disproportionately hit women in Iraq as a result of breakdown of the welfare state which created jobs mostly for women in

public sector. In other words, women were the real victims of Iraqi sanctions regime firstly because they were the prime beneficiaries of the state-economy and public sector which was demolished as a result of wars and sanctions. As reported in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) women's employment fell from 23 per cent to 10 per cent between the years of 1991-97 (UNDP, 2000). The more women lost their job, the more they were pushed back into their homes and traditional roles of being mothers and wives. Women could no longer define themselves through their education and waged jobs. The withdrawal of the positive intervention of the welfare state did not only mean unemployment for women. The state also cut its support for social and health services, including child and elder-care facilities putting more burdens on women who are often caregiver for children, elderly and sick family members. Furthermore, the demand for women's labour decreased, the types of employment open to them and acceptable for them changed (Al-Jawaheri, 2008, pp. 55-56). The conditions under which they worked deteriorated. Women increasingly turned to prostituting (Al-Ali, 2005, p. 753). More interestingly, Iraqi female prostitution was not limited in Iraq; rather most of the female prostitutes in Jordan were Iraqi women. The far-reaching poverty also adversely impacted the education of girls and young women since many families could not bear the expenses to send all children to school. The drop-out rate for girls in primary education reached 35 per cent (UNIFEM, 2004). Illiteracy drastically increased in the period 1985-1994 from 8 per cent to 45 per cent. Additionally, social attitudes towards female education highly changed and families started to consider it as useless and time-wasting. The high rates of unemployment, inflation, increased poverty, and a collapsed welfare state accentuated in the crime rates in Iraq. The crime rates rose substantially. As Al-Ali reported (2005) many women noted that before sanctions arrived, they did not feel necessary to lock their doors down and felt secure; but it radically changed. Sexual violence and abduction of girls and women reportedly increased (Human Rights Watch, 2003). In the context of chaos and lack of security, Iraqi women started to feel that there was no point to go outside unless they had to; or their relatives forbidden them to. Thus, women pushed back into their homes more and more through unemployment and insecurity. Since women lost their jobs, positive state intervention into the gender equality decreased and insecurity became palpable in Iraq, traditional and patriarchal culture strengthened. Therefore,

women face male institutionalized power both in the family and the society (Al-Ali, 2003; Al-Jawaheri, 2008, pp.107-125).

Additionally, the demographic costs of international sanctions manifested itself as an increase in female-headed households in Iraq (Al-Ali, 2005, p. 749). Economic collapse compelled Iraqi men to migrate. According to the October 2003 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report (as cited in Al-Ali, 2005), female-headed households accounted for up to 60 per cent of all households in 2003. The demographic imbalances also led to rise in polygamy, and getting married to older, or expatriate men. The other profound problem for women during the time of sanctions was the availability of contraception which was made illegal by the government, who tried to make up of losses of lives in two wars. The combination of unavailability of contraception and the reluctance of Iraqi women towards having children because of the economic and social insecure climate induced a dramatic phenomenon newly emerged in Iraq. There occurred an increase in the number of women abandoning new-born babies on the streets. A director of an orphanage in Iraq reported that, "they are often left by married women who just can't face not being able to feed their children" (Al-Ali, 2005, p. 750). Moreover, the unavailability of contraceptives unsurprisingly led to increase in illegal abortion made in back-alleys as risking their lives. With all these illustrations, although it is true that to what degree economic sanctions affect women vary from country to country based on extent and length of sanctions or the culture under which women live, it should be clearly recognized women shared parallel problems under sanctions regime.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY OF IRAN SANCTIONS REGIME

Islamic Republic of Iran was severely sanctioned at intervals from its establishment with the 1979 revolution to these days by international actors, specifically the United States, United Nations and European Union. Technically, it can be asserted U.S. pressure politics against Iran by means of sanctions remain almost uninterrupted for 40 years. Indeed, sanctions started at the very first year of inception of the Islamic state. On November 4th of 1979, a group of Iranian students, who were undoubtedly driven by ideological and religious impulses, seized U.S. embassy, and took hostage U.S. diplomats and citizens with respect to Shah's allowance to enter the United States. As a direct response to seizure, President Jimmy Carter ordered the first sanctions on Iran (Executive Order No. 12170, 1979). Accordingly, \$12 billion Iranian assets in U.S. were frozen, all Iranian government property in the U.S. was blocked. In the 1980s and 1990s, U.S. sanctions were aimed to enforce Iran to refrain from supporting acts of terrorism in the region. This aim reversed after the mid-2000s. U.S. and other actors targeted Iran largely because of its nuclear program. During 2010-2015, international community agreed to comply with, U.S.-led and U.N.-authorized sanctions which intended to limit Iran's nuclear program and make sure that Iran's nuclear program was for purely civilian purposes (Katzman, 2019). After 2018, both Iran's nuclear program and support for armed factions in the region became Trump presidency's two main reasons for sanctions. However, the administration also added the Iran regime's abuse of human rights as an official reason for imposing sanctions. As was seen multiple objectives and multiple threats were simultaneously embedded in Iran sanctions regime for years. That is to say, Iran, during the course of its history, became the subject of sanctions based on different motivations and reasoning of international actors. The United States was the first imposer of sanctions against Iran but not the only one. Germany, United

Kingdom, Japan, China and Russia are the other sanction-imposers. Moreover, not only countries implemented sanctions on Iran but also United Nations as intergovernmental organization, European Union as supra-national organization sanctioned Iran. In this thesis, important U.S., UN and EU sanctions were covered since their effects were far-reaching.

3.1.U.S. Sanctions

The central role of the United States in international financial system and the domination of dollar in this system provided U.S. with engaging almost any type of economic measures against any actors. Sanctions were one of these overused measures in U.S. foreign policy. Correspondingly, sanctions became the normal course of actions of the U.S. foreign policy. U.S. mostly sanctioned states unilaterally. That sanctions are imposed by a state on its own based upon the domestic laws of this specific country are the unilateral sanctions. U.S. sanctions can be imposed both by executive and legislative power (Katzman, 2019). There are many institutions that are responsible for the implementation of sanctions but U.S. Department of the Treasury is the main institution. U.S. Department of Commerce, Homeland Security, and Justice can also take place in the application of sanctions. There are currently more than six thousand people, business, and group who are in the blacklist of U.S. (Katzman, 2019).

U.S. sanctions with respect to Iran has always been different from the ones which imposed by EU and UN in terms of severity, duration and discourses (Taylor, 2010, p.67). Although there are structural differences between U.S., EU and UN, the last two did not regard Iran as threat to its own existence. On the other hand, U.S. declared that “Iran constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security” (Executive Order No. 12170, 1979; Executive Order No. 12211, 1980). Precisely for this reason, U.S. sanctions against Iran were more severe, uninterrupted and discursive. For that matter, U.S. sanctions were sometimes interpreted unlawful with regard to international law in its ratio between measures taken and objectives (Akpınarlı & Nejad, 2019). In this connection, we can say that U.S. sanctions are built on the effort to make Iran act in accordance with U.S. request and interests

through depriving Tehran of its own economic resources, and isolating it from international economy and diplomacy.

3.1.1.U.S. Sanction Phase 1: 1980-2000

As it was mentioned above, U.S. firstly sanctioned Iran in 1979 in consequence of hostage crisis by the authority of Jimmy Carter. In 1979, U.S. embargoed oil import from Iran, aid and military assistance to Iran. In 1980, President Carter passed two other decrees which expanded scope of the sanctions already imposed one year ago (Executive Order No. 12205, 1980; Executive Order No. 12211, 1980). With these two new executive orders, certain commercial transactions were prohibited. Diplomatic relations with Iran were also broke off. These measures were important in the sense that came at a time of massive economic disruption following the revolution. According to Suzanne Maloney (2015) although the financial constraints did not fully crippled the economy, they aggravated the negative consequences of revolutionary chaos. Those sanctions were lifted after the release of U.S. diplomats and nationals who were being held as hostage for 444 days. After the hostages were released, 25 tons of U.S. wheat exported to Tehran within two months. By 1981 of June, Iranian wheat imports bounced back to the pre-revolutionary levels of 125 tons per month. By the end of 1982, total trade increased \$300 million. U.S. remained to purchase Iranian oil. However, after Iran was blamed for the bombing of U.S. Marine Barracks in Lebanon, U.S. designated Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism. Accordingly, in 1984, U.S. banned foreign aid, credit and financial assistance of Americans; and arms export prohibited. These sanctions remained under the presidency of Ronald Reagan but these restrictions have relatively little effects compared to the hostage era sanctions. Yet, covert U.S. arms sales to revolutionary Iran remained, which went down in history as Iran-contra affairs which was a clandestine arms and missiles deal between the U.S. and Iran. Moreover, Iran's export to U.S. continued, 468 million dollar in oil, 51 million dollar in carpets and 14 million dollar pistachios (Maloney, 2015, p.443). By 1987, U.S. exports from Iran reached the level of 600 million dollars. Oil made up 75 per cent of this total trade. However, while the Iran-Contra scandal continued to echo, and economic expansion between two states became embarrassing for Reagan administration, the Congress

and Pentagon pressured the administration to aggrandize economic measures. In 1987, Reagan prohibited imports from Iran on the grounds that Iran supported terrorism as an active state policy (Executive Order No. 12613, 1987). The sanction in question was implemented under the International Security and Development Cooperation Act issued in 1985. This act enabled U.S. presidents to impose sanctions in response to alleged support of terrorism. As a result of the 1987 measure, U.S. non-oil imports and export crashed in 1988 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The most important dimension of these measures was that new restrictions were applied to Iranian carpet imports. Carpet industry was one of the main non-oil exports of Iran and the U.S. imports constituted 30 per cent of Iran's carpet trade at the time (Keshavarzian, as cited in Maloney, 2015). Moreover, Iran's non-oil exports, especially Persian rugs, were luxury, highly price elastic and labour intensive items. Decrease in demand for the rugs as a result of U.S. sanctions resulted in decrease in price. This contributed to the already high unemployment rate in Iran, especially for female workers who work under harsh conditions (Torbat, 2005, p.416). Additionally, the sanctions also changed the Iran's position in the U.S. market for caviar. Still, the 1987 embargo had its loopholes in oil trade because U.S. companies could continue to purchase Iran oil which was refined elsewhere and from non-American markets. These loopholes and leaks would resume until, to some degree, Clinton administration, and mostly Obama and Trump administration's sanctions regime. It is important to underline the fact that U.S. embargoes on oil import from Iran implemented 1980's and 1990's were almost utterly ineffective not only because there were loopholes but also because "Iran was always able to find new buyers for its oil because of its good quality" (Torbat, 2005, p. 417). In the year of 1992, when Tehran was linked to the bombing of Israeli Embassy, it was the US Congress passed the Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act which declared and restricted of transferring any goods and technology to Iraq or Iran since there was a belief that such transactions could contribute to that of country's acquisition of chemical, biological, or advanced conventional weapons (Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act of 1992, (H. Res.)). This act could be seen as a salvo and threat to third countries to deter them from conducting business from Iran.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton took the office to create “new Middle East” by isolating Iran and Iraq which was known as “dual containment”. According to Iran’s Central Bank, the U.S. was still purchasing Iranian oil by 1994, as much as 25 per cent of Iranian exports. Clinton signed two different decrees in 1995 which was hardening the pressure. One of these executive orders issued prohibiting certain transactions from Iran, and other one put U.S. investments in Iran’s energy sector under restraint (Executive Order No. 12957, 1995; Executive Order No. 12959, 1995). One year later, U.S. Congress passed the regulation known as Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA), in which all foreign companies which invest more than 20 million dollars in Iran’s oil resources would also be subject to the sanctions (Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996, (H. Res.)). No firms were sanctioned under ILSA because of the repercussion in a direct response among Western and Asian countries; however, the law, for the first time, was enacting secondary sanctions targeting other countries. In other words, this law had possessed extraterritorial effects in theory. The Congress adopted a more comprehensive version of this law in 2006 known as the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA). With another decree in 1997, U.S. companies were banned from trading and investing in Iran without the permission of the Treasury Department (Executive Order No. 13059, 1997). Still, Clinton administration took a multi-pronged path towards Tehran which went beyond signing the decrees. They embarked on to use moral suasion such as undermining Iran’s effort to reschedule debts, blocking loans by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), reversing third countries to invest or aid Iran, restricting Russia to sale defensive weapons. It was assessed that financial sanctions, initiated in 1984 and augmented in 1995, had more adverse effects than trade sanctions (O’Sullivan, 2003, pp. 64-73; Torbat, 2005). Iran, as a war-torn country, needed capital to rebuild its economy and to develop its projects, mainly for oil sector. These financial measures, nonetheless, either deprived Iran totally from financing or forced it to find other alternatives financing at much higher cost. The most important damage of financial measures caused decrease in investment in oil projects of Iran. Iran’s oil fields were aged and heavily damaged during the Iran-Iraq War and Iran could not obtain financing or financed those projects itself because of financial sanctions. The U.S. also put huge efforts to deprive Iran of a central role in energy supplies in Central Asia and Caucasia (Maloney, 2015, p.451). This administration did not just threaten

third parties but they convinced them that there would not be economic opportunities by doing business with Iran. As a result, a flow of capital was constrained and the Iranian currency crashed in the year of 1995. According to Suzanne Maloney (2015), Iranian currency would henceforth never recover.

3.1.2.U.S. Sanction Phase 2: 2005-2015

Between the years of 1997-2005, Iran experienced proportional relaxation of sanctions for two reasons. First of all, after Mohammad Khatami was elected in Iran, Clinton administration laid aside isolation policy and gave some concession in the hope that change would start in Iran with the “dialogue of civilization”. Second reason was that Bush mostly focused on Iraq, and just nominally threatens Iran after 9/11. Since there was an expectation that the eventual fall of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of democratic Iraq would pave the way for a similar change in Iran, which did not turn out as expected. However, sanctions relaxation remained only in the first term of Bush presidency. With the Executive Order 13382 (2005) Embargoes returned for Iran’s nuclear program in 2005. Accordingly, Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization, Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group, Shahid Bakeri Industrial Group Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, and Scientific Studies and Research Center were sanctioned. Over the course of 2006 and 2007, Iranian major banks including Bank Saderat Iran, Bank Sepah, Bank Melli Iran, and Bank Melat were subjected to U.S. smart sanctions. For example, U.S. authorized a prohibition of financial transaction for Bank Saderat. It was a serious authorization for a bank “with at least 20 per cent of its foreign reserves in U.S. dollars” (Paul Rivlin, 2019, p. 105). Moreover, in 2007, nearly all Iranian financial institutions were blacklisted both by the U.S. and the European Union through the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The Iranian Sanctions Act (ISA) that was enacted with respect to energy sector of Iran was also triggered in 2006. It was known as “first major extra-territorial sanction on Iran” (Katzman, 2019, p. 13). Unilateral sanctions against Iran resumed in 2008. More Iranian banks, entities and shipping companies were sanctioned. U.S secondary sanctions on other states, entities in or out of US were also imposed (Taylor, 2010, pp. 71-72). With these aggressive economic measures it seemed that Bush administration began to achieve what the previous government had sought to do but

failed: presenting a choice of trading with Iran or with the United States. However, there was still a loophole, which was indeed quite big opportunity for Iran that was particularly China. Iranian trade was on the rise with Chinese companies. They conducted their business, and trade outside the financial sector which was not mostly traced by Bush administration (Maloney, 2015, p. 464).

Between the years of 2010-2015, U.S. sanctions resumed closely with the UN authorized and the EU sanctions. In other words, Obama presidency succeeded in to create international economic pressure against Iran. From 2010 to the end of 2012, Iran was exposed the most comprehensive and severe sanctions in its history by then. The United States used its necessary tools and institutions, which were mentioned above, to pressure Iran. After this particular year, it is very challenging to pursue each sanction both in the form of executive order and congressional provision or regulations administered by different US department. Still, it is essential to mention the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions and Divestment Act (CISADA) which is “revamped and super powered version of the former Iran-Libya Sanctions Act” (Maloney, 2015, p.466). This act was the first and striking step against Iran taken in 2010 which targeted Iran’s imports of refined petroleum products and new energy investments. Accordingly, CISADA limited investments in Iran’s petroleum sectors; prevented any assistance in the production of refined petroleum resources, in modernization or repairment (Torbat, 2020, p. 206). A broad spectrum of sanctions were imposed under the Obama presidency in the following years after CISADA, including freezing of Iranian assets and property which were partly used for compensating U.S. victims of Iranian terrorism; banning on U.S. trade and investment with Iran which was most importantly crude oil transactions; prohibition on auto production, petrochemical, minerals sector; banning on technology transfer to Iran; prohibition on exportation of conventional weapons to and from Iran; prohibition of agricultural trade specifically of caviar, carpets, and pistachios; prohibition of all financial transactions with any Iranian institution including the Central Bank (Torbat, 2020, pp. 205-210). It is substantial to mention that those sanctions had “extraterritorial effects” which meant they executed secondary sanctions on other states, entities, organizations or institutions. Secondary sanctions were under strict scrutinize than ever before. Those sanctions hit the sanction sender

states also, the United States, Germany, France and Italy (Leslie, Marashi, & Parsi, 2016).

The effects of Obama sanctions regime will be discussed in next chapter but it will be helpful to look at them in a simple way. These measures degenerated the business climate, especially in energy sector, in Iran; made the revenues bleed as much as \$133 million per day. Because of the frozen assets, Iran had difficulty to access of hard currency. According to the U.S. Department Treasury, Iran's hard currency reserves held in foreign banks were approximately \$115 billion (Katzman, 2019, p. 63). Oil exports significantly fell; the Iranian rial lost half of its value. As a result, Tehran was forced to unconventional way for compensation such as smuggling and relying heavily on barter trade. As you will see in the next chapter, Iran's macroeconomic variables returned to the wartime economic indicators. This process was end up with the historical agreement Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015, which took place at the era of Ahmadinejad's successive government Hassan Rouhani who was elected in 2013. Newly elected Iranian President Hassan Rouhani paved the way for diplomacy over the Iranian nuclear crisis since, as is believed, Iranian financial and oil sector were put under heavy pressure. Therefore, Iran had to consider sitting at the table with "Great Satan", the United States, for the first time since 1979. Consequently, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), shortly Iran Nuclear Deal, was reached in 2015, which had regulations regarding Iran's nuclear activity and under which sanctions related to Iranian nuclear activities waived.

3.1.3.U.S. Sanction Phase 3: 2018-2020

As of May, 2018, this considerably infrequent outcome, the JCPOA, fell under threat because of Obama's successor Trump Administration. Donald Trump declared at every platform the agreement is "inane and superficial" and unilaterally withdrew from it on 8th of May in 2018 (Inat & Duran, 2019). From this particular date, U.S. started to reimpose pre-nuclear deal economic sanctions and further augmented them. On August 2018, they prohibited business transactions with several sectors including carpets, caviar, gold, aeroplanes and pistachios. In the same year, as of

November, key Iranian oil and banking sectors were targeted. In 2019, the United States designated Islamic Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) as a terrorist organization, followed afterwards economic and travel sanctions on the IRGC members. On May 2019, U.S. imposed new measures on mining and steel sectors. In the middle of 2019, the U.S. imposed financial sanctions and targeted Iran's top officials, including Iran's supreme leader, his office and foreign minister Javad Zarif. Iran's space agency was also sanctioned. On January 2020, Trump administration continued to pressure senior officials, manufacturing and metal sectors in Iran. Within this period, Trump Administration put so many firms, individuals and ships into its blacklist accused by breaching the sanctions of U.S. All in all, any sectors was left to be sanctioned, including Iranian carpets, gold, steel, cars, aircraft, currency, industrial software, insurance, construction, manufacturing, mining, shipping, insurance and oil sectors. It is now estimated that U.S. took measure against more than 700 Iranian targets (Manson, Peel, & Bozorgmehr, 2018). Those wide spectrums of sanctions are built on basically three reasons: Iran' nuclear program, malign activities, and human rights violations in the region.

3.1.4.Reasons of Sanctions against Iran

Over the course of U.S.-Iran relations from 1979, three claims that drove the United State to enforce sanctions against Iran come to the forefront. The United States has become the main leading actor regarding sanctions against Iran throughout decades. The United Nations and the European Union joined this guided reasons' bandwagon of the United States after the mid 2000's. In other words, international community was directed and motivated by the United States. In this part, these three reasons behind Iran sanctions regime will be addressed and illuminated.

The first and foremost reason why Iran faced severe sanctions for decades is its alleged ambition on possessing nuclear weapon, which was in fact a gift given by the U.S. itself in the time of Shah. Before the revolution, Iran was one of the main allies of U.S. in the region against growing threat of Soviet Union. U.S. was even eager to give and help with the nuclear technology which could be used for building nuclear weapons such as plutonium separation facilities. This interest, however, turned into a

nightmare after the revolution. Iran's nuclear crisis started at the onset of 21st century. The 20 years of hidden facilities since its inauguration were unveiled on 14 August of 2002. Alireza Jafarzadeh, the representative of the opposition organization of National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) in exile, fired the crisis in a press release in Washington (Ekinici, 2009). According to Jafarzadeh, Iran was hiding its nuclear facilities from International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Jafarzadeh also gave hidden nuclear facilities names, which were Natanz and Arak Nuclear Complex. Meanwhile, Iran was already cooperating with China and Russia on peaceful nuclear activities under the governance of IAEA (Ekinici, 2009, pp. 37-38). Although, as America claims, no concrete evidence was obtained by IAEA that Iran was carrying out nuclear weapons, unveiling the clandestine facilities gave justification to the U.S., who developed a completely different attitude towards Iran's nuclear activities after 1979 and claimed since 1990s that Iran was aiming to obtain nuclear weapons. In other words, after this statement, it was proved that Iran was not informing a number of activities of which it had responsibility to do so. This means Iran was in material breach of Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and cheating the international community regarding its nuclear program. This incident discredited Iran's reliability in the international arena and provided them a basis not to believe Iran's nuclear activities were simply for peaceful ends. As a result, the U.S. started to take more active steps to affect the attitudes of countries and international organizations afterwards towards Iran, which meant U.S. played a huge role in Iran nuclear crisis. Although Iran is one of the richest countries in terms of natural resource of oil and natural gas, the governing elites were reputedly seeking nuclear energy for electricity generation. Still, there were a couple of other motivations why Islamic Republic of Iran longed for nuclear energy. Those motivations were mostly learned from Iran-Iraq war. The 8 years devastating war instilled the importance of developed technology, independent economy, and privileged position which the possession of nuclear energy gave. It was also argued that Iran inaugurated its uranium-enrichment programme in response to chemical weapons attacks in Iran-Iraq War (Taylor, 2010, p.61). Moreover, although Iran already developed ideological objectives, namely anti-US or "Neither West Nor East" after the revolution, Iran found Iran-Iraq war was very instructive for revealing the position of West and Arab countries against itself. Iranian regime understood that

Iran was no longer under the US umbrella for protection, which Iran's mullahs no longer seek for, in times of aggression and economic hardship. Therefore, it became existentially important to be independent. Last but not least, Israel and its believed to have nuclear weapons warhead posed a huge threat for ideologically driven Iran. That is to say, since Iran's nuclear program posed a threat to the countries and international system, nuclear energy and its possession by Iran turned into a nightmare for US and the world after the 1979 revolution. Correspondingly the United States became the shadow behind every step Iran has been taking regarding nuclear program.

The second underlying claim and reason of US sanction in 1980's against Iran is that the state were funding armed groups against US and its allies in the Middle East (Fathollah-Nejad, 2014, p.49). After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, newly established Islamic Republic of Iran, because of ideological impulses and ontological anxiety, adopted a foreign policy which aimed at exporting Islamic revolution throughout region, and which assumed an explicitly hostile pose to the U.S. and its allies. To this end, Iran has trained, financed and provided weapons for non-state militant actors in the region. Some of these groups can be named as Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza, the National Defence Forces in Syria, the Badr Organization and Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq, and the Houthis in Yemen. While Iran considers them as a liberation forces, some of them are designated as terrorist organizations by the U.S., UN and the EU. Iran has been recognized as state sponsor of terrorism by U.S. mostly. That is to say, sanctions were imposed as a direct consequence of foreign policies adopted by Islamic Republic of Iran in Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Persian Gulf and even North Africa.

The third reason behind the sanctions imposed on Iran, albeit rather a rare and ineffective one compared to the two reasons above, is human right abuses of Iranian government. That the idea of protection of human rights is a domestic matter of a specific state is widely challenged since states can be the uttermost violator of human rights. International community, both international organizations and other states collectively, can become one of the main interlocutors of states' human rights abuses. They usually address the human rights violations through economic

sanctions. Iran is not an exception. Time of uprising was when Iranian government violated human rights to the uttermost. Islamic Republic of Iran has irregularly experienced recurring unrest throughout decades. 1999 Iranian Student Protests and 2009 Green Movement, 2017 and 2019 protests were the main protests needed to be mentioned. These intermittent uprisings were the most graphic evidence that Iran had its deep rooted problems which stirred up and nurtured people's antagonism against the government from time to time. Sanctions against Iran were one of the triggering factors of this antagonism among Iranians since sanctions had deep negative impacts on Iranian's daily lives. The reaction of Iranian government to the popular uprisings has historically been vicious and brutal. Moreover, in its normal course, human rights records of Iran were underwhelmed. Women, human rights lawyers, environment activists, media workers, ethnic minorities, political criminals and dissidents were suppressed into submission and silence (Rehman, 2020). For this reason, Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly been subject to international condemnation and economic sanctions.

3.2.UN Sanctions

The first round of UN sanctions against Iran started in 2006 pertaining to Iran's nuclear activities. Four effective UNSC resolutions should be mentioned at this point. UNSCR 1737 was the first sanction adopted in 2006 in which prevented any countries to supply, sale or transfer all items, equipment, goods and technology which could possibly contribute Iran's nuclear weapons development activities. (United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 2006). Moreover, assets of the persons and entities that involved in Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programme were decided to be frozen. All states also called upon to freeze the assets of any individuals and entities that were identified in the Annex of Resolution 1737. In this resolution, Iran was called for immediate suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. Iran, however, failed to meet UNSC obligations, and UNSC adopted Resolution 1747 in 2007 (UNSC, 2007). With this new resolution, all arms transfer both into and out of Iran was banned. Those arms items included "battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles or missile systems". It also further extended the

names of individual and entities which were sanctioned. What was notable with this extended list was that Iran's most prestigious bank -Bank Sepah- was included. After Iran once again failed to meet UN requirements and made provocative statements, UNSC (2008) passed 1803 Resolution which was almost unanimously accepted. Accordingly, the sanctions that were in place for 15 months were aggravated. That is to say, Resolution 1803 was extended version of Resolution 1747. Further individuals and entities, including two more major Iranian banks -Bank Melli and Bank Saderat- put on the sanction's lists. Moreover, UN called upon all states to monitor aircrafts and shipping vessels travelling from and to Iran if any suspected cases occurred. UNSC passed 1929 Resolution in 2010 which tightened the international sanctions regime against Iran (UNSC, 2010). Accordingly the arms embargo on Iran was extended; inspections and sanctions were stipulated on Iranian banks. The number of companies to be sanctioned was increased, and the control of ships suspected of carrying cargo, within the scope of the ban in international waters, was regulated. Particularly, the 1929 resolution was of great importance in the sense that painstaking diplomacy of the U.S. with Europe, Moscow and Beijing was finalized. It means the U.S. got finally robust -not light- measures and international support through UNSCR 1929 against Iran (Maloney, 2015, p. 467).

3.3.EU Sanctions

One of the pillars of comprehensive sanctions regime on Iran is the European Union especially after the year of 2010 when UN sanctions began being implemented with respect to Iran's nuclear activities. At this point, it is essential to see that for both the United Nations and European Union, infringement on nuclear non-proliferation regime was their threshold. Before this particular year, the use of sanctions against Iran in its foreign policy was not the regular course of the EU for a couple of motivations. First of all, politics of coercion is not the traditional nature of EU policy. In other words, it can be observed that EU, for its own peculiar role, generally prefers diplomacy more over coercive measures than US to solve the crises (Ekinci, 2009, p. 2; Suzanne Maloney, 2015, p. 454). Secondly, it is complicated and difficult to use sanctions unanimously for an organisation comprising 27 states. There were several examples observed that there was a lack of coherence concerning

the sanctions (Seeberg, 2016, p. 2). Third of all, there are, especially in the case of Iran, commercial motivations. For this particular reason, it is specifically important to mention Germany which is Iran's preeminent trading partner and which uses Iran as a major market for its industrial and technological products (Taylor, 2010, p. 79). But nonetheless, EU, as a supranational organization, being faced with the changing regional and global environment, adapted itself. In that sense, opting for the sanctions over the diplomatic solutions has increasingly become more discernible. For example, EU had once opposed Iran/Libya Act because it had extraterritorial effects which would definitely threaten the open international trading system in the late 1990s (Taylor, 2010, p. 73). However, open international trading system is the phenomena that was once tool of integration and supported by the EU has now been increasingly undermine by economic and financial sanctions of its own. It was argued new developments over the course of 2000's have changed the EU position on sanctioning Iran. Revelation of large-scale uranium enrichment and expansion of centrifuge capacity of Iran at the onset of 2000, the EU's increasing concern about international non-proliferation regime because of Iran's nuclear ambition, the EU's failed diplomacy with Iran, and serious human rights abuses during the Green Movement in 2009 had of real impact why the EU played a strong part building up an international sanctions regime against Iran.

EU has started to adopt sanctions against Iran in 2006 with respect to Iran's ambitions and involvement producing weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Those sanctions were both went along with UN sanctions meaning that EU endorsed the UN measures. Accordingly, the Council of the EU adopted a 'Common Position' and implemented UNSCR 1737, 1747 and 1803. However, it extended those resolutions by identifying additional persons and entities which would be subject to measures taken (Bergeijk, 2015; Drezner, 2000; Patterson, 2013; Tabrizi & Santini, 2012). Those sanctions, yet, were not major sanctions in terms of their effects and scope. It would not be false to say that EU sanctions against Iran have changed its facet from 2010 onwards, which meant it strengthened its sanctions against Iran by adopting effective autonomous sanctions. The sharpened measures of EU Council Decisions on Iran between 2010 and 2015 were presented in the list showing the 17 pages long sanctions against Iran (EEAS, 2015). The list includes EU's restrictive sanctions in

force against numerous countries which included Iran. Accordingly, Iran encountered different type of sanctions such as freezing funds and economic sources of individual and entities, prohibition of exporting certain type of provision especially related to nuclear equipment, embargo on telecommunications, and more importantly embargo on purchase, transport and import of Iranian oil and embargoes on Iranian petrochemical products. The EU ban on Iranian petroleum imports particularly affected Iran since the EU was the world's largest importer of Iranian oil. Additionally, European investments in Iranian oil and gas sector were prohibited; government supports for trade with Iran were banned, opening Iranian bank branches in Europe was also banned; any transactions of EU with Iranian banks were banned without advanced authorization (Patterson, 2013). Following an EU Council decision, Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) stopped to its communication services to Iranian financial institutions which were under the EU sanctions. It meant the intensification of financial sanctions against Iran. Another most painful sanctions for Iran was that prohibition of maritime insurance for Iranian oil shipments which was of great importance given that European insurance companies are responsible for more than 90 per cent of global petroleum shipments (Torbat, 2020, p. 214). As a result of this, not only oil shipping company but also food company shipping has decided to leave Iranian country. For example, Maersk the world's largest shipping company that delivered food products to Iran "stopped calling on Iran's three largest ports in 2011" which was to be affiliated with the IRGC (Zahedi, 2013, p. 94). Those measures implemented by the EU were mainly with respect to nuclear issue of Iran.

3.4. Macroeconomic Impacts of Economic Sanctions

As discussed above, while both trade and financial sanctions on Iran before 2010 have succeeded to bring damage to Iranian economy, they are far from being the main annihilator of the economy (Maloney, 2015; Şen, 2019; Torbat, 2015). Iranian economy suffered mainly from the deprivation of decisive economic policy after the revolution and Iran-Iraq war during the 1980's. By the 1990's, the new government tried to change the Iranian economic course to a degree so as to rehabilitate the damages resulted from the war. Yet, political opposition inside the country,

economic mismanagement, global oil prices, and sanctions, in general terms, stalled the reconstruction period. Again, sanctions were not the main driver of economic hardship in that period; or at least, it was not easy task to evaluate properly to what extent sanctions hurt the economy apart from the other factors. It was estimated that the trade and financial sanctions' cost to Iranian economy on the whole was about 1.1 per cent of Iran's GDP (Torbat, 2005, p. 432). This was a serious hindrance to the economy considering Iran's economic growth was at 4.7 per cent on average between the years of 1995-2000. Still, Iran resumed selling their oil, and strengthening economic ties with other countries, mainly Russia and China. Moreover, during the course of 2000's, Iranian economy has thrived even under the international sanctions as a result of increasing oil prices. Oil prices became the protectorate of Iranian economy during these years (Şen, 2019, p. 101). Notwithstanding the evidence, Iranian economy would be stronger if there were no sanctions because of the negative impacts of sanctions on improvement of oil sector as mentioned above. However, I will go deep into the economic effects of sanctions implemented between the periods of 2010-2020 with a short interruption. The effects of these sanctions are major since they profoundly hurt Iranian oil export in the first place.

It can easily be argued that Iranian economy is based on natural resources - specifically oil- which means oil sector dominates the economy and the main sources of state's revenue comes from oil export. In this sense, Iran is a "rentier state". The "rentier" character of Iranian economy makes it more vulnerable and sensitive to the unilateral US or/and multilateral international sanctions. Moreover, the incompetent mismanagement of economy by the clerical regime, which engenders structural problems and precarious nature of the economy, is another fault line that makes international sanctions more effective. The effects of these sanctions can be seen on macroeconomic variables including foreign trade volume, national income (GDP), economic growth, inflation and unemployment.

3.4.1. Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Before 2010, the US and UNSC has already sanctioned Iran unilaterally but, the strong international backing was missing and sanctions were not implemented aggressively which means sanctions were half-hearted. Therefore, Iran's GDP has steadily grown thanks to high oil prices in the world market between the years of 2000-2011. As it can be seen in Figure 3.1 Iran's GDP was badly affected especially after 2011 when international sanctions were aggressively used as never before although oil prices in the world market was in rise at that year. According to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Iran's economy contracted approximately 20 per cent over the period of 2011-2015 (Katzman, 2019, p. 62).

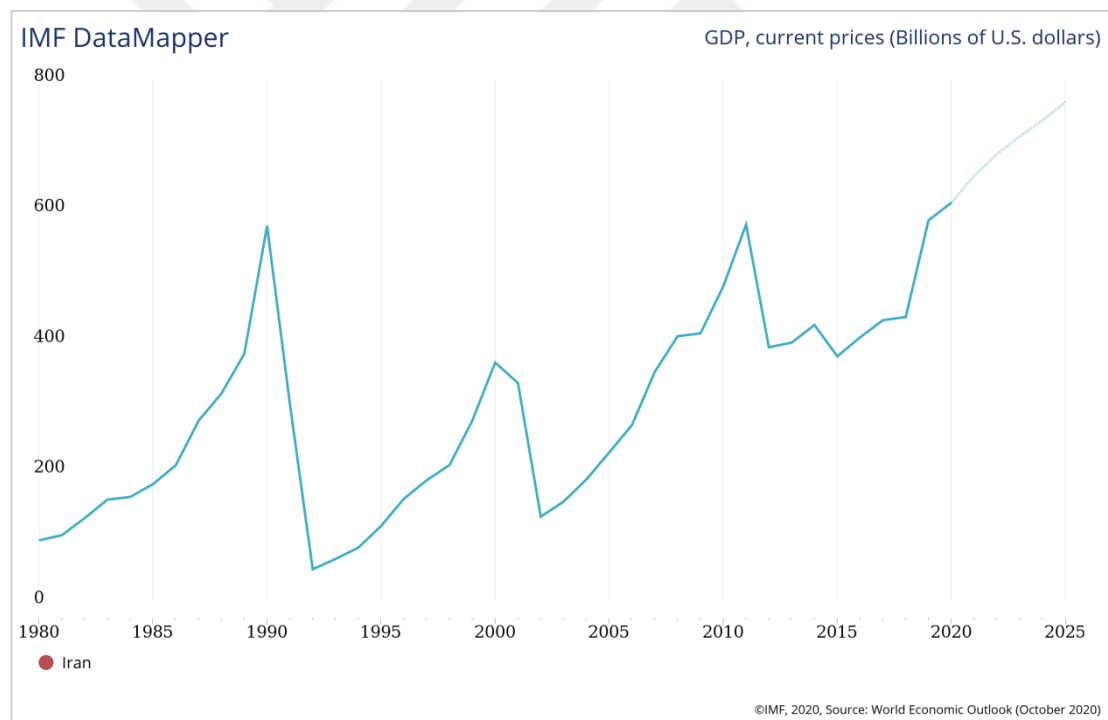


Figure 3.1 GDP, current prices (Billions of U.S. dollars).

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3.4.2. Real GDP Growth

As for real GDP growth of Iran, the years after 2011 was also important. Because of the US, UNSC and EU’s sanctions, as it can be seen in Figure 3.2, Iranian economy faced negative growth in 2012, which was not seen in 23 years in its history of economy. With the negotiation process on nuclear deal and implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015, economic growth bounced back. However, after Trump administration has decided to withdraw unilaterally from the JCPOA and started to implement sanctions more aggressively in 2018, Iranian economy has again faced negative growth as it can be seen in Figure 3.3. Positive growth in 2014, that was demonstrated both in Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3, was presumably due to the positive atmosphere in the politics after Hasan Rouhani, the new moderate president came to the office with the 2013 election (BBC, 2013).



Figure 3.2 Real GDP Growth (Annual percent change)

Reprinted from “World Economic Outlook (October 2020) Datasets” by the IMF DataMapper, October 2020b

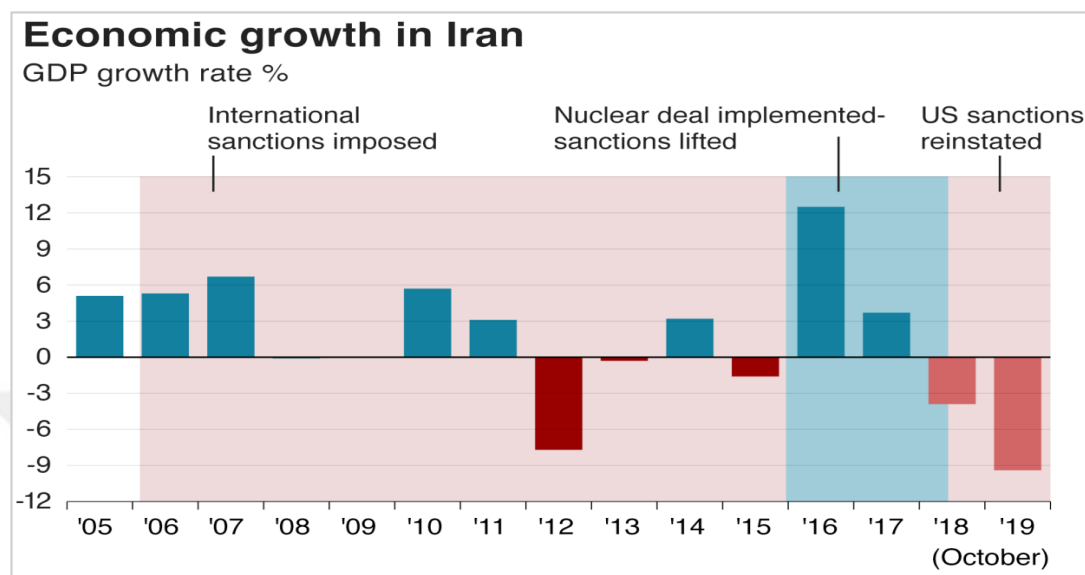


Figure 3.3 Economic growth in Iran (GDP growth rate %)

Reprinted from “Six charts that show how hard US sanctions hit Iran,” by BBC, December 9 2019 (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48119109>) Copyright 2019 by BBC.

3.4.3. Iranian Rial and Inflation

Since the Islamic Revolution, inflation rate remained double digit most of the time. In other words, inflation is Iranian economy’s chronic problem emanating from mismanagement and corruption. However, when we look at the years of 2012, 2013 and 2019 in Figure 3.4, the inflation rate was more than 30 per cent. Inflation rate mostly resulted from the loss in the value of rial as a result of sanctions. Between the years of 2011-2013 and after 2018, several Iranian sectors—mainly oil, manufacturing and financial sectors— were targeted by means of sanctions. After all, oil exports and non-oil trade volume decreased which in turn resulted in deterioration of the rial. The sanctions crushed the Iranian rial that was reflected in reports. Accordingly, in 2012 in Iran, meat prices increased by 60 per cent, cooking oil by 35

per cent, and chicken prices increased 3 times from only a year earlier cost (Maloney, 2015, p. 355-360).

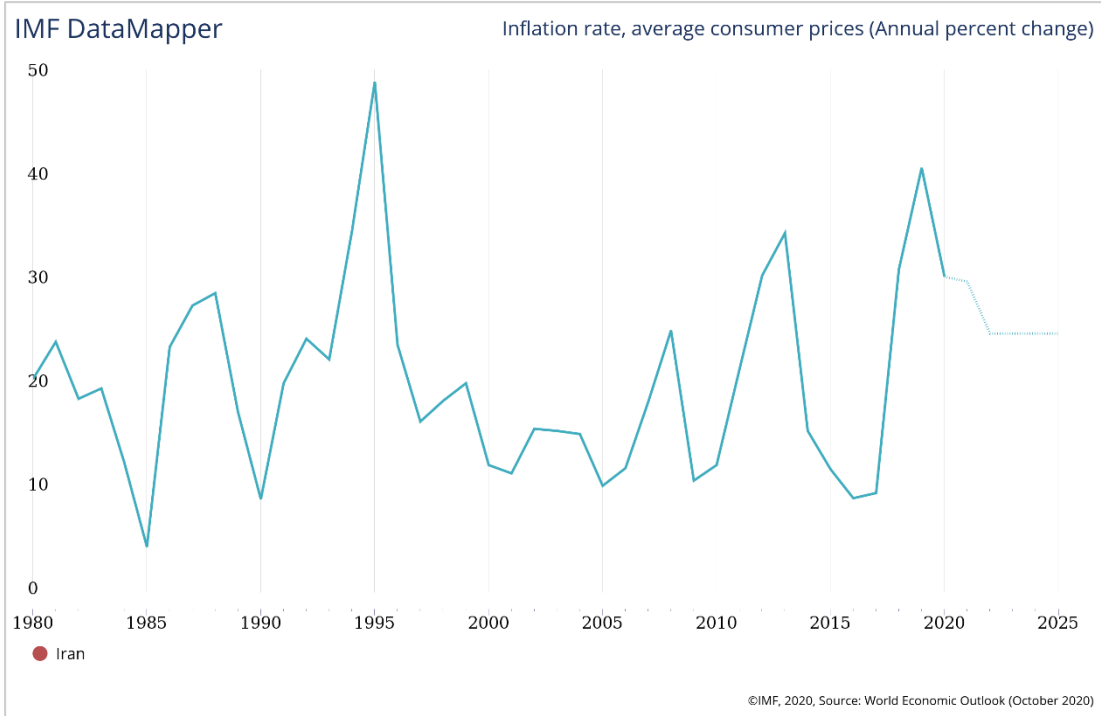


Figure 3.4 Inflation rate, average consumer prices (Annual percent change)
Reprinted from “World Economic Outlook (October 2020) Datasets” by the IMF DataMapper, October 2020c
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3.4.4. Foreign Trade Volume: Oil Export

Iran holds high amount of natural gas and proven crude oil reserves. Iran consumes most of the natural gas it produces and exports small volume of it. On the other hand, crude oil remains significant for government revenues. But both crude oil production and exports have been disrupted for many years by sanctions. It can be seen in Figure 3.5; Iran’s oil output declined after 2011, and stagnated between the years of 2012 because of the international sanctions.

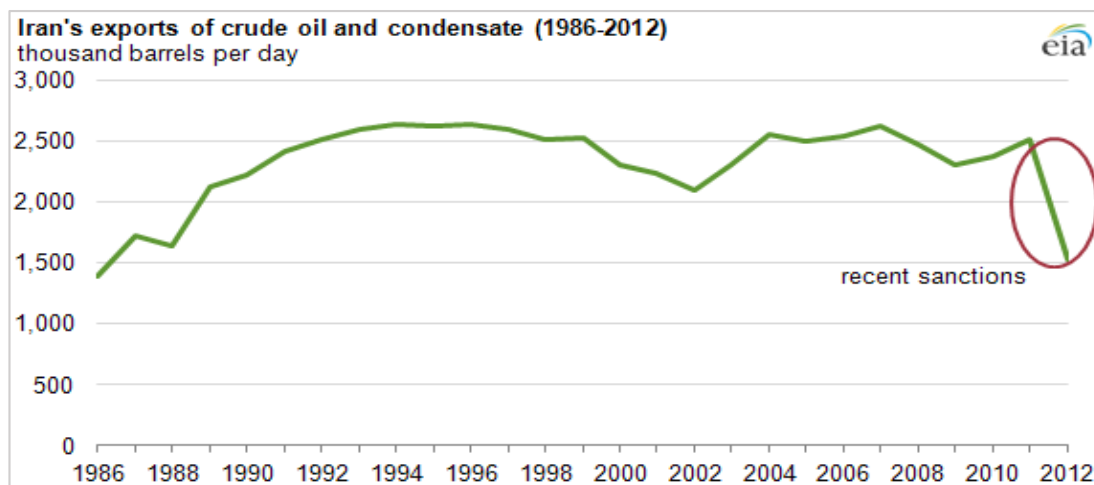


Figure 3.5 Iran's export of crude oil and condensate (1986-2012)

Reprinted from "Sanctions reduced Iran's oil export and revenues in 2012," by U.S. Energy Information Administration, April 2013, (<https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=11011>) Copyright 2013 by U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Until the Trump administration decided to reinstate the sanctions, oil output bounced back; but, as is seen in Figure 3.6 Iran's production has sharply decreased after 2018. Both international sanctions between the years of 2010-15 and Trump's administration unilateral sanctions impeded Iran's oil sales. As a result of international sanctions Iran's oil exports plunged from 2.5 million in 2011 to 1.1 million barrels per day in 2014 (Katzman, 2019, p. 63). Moreover, the reinstated sanctions of Trump administration, it is claimed that crude oil exports plunged to below 500 thousand barrels per day in 2019 of May (Lawyer, 2019). As of October 2019, Iran's oil exports decreased below to 300 thousand barrels per day which means Iran lost at least \$50 billion in revenue compared to 2017 (Katzman, 2019, p. 63). How sanctions affected Iran's oil production and export can be clearly seen in Figure 3.7.

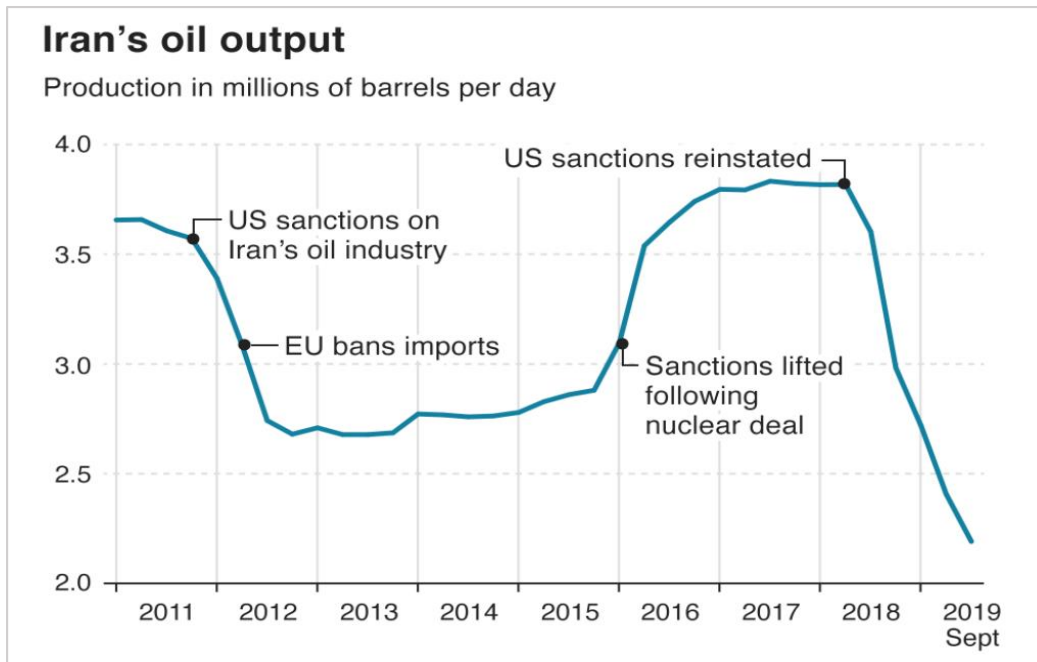


Figure 3.6 Iran's oil output

Reprinted from "Six charts that show how hard US sanctions hit Iran," by BBC, December 9 2019 (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48119109>) Copyright 2019 by BBC.

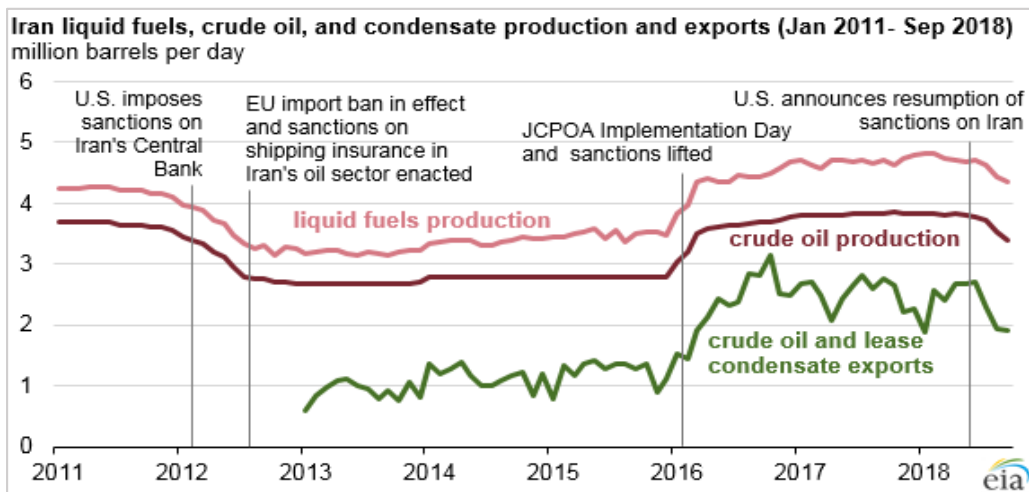


Figure 3.7 Iran liquid fuels, crude oil, and condensate production and exports

Reprinted from "Iran has produced and exported less crude oil since sanctions announcement," by U.S. Energy Information Administration, October 2018, (<https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=3735>) Copyright 2018 U.S Energy Information Administration.

3.4.5. Unemployment

The reflection of economic activities' contraction on the labour market is expected to be unemployment. One of the factors that cause the contraction in the economic activity in Iran's economy has historically been the sanctions. Therefore, severe macroeconomic predicaments posed by sanctions, especially after 2011, resulted in soaring unemployment in Iran as it can be seen in Figure 3.8. Especially, the fact that Iran's economy is largely dependent on oil export unfolds the nested relations between the sanctions and unemployment rate. Empirical studies showed that a rise in oil revenue meant the decrease in unemployment rate because oil revenue denoted the increase in government investment in several sectors (Aslan, Aslan & Rashid, 2020). Based on this, sanctions, that are largely meant to hurt oil sales of Iran, impacted Iran's unemployment figures in a negative manner.

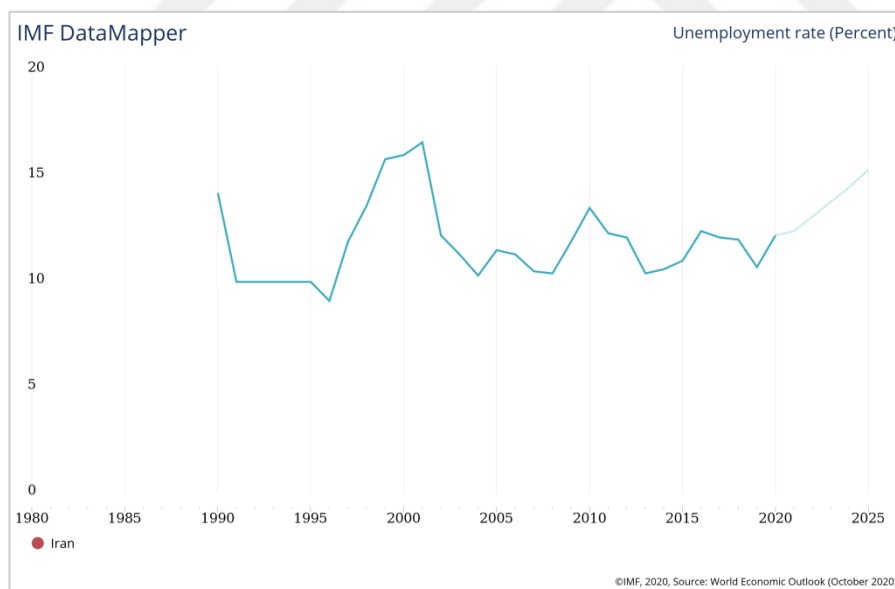


Figure 3.8 Unemployment rate in Iran (percent)

Reprinted from "World Economic Outlook (October 2020) Datasets" by the IMF DataMapper, October 2020d (<https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/LUR@WEO/IRN?year=2020>) Copyright 2020 by the IMF.

3.5.The Socio-Economic Impacts of Economic Sanctions

Islamic Iran, after its inception in 1979, regarded economy as a mean not an end, which signified that economy should “apt conditions for the emergence of human beings’ various creativities” (Papan-Matin, 2014). From this point of view, the constitution of Iran gave direct responsibility to the government to plan a correct economic system and to use all of its resources “in order to create prosperity and eliminate poverty and to remove all forms of depravation in the areas on nutrition, housing, labour, and health” (Papan-Matin, 2014). Despite the clear requirements in the constitution and excessive natural resource wealth of Iranian government, eliminating poverty and accomplishing equality has increasingly become elusive. Poverty and inequality can be blamed on chronic economic problems; but sanctions have exacerbated the situation across country since U.S. sanctions disturbed the government resources, basically oil revenues of Iran, which enabled the government to accomplish aforementioned objectives. Moreover, as it has been observed above, the economic sanctions of 2012-2015 and 2017 till today against Iran precipitated devaluation of national currency, increase of inflation and unemployment. These inevitably deteriorated people’s overall welfare including both economic and non-economic well-being. Although there is a lack of official and reliable sources on these issues for Iran, it is still important to analyse poverty, income inequality and health to find out the impacts of sanctions on Iran.

3.5.1.Poverty

It is hard to specify to what extent poverty is prevalent in Iran from the regime controlled official data who is reluctant to present data publicly, and to assess the issue properly. Still, there are limited official sources, which one should choose to approach critically since “there are contradictions between official and independent statistics” (Khoshnood, 2019, p. 60). In one of the most recent studies, Arvin Khoshnood revealed both the official and independent statistics on poverty in Iran. Official statistics were based on the various state organizations “some of which are more or less independent of the government” (Khoshnood, 2019, p. 62). Accordingly, the Statistical Centre of Iran estimated 31 per cent of Iranian

households lived below the poverty line in 2014, but the source did not identify what type of poverty was specified. In 2015, the Central Bank of Iran estimated 16 per cent of Iranian people lived in absolute poverty, while 50 per cent were believed to live below the relative poverty. In 2017, the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation stated that 14 per cent of Iranian people were living below the poverty line which was estimated \$8 per person per day. However, those statistics do not elaborate on what are the “methodological explanations and of how poverty was defined and measured” (Khoshnood, 2019, p.62). Another official institution, The Islamic Parliament Research Centre, recently published a report and revealed that “over the next 12 months between 23 and 40 per cent of Iran’s population will be living under the absolute poverty line” (The Islamic Parliament Research Centre, 2018). The report showed clearly that Iranians faced rapid increase in levels of inflation and unemployment, and rapid decline in real income of households in a short time, which rendered it impossible for many of them, to keep up with the rising cost of living and to afford health services. The report recommended that most vulnerable groups to the rapid deterioration of economy must be provided with “support packages” to survive. The U.S. sanctions, however, disturbed the government resources, basically oil revenues of Iran, which would enable the government to pursue this recommendation. In other words, sanctions, especially Obama and Trump administrations’ sanctions, are one of the leading causes of poverty in Iran (Atamanov, Mostafavi, Salehi-Isfahani, & Vishwanath, 2016). The footprint of poverty was observed in Iran streets in which children, adults and elderly people were “either begging, cleaning car windows or selling flowers for a penny” (Khoshnood, 2019, p. 66). The numbers of street children showed an increasing trend since 2009 according to UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESRC, 2013). In last, prostitution as a way of earning income for women, which I will discuss in detail in the last chapter, is also on the rise in Iran (Khoshnood, 2019, p.67).

3.5.2.Health

According to the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran, every Iranian has right to enjoy the highest attainable level of health (Papan-Matin, 2014). Nonetheless, Iran-

Iraq War (1980-88) adversely impacted the ability of newly established regime to supply the greater health care to its people. After Iran-Iraq War, a welfare state system which corresponded to prioritized fields – mainly health and education— of the Constitution of Iran was established in Iran to some extent. In line with this social justice agenda of revolutionary government, a fair amount of money was invested in health. As a result of this investment, the Iranian health system and population's health improved (Mehrdad, 2009; WHO, 2010; Kokabisaghi, 2018; WHO, 2018; Ebrahimi et al., 2020). In 2015, 97 per cent of Iranians had access to improved water and 99 per cent had access to improved sanitation facilities (WHO, 2018, p.7). Life expectancy rates has substantially increased from 61 to 75.7 during 1990-2016, and the rates of maternal, prenatal and child mortality have decreased. In 2004, the infant mortality rate was 29 per 1000 live births, in 2017, the ration decrease to 13 per 1000 live births. Communicable disease has also controlled which were causing less than 5 per cent of total deaths in Iran (WHO, 2010, p. 30). Other factors which are highly interrelated with health conditions such as education, has not been taken for granted by Islamic Republic of Iran. Total literacy rate was 85 per cent in 2011. Net primary school enrolment ratio per 100 school-age children was 98 for girls and 99 for boys in 2016 (WHO, 2018, p.5). This success has been praised by UNICEF, saying “Thanks to a strong health and education network and infrastructure, Iran is on track to achieve most Millennium Development Goal targets” (UNICEF, 2012, p. 2). However, sanctions have adverse effects on population health through aggregating of economic situation and social system of targeted countries in a specific way which was framed in detail in chapter two. Islamic Republic of Iran is no exception. The Iranians' right to health was restricted by sanctions in two ways (Cheraghali, 2013; Butler 2013; Kokabisaghi, 2018; Aslan et al., 2020). Firstly, both mental and physical health of Iranians was influenced by sanctions since their living conditions deteriorated as a result of the rise of inflation, high unemployment and decline in their income. For example, WHO (as cited in Aloosh, Salavati, & Aloosh, 2019) found that death rates due to suicide rose from 5.9 to 6.1 per 100,000 persons during the 2011-2014 period. Additionally, interpersonal violence rose during the same period. Moreover, sanctions had direct unfavorable effects on the availability, accessibility and quality of lifesaving medicines in Iran (Setayesh & Mackey, 2016; Kokabisaghi, 2018; Aloosh et al., 2019; Kheirandish, Rashidian, & Bigdeli, 2015).

Iran's pharmaceutical industry or medicine's raw material and stock of medical equipment are almost entirely import-dependent (Zahedi, 2013). Since the international pharmaceutical refused to trade with Iran for fear of US sanctions, drugs shortage has mounted. One study found that the availability of lifesaving medicines fell significantly in Iran between 2012 and 2015 (Kheirandish, Varahrami, Kebriaeezade, & Cheraghali, 2018). Besides that, shortages resulted in high inflation in medical costs which allegedly approached a 350 per cent (Zahedi, 2013, p.14). As it is seen, although in theory sanctions are not supposedly directed at medicine trade, or medicines are exempted from sanctions, there are clear evidences sanctions hurt Iranians' basic right to health.

3.5.3. Collateral Effects

Sanctions are cementing the authoritarian and national security state in Iran (Şen, 2019). It occurred in two ways: political and economic. In other words, sanctions created political and economic environment of which was taken advantage by certain fraction. In the political side, it is argued that regime survival is one of the leading drivers of Iranian domestic and foreign policy (Katzman, 2020). Nearly uninterrupted sanctions have formed the threat perception of Iran since sanctions are ultimately an aggressive and hostile stance taken towards a state. One can clearly see that sanctions fostered the anxiety of regime survival among the Iranian political elites, whose portrayal of the sanctions is "economic war" (AP News, 2019). The same anxiety can be traced in the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's statements. According to him, Western powers have been aiming to "make the Iranian people stand up against the Islamic Republic" (Khamenei, 2013). Such reflection of sanctions by the top leader of Islamic Republic of Iran served to the Iranian political elites to create "perpetual enemy" for a long time in politics. As a result, it justified and strengthened military-security apparatus who serves to counter that enemy in Iran (Fathollah-Nejad, 2014, p.52). Furthermore, political strength was formed through economic sanctions by providing the regime with omnipresent scapegoat for everything that goes wrong in Iran.

In the economic side, Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), who took the advantage of the creation of perpetual enemy in politics, also benefited from crony capitalism sanctions cultivated. Crony capitalism strengthened IRGC economically and "led to militarization of state and strengthening of security actors" (Şen, 2019). As a matter of fact, how the economic sanctions enriched Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps in the course of time was not a confidential matter. Circumvention of sanctions measures served the IRGC (Alfoneh, 2012). In order to circumvent the impacts of sanctions, Iranian economy has been reorganized both in terms of its nature and its direction. First of all, mass privatization of economy has been promoted with the decree of Supreme Leader of Iran Khamenei with the request of newly elected president Mahmoud Ahmedinejad in 2006. Although this reorganization of the economy was regarded as privatization, it was rather a militarization of Iranian economy. Since, instead of private or foreign companies – which were basically prevented by sanctions to compete in Iranian markets—Pasdaran were privileged during the sales of state-owned enterprises, especially at non-transparent sales of those enterprises (Harris, 2013). Along with the this 'privatization process', they also benefitted and filled the vacuum of sanction-related withdrawal of European companies in oil, gas sectors and other industrial branches on no-bid basis (Borszik, 2015, p.27). Second of all, direction of Iranian economy was turned to the East, specifically China, so as to find new partners in the face of crippling international sanctions. Trade volumes between Iran and China increased from 30 billion US dollar to 40 billion US dollar between the periods of 2010-2013. As a result, China became the main trading partner of Iran by overtaking the EU with its all member states (Fathollah-Nejad, 2014, p. 55). As Iran's trade partners gradually turned to China and other Asian countries, Pasdaran's cooperation and networks with Asian firms also increased. By that means, Iranian state desperately needs IRGC's networks to bypass the sanctions. The more state needed their networks, the more IRGC developed substantial power in economy, which ultimately resulted in expansive "socio-politico-economic conglomerate" (Fathollah-Nejad, 2014, p. 54). For example, according to the former Deputy of the Ministry of Industry, Mohsen Safai, IRGC indirectly controls 50 percent of Iran's gross domestic product (Perlman, 2019). Thus, while entities and actors who are closely connected to the IRGC's economic circle can easily reach state resources, crippling sanctions

mostly harm the Iranian people who are out of that circle. For example, Porsche sold more cars in Tehran during 2011 than other Middle Eastern city, and Iranian rich eat ice cream covered with edible gold (Dagres, 2018). Moreover, sanctions also prospered black market and lucrative smuggling in oil, cash, narcotics, and consumer goods, which were the real opportunities for IRGC (Batmanghelidj, 2018). Iran's parliament member estimated that the IRGC's smuggling operation worth annual reserves of 12 billion dollar in 2007. In 2014, at the height of international sanctions regime, 7 billion dollar worth of petroleum products was smuggled out of country according to anti-smuggling agency in Iran. In 2019, a top official from Iran's anti-smuggling agency has told that approximately 11 million liters which is close to 3 million gallons of gasoline was smuggled on daily basis (Radio Farda, 2019). One of the founding member of Pasdaran (IRGC) and now exiled Iranian dissident Mohsen Sazegara criticized this organisation in an interview to the Guardian, and said "We created a people's army to defend the country and also help in emergencies, but it turned into a monster" (Dehghan, 2017). All in all, economic sanctions became the boon for IRGC who were the main beneficiaries of economic pressure in aforementioned ways. It can be argued that sanctions are one of the main enabler of profound ascent of the IRGC in Iran. The increasing material possession of security actors have inevitably reflected on social and political life.

CHAPTER 4

IRANIAN WOMEN UNDER ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

Middle Eastern women known as ‘Muslim women’ in general and Iranian women in particular are one of the most controversial topics both in the West and in the Middle East countries. Muslim women became more visible after 9/11 attack in the West since Bush waged his finger at their ‘pathetic situation’ that was in need of to be ‘saved’. This rhetoric has been discussed at length (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Afshar, 2005; Bahramitash 2005; Mernissi, 2002). Still, it may not be false to say that historical documents that deal with women’s issue and gender dynamics in the Middle East are insufficient (Afary, 2009). Even so literature dealing with Iranian women or gender dynamics in Iran –in the past and present- is remarkable compared to researches on gender in the Middle East (Afary, 1989, 2009; Moghissi, 1991; Najmabadi, 2005; Paidar, 1995; Sedghi, 2007; Shahidian, 2002; Tohidi, 2016). Women rights in contemporary Iran in terms of legal and practical situation seem complicated and ill-conditioned. On the one hand, women under a conservative Islamic clerical regime can show impressive educational attainment, even in higher education. On the other hand, sex segregated attitudes towards women is enforced by legal laws, societal norms and tradition and patriarchal system in Iran. Moreover, Iranian women’s labour force participation rates and share of representation in the Parliament are one of the lowest numbers in the world. It is important to underline that women in Iran have not faced challenges only in contemporary era. They have been, alike their sisters in the region, experiencing very painful progression since the end of 19th century. Their situation has been shaped by different factors, including the embedded patriarchal patterns, the state policy and ideology such as nationalism, anti-imperialism, socialism, Islamism and capitalism. External factors also affected women in Iran such as imperial desire of the West or international organizations like the UN, the transnational feminist activism and, globalisation. Those factors that

shaped women's rights and status in Iran have been mentioned and studied one way or another in the literature mentioned above. However, international sanctions as a non-violent foreign policy economic tool and their impacts on women in Iran have not been sufficiently addressed yet.

In Iran, the government remains to play a major role in the reproduction of gender structures that are mostly to detriment of women. This is the structure of inequalities and discriminations. Women are more aware of those facts. Iranian women perceived gender inequality "as the result of the ruling of a patriarchal and religious system ideology on cultural, legal, political, social and even economic structures of the country" (Panahi & Abedini, 2020, p. 26-27). I argue that economic sanctions, if not the only and main factor, are one of the important factors which shape the ruling ideology in Iran. As a result, sanctions also reproduce the gender relations and women status in Iran. The aim of this chapter to trace gender impacts of sanctions by focusing on economic, political and social areas with specific attention on Iranian women.

4.1. Iranian Women's Economic Profile under the Economic Sanctions

The position of women in the labour force is considered as a main indicator of women's status in any society since women's social, political and financial liberation can be achieved through working outside the home. Conventionally, education, age of marriage, the number of children and labour market conditions have an influence on female labour force participation (FLFP) in general. However, every region and country has its own characteristics that yield specific factors affecting FLFP, specifically in MENA. As international statistics have shown that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region held the lowest FLFP rate in the world (World Economic Forum, 2019). Although oil income, Islam and the culture of patriarchy were identified by sociologists as the specific factors that had adverse effect on FLFP in this region, Fariba Solati has shown that Islam and oil income has not directly associated with low rates of FLFP in MENA (Solati, 2017, p. 1-30). Instead, she argues that deep rooted patriarchal culture that cultivated by patriarchal states were the root cause of FLFP in MENA as MENA countries have one of the highest levels

of patriarchy compared to other regions in the world. Having said that, the status of Iranian women in the workforce remain one of the lowest rates in MENA region despite high level of increase in all levels of schooling, increase in the age of marriage and significant and consistent decrease in fertility rates in Iran. According to official statistics, while 48 per cent of university graduate women were employed in 2004, it dropped 37 per cent in 2013 (Muavunat-e Omur-e Zanan ve Khanivade-ye Riyasat-e Comhuri. n.d, p. 100). This implies that all those conventional factors may have limited and indirect impact on FLFP in Iran. Studies that concerned with economic participation of women to labour force in Iran commonly attributed the low rate of participation to culture and state policy (Alizadeh, 2017; Bahramitash, 2003). On this basis, in Iran, as in other MENA region, FLFP is adversely shaped by “patriarchal laws which are often legitimized by religion and are enforced by patriarchal state” over the course of four decades. Tara Sefhri Far, an Iranian researcher at Human Rights Watch, revealed (2017) that patriarchal laws and culture in Iran discriminated and aggravated Iranian women’s right to work. Those patriarchal factors can be specified as women’s inability to travel and to enter in a job without her husband or father’s permission under the family law; the direct prohibition on entering certain jobs based on the Iranian constitution. Moreover, Iranian society and culture remains traditional, patriarchal and militarized which are largely influenced by dominant political ideology of the state since the revolution. This ideology pushes women towards the perceived patriarchal roles as mothers and wives of the nation which, in turn, sought to marginalize them from public life; or creates strict gender divisions of labour in Iran.

But, internal factors cannot, indeed are not, the only factor which affect the Iranian women’s participation in the labour force and unemployment rate. Internal factors are in interactive relationship with external factors which are often disregarded in women’s studies in international relations. Feminist IR scholars have shown that international politics (high politics), meaning external factors, also influences women unfavourably. Economic sanctions as external factor are likely to contribute economic shocks which will, in turn, have detrimental effect on women’s economic participation in the labour force, unemployment and earned income since “economic crisis directly transferred into negative impact on the demand for women’s labour”

(Al-Jawaheri, 2008, p. 55). This negative relationship between economic crisis and the demand for women's labour lies in "patriarchal gender contract" where the male is breadwinner and the female is housewife (Moghadam, 2002). Moreover, as was discussed above, Iranian women's status is highly linked with the role of the state. Thus, it must be underlined that sanctions not only adversely affected economy but also negatively moved the role of the state in social life. In fact, precisely from these reasons, women activists from inside Iran argued that "hardliners in government use the economic problems as an excuse to push women out of work" (Benjamin & Tahmasebi, 2020). This line of thinking reflected on decision of education quota for women in 2012. Accordingly, women were restricted from joining 77 technical, science and engineering undergraduate programs in 36 universities. In this way, women were precluded to seek a job in some scientific, technical and engineering area in the time of rising unemployment with impact of economic sanctions (Rasol-Ronning, 2013, p.34). On the one hand women were pushed out of specific works on behalf of male employment; on the other hand sanctions mostly disrupted the sectors in which women overrepresented such as agricultural goods, textiles and electrical equipment.

As it was discussed in the previous chapter, Iran's confrontation with the international community especially over its nuclear program has heightened since 2006, and the severe economic sanctions by international community started in 2010. According to Table 4.1, which was produced based on World Economic Forum's report, under the sanction-caused economic contraction between 2007-2013 and 2017-2020, women's economic participation experienced sharp decline while male economic participation rate preserved its high position, which meant gender gap grew. The year of 2012 was the breaking point for female economic participation which underwent a rapid decrease. What is more important that can be drawn from this table, female economic participation never recovered and brought back after 2012 despite the sanctions relief with the implementation of the 2015 Nuclear Deal. This implies economic sanctions can have long term and irreversible consequences.

Table 4.1 Comparative economic profile of women and men in Iran

Year	Female/ Male Economic Participation (% of total labor participation)	Female/ Male Unemployment (%)	Estimated Earned Income Female/Male (int'l \$ 1,000)
2006	39/ 74	20/ (-)	3,094 /10,856
2007	41/ 76	20/10	4,122 / 10,830
2008	42/ 76	17.10 / 10.10	4,475/ 11,363
2009	33/ 77	15.72/ 9.29	5,777 / 14,150
2010	33/ 76	16/ 9	5,304/ 16,449
2011	33/ 76	17/ 9	6,564/ 16,386
2012	33/ 76	17/ 9	3,912/ 18,834
2013	17/ 75	17/ 9	3,895/ 18,785
2014	17/ 76	16.8/ 9.1	4,656/ 26,644
2015	18/ 77	19.8/ 8.6	4,787/ 27,744
2016	17/ 76	15/ 9	4,963/ 29,468
2017	17.2/ 76.4	19.4/ 9.3	4,885/ 29,060
2018	17.9/ 75.2	19.4/ 9.3	6,003/ 35,715
2019	(-)	(-)	(-)
2020	17.9/ 75.3	19.18/ 10.60	5.3/ 29.2

Source: World Economic Forum, 2019.

As a matter of fact, the 2015 Global Gender Gap Report pointed out “Iran has increased its labour force participation gender gap the most- by about 30 per cent in the past 10 years” (World Economic Forum, 2015, p.33). Ultimately in 2016, Iran joined one of the world’s bottom three countries on the overall gender inequality index (World Economic Forum, 2016, p. 45). If we look at the estimated earned income figures, men in general earn more than women in Iran; however, over the course of years, this gap has also widened. Especially in 2012, while female’s income fell by half, male’s income continuously increased till 2018. In addition to these ups and downs in female earned income within years, female income has increased only 2 times while male’s income increased 3 times from 2006 to 2020. In

2020, Iranian men earn 5.5 times more than female in general. It can be concluded from the chart, female's income remains very vulnerable to the economic sanctions while its growth is already been marginal due to the structural weaknesses and discriminatory policies. On the other hand, male economic participation, unemployment rate and estimated earned income were not as fragile as female's to the sanctions. Moreover, unemployment rate remains generally twice as high for women than men within these years. In another study, in fact, Roksana Bahramitash (as cited in Povey, 2016) found Iran's female unemployment is among the worst in the region despite their high participation in high education.

Table 4.2 Comparative economic profile of women and men in Iran (2)

Year	Female Labor Force (% of total labor force)	Female/Male Unemployment (%)	Female/Male Labor Participation (% of total labor participation)
1990	10.423	(-)	10.231 / 82.565
1996	12.129	13.408 / 8.505	11.181 / 75.673
2000	15.433	18.621 / 10.142	13.65 / 75.429
2003	18.143	18.93 / 10.558	17.866 / 76.185
2005	20.145	18.231 / 10.553	20.464 / 76.98
2006	19.642	16.163 / 9.987	19.467 / 76.027
2007	19.191	15.94 / 9.332	18.558 / 75.157
2008	17.668	16.826 / 9.118	16.215 / 73.252
2009	18.463	16.975 / 10.837	16.974 / 73.655
2010	18.218	20.667 / 11.928	16.575 / 73.065
2011	17.653	20.578 / 10.708	15.934 / 73.041
2012	17.092	20.618 / 10.983	15.331 / 73.016
2013	16.549	19.754 / 8.593	14.762 / 72.97
2014	16.042	19.761 / 8.814	14.222 / 72.879
2015	17.271	19.491 / 9.3	15.762 / 73.84
2016	18.811	20.76 / 10.5	17.804 / 75.094
2017	19.797	19.873 / 10.181	19.17 / 75.916
2018	19.591	19.105 / 10.319	19.022 / 76.365
2019	19.535	18.567 / 9.638	18.89 / 76.119

Source: The World Bank.

Table 4.2 produced based on World Bank statistics – acquired data from ILOSTAT database— presented different figures to a degree in the area of female unemployment and labour participation in comparison with Table 4.1 produced based on World Economic Forum’s data. Accordingly, World Bank estimated female labour participation was maximum of 20 per cent in 2006 while this rate was maximum of 42 per cent in 2008 in Table 4.1. On the other hand, reflected male labour participation rate both in Table 4.1 and 4.2 slightly differ from each other. It is important to highlight that despite the differences between numbers, it can be observed economic condition of Iranian women more or less reflected the same ups and downs between the years of 2010-2020. According to the World Bank, Iranian female labor force participation rate and female unemployment also reflected similar fluctuations from 2006 to 2020. Lastly, according to World Bank Development Indicator, female part time employment in Iran has risen from 49.05 to 55.69 per cent between the years of 2017-2018, meaning in one year (World Bank, 2020). It can be argued, the increasing cost of living due to sanctions propelled women to take part-time jobs.

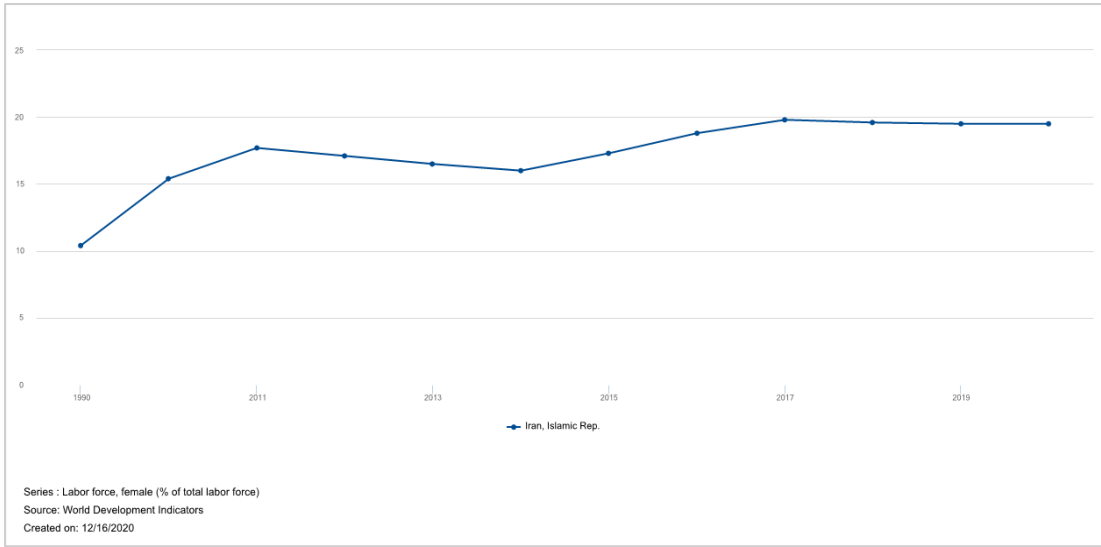


Figure 4.1 Iran-Female labor force participation (% of total labor force)
 Reprinted from “World Development Indicators” by the World Bank, 2020a,
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS?end=2020&locations=IR&start=1990&view=chart> Copyright 2020 by the World Bank.

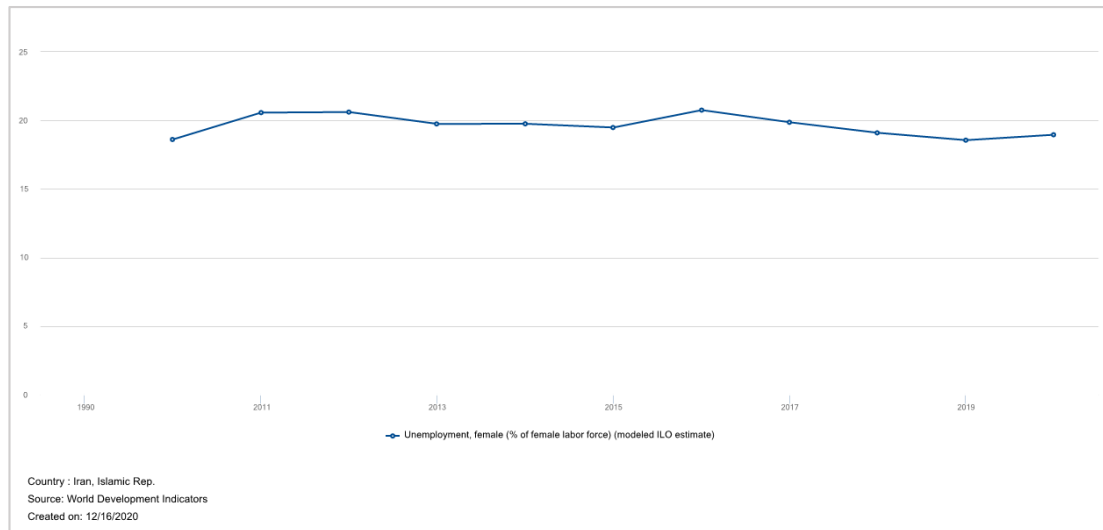


Figure 4.2 Iran-Female unemployment (% of female labor force)

Reprinted from “World Development Indicators” by the World Bank, 2020b,

(<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.FE.ZS?end=2020&locations=IR&start=1990&view=chart>) Copyright 2020 by the World Bank.

4.1.1. Iranian Women in Informal Economy under Sanctions

At first glance, it can be improperly interpreted from statistics of Iranian women’s economic participation women in Iran are not economically active. It was observed above that the years of ongoing sanctions pushed Iranian women out of formal sectors. However, the majority of Iranian women work in what is known as the informal economy. Informal economy can be defined, in general terms, as untaxed and unmonitored economy of a country. Informal sector constitutes about 65 per cent of Iran’s GDP (Solati, 2017, pp. 36-37). This sector increased further when economic sanctions implemented (Petrescu, 2016). According to the study conducted by the Office of the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, “half of the jobs held by woman are in the informal economy” (Far, 2017, p.21). Thus, it would be more accurate to state that Iranian women are not economically active in the formal sector, meaning their works are invisible and unaccounted. There are limited studies on Iranian women in informal economy. Still, when we take the significant share of informal sector in Iran’s GDP into account, it becomes more important to pay attention to this limited study to discern the role of women in informal economy. By this means, the research on the impact of international sanctions on women’s

economic status will be more complete. Bahramitash (as cited in Solati, 2017) found that “the share of self-employed women in the informal sector among employed women is increasing in Iran particularly in the last decade”. In the same line, Etemad Moghadam (as cited in Solati, 2017) found “there exists large, diverse, and growing informal economy in Iran which consists of about 47 per cent of the total labor force”. She added based on her research the presence of women in the informal economy was substantial. The Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs estimated the informal employment rate in 2017 was 57 per cent and at least 50 per cent of these people are women.

As it was mentioned above economic crisis considerably limited the demand in women labour in the formal economy. Thus, it was no coincidence, especially during economic crisis, there increased the number of women in informal economy which functioned generally as a “survival mechanism” (Solati, 2017, p.41). As economic crisis meant for women to be first one to be sacrificed; on the other hand women are increasingly employed in a more flexible and insecure manner in times of economic crisis. It is seen, sanctions stifled women’s access to formal labor market, therefore have a direct and negative effect on working conditions.

4.1.2.Female-Headed Households under Sanctions

All of these economic issues manifested itself in a more brutal form for female-headed households in Iran. The ever-increasing trend of female-headed households in Iran requires to be tackled it not as a relatively social trend but as a social problem since the existence of gender discriminations in all domains appear in the society. According to the Statistical Center of Iran, head of households mean being responsible for providing all or the main share of the household expenses or deciding how to spend them (Muavunat-e Omur-e Zanan ve Khanivade-ye Riyasat-e Comhuri, n.d., p. 54). According to the last official statistics regarding the number of female-headed households in Iran, there were 2.5 million female head out of 21 million families in 2011 while it is estimated that it would increase to 15 per cent in 2016 –approximately 4 million—(Muavunat-e Omur-e Zanan ve Khanivade-ye Riyasat-e Comhuri, n.d., p. 54). The majority of them were either illiterate or lowly

literate (Statistical Research and Training Center, 2014, p. 13). The percentage of unemployed female headed households stands at 82.1 per cent, whereas this statistic is 25 per cent among male-headed households. Additionally, 65 per cent of the female heads of households are widowed in Iran. (Statistical Research and Training Center, 2014, p.21). Nevertheless, “there are on average 3.7 unemployed persons per one employed person in female-headed households: this ratio is 2.6 in male-headed households” (Statistical Research and Training Center, 2014, p.26). Lastly, when we look at health conditions of female-headed households, it is seen that 30.1 per cent of them are unable to work. Those women in Iran are corroborated by different foundations in Iran such as Imam Khomeini Relief Foundations; however, the budget of those foundations is provided by the state. Being dependent on state budget signifies being much more vulnerable to any decrease in state revenue which is severely disrupted by sanctions. For example, there experienced 5.4 per cent decline from 2011 to 2013 in the amounts of covered female heads of households by the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation Committee. Moreover, while approximately 60 per cent of the illiterate female heads were covered in 2011, the figure went down to almost 53 per cent by 2013 (Statistical Research and Training Center, 2014, p.45). To conclude, these figures revealed that as sole breadwinners who were mostly dependent on nation-state experienced economic problems in the first place; however, the lack of economic prosperity is just one aspect of their multidimensional misery which I will mention in detail in the section titled ‘the status of divorced women’.

4.2.The Women’s Movements under Economic Sanctions

Iranian women’s status has been one of the popular topics attracted scholar’s attention and is still a contested subject in the Middle East and West since the revolution. Due to the discriminatory laws and policies against women after Islamic revolution, activists especially pro-monarchy Iranian diaspora activists in Europe and the U.S. accused the newly-established regime, and sometimes even romanticised Pahlavi’s era in bringing about reform concerning women’s rights in the area of economic, social and family law. Besides the Pahlavi period was far from being good at improving women's rights, Islamic Republic of Iran and its sexist laws and

policies were not the only factors that had an influence over women. Nayereh Tohidi, an Iranian feminist scholar at California State University, clearly identified the factors which has an influence in women's status:

Many factors have shaped women's contradictory status in present Iran, including the patriarchal and patrimonial patterns in Iranian history and culture, be it secular or religious (Islamic), the state policy and state ideology, the influential ideological or intellectual trends such as nationalism, anti-imperialism, socialism, Islamism, and more recently liberalism and a human rights framework. External and international factors, especially Western imperial meddling too has influenced state policies and intellectual discourses pertaining to women's rights and gender issues. (Tohidi, 2016, p. 76)

Although the socio-economic and socio-political status of Iranian women under these historical and recent factors could appear as a complex issue, Iranian women, in a nutshell, were the symbol of modernity during the Pahlavi regime, and they were the symbols of Islam during the post-revolutionary period (Afshar, 1987). In that sense, women became sacred as much as Islam in Islamic Republic of Iran. This signifies two main things for women. They were strongly linked to security of society and state (Khanlarzadeh, 2009). As it is mentioned above, the lived experience of this understanding for women meant inequality in employment, marriage, divorce, inheritance, travel and custody of children. Moreover, because they became a part of national security politics of Iran, their activism encounter oppression. One can perceived this oppression in Ahmadinejad's portrayal of Iranian feminism "a threat to national security" and the fact that female activists were arrested on the grounds of being a threat to national security (Moghadam, 2018; Abbasgholizadeh, 2011). Still, women's movement in Iran, in spite of the denial of such a movement by conservative Islamists, has continuously growing under such circumstances, and struck a blow against oppression (Povey, 2016, p. 3). Women activists have been run into smear campaigns, negative propaganda, arrest and imprisonment. This oppressive system resulted in exodus of women rights' activists –to name a few Shirin Ebadi, Shadi Sadr, Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Shaparak Shajarizadeh and Masih Alinejad— over the years which created strong international support for women inside Iran. At initial stage, transnational linkages are perceived to have provided Iranian women both inside and outside with opportunities for action. Iranian

women's movement, as in the case of other movements, is linked with international politics. Strong Iranian women diaspora makes this linkage more deep. This linkage is sensitive to the issue of sanctions. Within this concept, economic sanctions hamper women's movement in Iran by "strengthening the hand of conservative forces both materially and ideologically" and creating practical and physical impediments.

First of all, since sanctions signified hostility in nature, they rightly and highly intensified disintegration and antagonism between Iran and the West. Thus, sanctions were used to fuel dominant narrative by conservative politicians, first and foremost, by Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In 2014, during his speech "on 25th Demise Anniversary of Imam Khomeini", he stated western camp has been doing whatever it could against the Islamic Republic and sanctions are one of the tools they unprecedentedly used ("Supreme Leader's Speech", 2014). In his another speech, he said westerners wanted to punish the Islamic Republic and to harm the Iranian nation by the means of sanctions ("Anti-Iran sanctions", 2010). That these speeches inferring the West as brutal and immoral intending to make Iran underdeveloped and dependent can numerously be augmented. At it is seen from the example, the authority in Iran and its discourse is ideologically cherished through economic sanctions. From this perspective, any face of being dissident in Iran can be, indeed, is accused of being a threat who tries to undermine the regime; or they can be accused of working with foreign states against the government. In 2019, more than 170 members and supporters of women's movement, including journalists, university professors and students, artists, signed a statement opposing sanctions and threats of war on the country ("We Oppose War", 2019). The statement referred to the increase in oppression by government on civil society and in limit to the freedoms of citizens. This statement proves sanctions are counterproductive by "sustaining the image of a merciless enemy" (Fathollah-Nejad, 2014, p.52). It also demonstrates how sanctions materially empower mafia like groups and organisations/foundations in Iran. The statement does not directly point at the names of those groups and foundations but *Basij*, the IRGC, Imam Khomeini Foundations who are able to circumvent the sanctions and empower their economic status can be enumerated at the forefront. The more they are materially empowered, the more militarised and repressive atmosphere entails for Iranian women. To illustrate more on repressive environment, Iranian

Mothers for Peace forum, founded in 2006, wrote a letter to the United Nations and World Health Organization in 2013 regarding the deadly impact of sanctions on the lives and health of population. In the letter, it was argued based on Iranian everyday reality that “draconian sanctions are victimizing the very fabric of the society we intend to strengthen” (Marjai & Shahabi, 2013). They additionally stated that, “we view the Western-imposed crippling sanctions on the people of Iran as a form of structural violence— a silent, yet a predatory war”. Cost of sanctions and the atmosphere it creates for civil society can be seen more in the below in international human rights organizations’ report. Amnesty International declared that 2018 was the “year of shame” for Iran (Amnesty International, 2019a). Philip Luther, Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Research and Advocacy Director, asserted a particular sinister crackdown has been practiced against women’s rights defenders throughout 2018. Furthermore, Human Rights Watch (HRW) activists reported that length of prison sentences handed down to human rights activists in Iran have increased in the past four years (Human Rights Watch, 2019). It was acknowledged that judiciary has increased the cost of being dissent in Iran in 2019. In the same report, it was stated Iranian courts handed down harsh sentences to dozens of women over the past two years. To give a specific example, Nasrin Sotoudeh, a prominent Iranian human rights lawyer, was sentenced to 38 years in prison and 148 lashes because of defending women’s rights and protesting against forced veiling laws (Amnesty International, 2019b). According to her husband’s claim, Sotoudeh must serve 12 years in prison based on Iran’s penal code. Along with Sotoudeh, other well-known women rights’ activists have been sentenced to imprisonment in a short time in 2019. In order to comprehend exponentially increasing poisonous atmosphere in Iran, it is worth to mention the latest protest erupted after the increase of fuel prices as a result of US crippling sanctions in the middle of November in 2019 in Iran. As of middle of December in 2019, Amnesty International (2019c) reported at least 304 people killed in nationwide protests, more than 7,000 people has been arrested who were declared to be at great risk of mistreatment by the security forces. Also, a near total shutdown of the Internet for a week-long has been experienced during the process as a government effort to suppress the protests. In this social, political and economic impasse due to sanctions, there unsurprisingly emerges interruptions in social and mental interactions between

Iranian women. This interruption is likely to damage feminist consciousness and self-confidence of Iranian women which could entail considerable strength in their struggles to create their own place in the society. Second of all, ideological effects on women's movement can be perceived on the order of the day. Sanctions trivialize the women's rights issue in sanctioned-induced 'urgent' and 'real' problems. At the end of the day, women's questions vanish and seen a secondary issue in the face of survival. The ability to continue a meaningful and organized movement under sanctions regime has been hindered. Third of all, sanctions also create practical impediments for women's rights activists. International conferences and other events can become impossible through the sanctions applied to banking system and airlines. They cannot use banks to transfer money to participate in events or hotel reservations; they cannot use airlines who cannot maintain their flights. As Tara Povey has showed her fieldwork, activists from the One Million Signatures campaign and Stop Stoning Forever campaign unveiled the challenges they encountered for doing business in transnational level and receiving funding from overseas (Povey, 2016, pp. 5-9). As a result, many civil societies turned their work into voluntary work but economic impact of sanctions has caused serious obstacle to meet the economic demands for carrying out their work. Thus, they had to cease their activities in the end. That is to say, international solidarity which helps to promote and create social progress for women's status in Iran has been consumed by sanctions-induced effects. Finally, the Internet, which activists use in an effective way, is also limited by US sanctions (Mortazavi & Alimardani, 2020). Internet usage has been very vibrant in Iranian society on the purpose of different range of issue such as for fan, commerce, or politics. Freedom of Internet is under continuous attack by the state of Islamic Republic. But it is also been hampered by US sanctions by the means of blocking platform and sanctioning international technology company which provide circumvention tools for Internet access to Iranian people.

To conclude, women's activism in Iran has been under serious attack as national security concerns and more masculinised political atmosphere elevated as a result of international sanctions. Besides ideological impact, there are practical challenges that women will likely to encounter in sanctions-regime. To conclude, the centrality of

economic sanctions and threat of war raises the challenges in the development of women's movement.

4.3.The Impact of Economic Sanctions on Family Dynamics

As the Islamic regime after its inception “hoping to create an obedient society”, it overwhelmingly intervened the society, family and women. (Karami, 2020, p. 387). Newly established regime regarded family as the most important institution to make revolutionary ideology victorious, and to transmit it to the future generations. As a result, preservation of traditional and religious family became one of the most important tasks for the state. However, Islamic regime could not monopolise the management of societal or gender relations even through excessive effort to intervene into every rubric of life. Indeed, Iranian family has been undergoing significant changes through different policies adapted by different governments in economic, social, political and cultural field in Iran; increased literacy and higher education rate for both sexes; diffusion of technology and science into the daily life of people. Political conflicts, wars and sanctions which undermined peace and security have also influenced Iranian family dynamics. While Islamic regime still tries to control the family life according to the revolutionary and Islamic values, highly valued traditional family lives and marriage are exposed to socio-economic crisis resulted from sanctions. In this crisis, women became a target of different forms of abuse.

4.3.1.Divorce and the Status of Divorced Women under Economic Sanctions

The sanctions damaged the Iranian family by putting immense economic and social pressure on them. As a result, divorce rate had witnessed unprecedented increase. Getting divorce meant for Iranian women was the beginning of the new and big problems since women compared to men face additional problems after divorce. Divorced Iranian women, who are undeniably restricted by patriarchal and cultural practices, became more exposed to problems in any forms.

Divorce rate has ever-mounting trend for the two decades in all provinces of Iran although it is seen the last and unpleasant solution to marital problems. In fact, Iran has one of the highest divorce rates among MENA countries. According to Euromonitor International (as cited in Farzanegan & Gholipour, 2015), the ratio of divorce to marriage was 6.9 per cent, 8.24 per cent and 12.29 per cent in 1980, 2000 and 2012 respectively. According to National Organization for Civil Registration of Iran (as cited in Aghajanian and Thompson, 2013) divorce rate per 1000 marriages was 106.9 in 2015. However, it climbed to 154 in 2011, meaning having increased by 45 per cent in less than a decade. The situation has become so serious that the authorities issued “red alert” for divorce in 2017 along with other five socio-economic problems including addiction, squatting, moral collapse, unemployment and psychological depression (Başar, 2020).

According to the official figures of the last 2 years, divorce took place every three minutes in Iran. Several studies examined the factors affecting the dissolution of family in Iran (Aghajanian & Thompson, 2013; Doherty, Kalantar, & Tarsafi, 2020; Farzanegan & Gholipour, 2015). The findings are difficult to summarize and categorize since they used different methods and reached different conclusions. Moreover, those studies are generally micro-level studies meaning that they conduct a study in an individual province of Iran. Still, the common argument of those studies is that economic problem is one of the most important reasons of increasing trend of divorce in Iran. Although it is argued that getting divorce is no longer a taboo as before, recent studies conducted in Iran have shown that divorced Iranian women are experiencing difficulties economically and socially and became more vulnerable to different forms of abuse even under normal economic and social conditions (Esmaeili, Yaacob, Juhari, & Schoebi, 2015; Pirak, Negarandeh, & Khakbazan, 2018; Zarei, Merghati, Taket, Rahmani, & Smith, 2013). The deteriorated economic and social lives in the face of sanctions exacerbate their already fragile status. As will be illustrated in upcoming findings from case studies, divorced women living on their own in Iran are representing increasingly common but ill-tolerated phenomenon. Pirak et al. (2018) conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 15 divorced women from November 2015 to December 2017 in Tehran. Accordingly, 11 participants expressed their regret for deciding to divorce. Most of

the participants mentioned social stigma, discrimination and becoming a sex object are among the common problems they encountered after divorce. One of the participants designated themselves (divorced women) as “those mentally disabled children in the society” (Pirak et al., 2018, p. 78). The other participants revealed she was asked for a sexual relationship after employer saw the divorce stamp on her birth certificate in every job interview (Pirak et al., 2018, p. 79). In fact, it goes without saying that divorced and single women are more vulnerable to the sexual harassment at the workplace. Additionally, almost all participants expressed their insecurity after divorce, and they stated that they preferred bad husband to his absence. Another study yielded some results regarding the relationships between divorce and mental health among divorced women in Mashhad (Pirak et al., 2015). Accordingly, economic hardships following divorce have a strong influence on women’s psychological distress.

4.3.2. New Form of Sex Work: Temporary Marriage in Iran

Temporary marriage, *sigheh*, is one of the two recognized type of marriages under Iran’s civil law. The other one is formal marriage (*nekah*) in conventional sense. While formal marriage has been established with the intention of creating a life-long association, *sigheh* is often of shorter duration, even of a few hours. *Sigheh* has been practiced even before the emergence of Islam in Arabian Peninsula meaning it has a long cultural history. There is no divorce in this type of marriage since the duration is determined beforehand which enables the dissolution of ‘marriage’ automatically at the end of term. As it is understood, it requires a negotiation about the length. Moreover, monetary exchange and the nature of sexual relationships have to be negotiated before the contract signed. *Sigheh* marriages are mainly practiced for sexual desires, not exclusively but substantially those of men. This is one of the reasons why it is regarded as a type of sex work by segment of society in contemporary Iran (Yaghoobi, 2020, pp. 9-11). There is another reason why *sigheh* is viewed as a sex work and become highly controversial social issue in contemporary Iran. Since *sigheh* has legality under Iranian civil law, it paves the way for circumventing the penalty for ‘prostitution’ in Iran. Although not all women who engaged in *sigheh* marriage can be seen as sex worker, it is worth to mention there

has been a noticeable increase in the number of *sigheh* in parallel with the tightening of the economic sanctions after 2011. For that matter, the increase in the number of temporary marriages has even attracted the attention of international media. In 2015, the Guardian has published a reporting which uncovered the sizeable number of Iraqi men coming to Mashhad for *sigheh* (“Prayer, food, sex”, 2015). These allegations have also been brought to the agenda by high-circulation media outlets in Iran. Iranian state-controlled news agency Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA) reported that the number of Iraqi tourists increased by 90 per cent in the period from December 2017 to August 2018 (“Safar-e Iraqi-ha”, 2018). Shahrvand newspaper noted that Iraqi men have been frequently visiting unlicensed “chastity house” where women and men could engage in a marriage for a few hours under Islamic law in Mashhad (“Mardan-e Iraq”, 2018). That is to say, according to Shahrvand, the frequent visit of Iraqi men to Iran was mostly because of visiting chastity house. Mohammad Moheb Hodai, Deputy Minister of Tourism of Iran, also acknowledged the fact that the number of tourists from Iraq and Azerbaijan visiting Mashhad and Qom have excessively increased in a few months. In addition to Mashhad; Abadan, Huremsehr, and Ervend Free Trade Zone has also come to the fore with sex tourism, or in other words, temporary marriage. Furthermore, the statement of Mohammad Ghanaifar, the head of the Hoteliers Association, in 2018 uncovered unprecedented number of unlicensed chastity house in Mashhad. Accordingly, it was noted that the total number of chastity house in the city was 7300 and only 600 of them were licensed (“Afzayesh-e Asibhay-e Ejtemayee”, 2018). Mohammad Ghanaifar accepted the authorities do not want to engage in this problem to solve it for the time being since they think they have to keep tourism industry alive under the challenging economic period (Mirzadegi, 2018).

Fourty years ago, the Islamic Republic of Iran tried to create a “true” type of *sigheh* which is seized upon the nonsexual relationship. However, former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani openly supported *sigheh* marriages as an effective solution to young people’s sexual desires. In that sense, *sigheh* seems to give a degree of sexual freedom also to women whose sexuality is a threat to morality of society. While it has been argued it is a good solution for widows and divorced women in few individual examples, and is a prevention of sexual corruption and sex work, its form

and scope have significantly been altered under the economic sanctions specifically for women. *Sigheh* was supported on the grounds that it could prevent spread of prostitution; however, *sigheh*, itself, turned into a sex work. Ultimately, *sigheh* has become a serious source of livelihood for Iranian women who suffer from unemployment, poverty due to the economic contraction.

4.3.3. Child Marriage

According to UNICEF, child marriage is defined as a marriage of a girl or boy before the age of 18. Marriage does not necessarily mean formal marriages. It also refers to “informal unions in which children under the age of 18 live with a partner as if married” (UNICEF, 2020). On the other hand, there is no clear and explicit regulation on child marriage in Iranian law. Although Article 1041 of the Iranian Civil Code regulates the age of marriage, it does not impose an age limit. It is, nonetheless, stated that those who are under the age of 13 in girls, and those under the age of 15 can get married depending on the permission of their parents (DW, 2019). The draft law, which strictly prohibits marriage at 13 and sets 16 as the age of marriage, has not been passed by parliament until now (“Chera Tarh-e Kodak”, 2018). In both cases, it is important to see that what is recognized as child marriage in the framework of international law has no validity in Iran. It also important to remember Iran has not signed and ratified the Convention of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which directly prohibited child marriage. Since the state does not recognized child marriage as a social problem or does not set any limit on marriage age, it does not undertake any survey. This resulted in difficulty to get the reliable data on child marriages in Iran. The way to obtain reliable statistics about child marriages in Iran is to look at the marital status reports which are published once in every five years. According to the last report, approximately 35-41 thousand girls under the age of 15 was married between 2012 and 2017. This shows that 5-6 per cent of marriages consist of girls married under the age of 15.

Although there are definitely different causes and contexts that have an impact on child marriage, there emerges a nexus between marriage loan claim and child

marriage can be presented in recent years in Iran. Tabnak newspaper reported, based on the Statistical Center of Iran, the proportion of those under the age of 15 who applied for marriage loans increased by 70 per cent in 2018 and 90 per cent in 2019 compared to 2017 (“Afzayesh-e Char”, 2019). Some Iranian sociologists denominate this event ‘marketing children’ for the economic ends of the family. The considerable increase in the number of people applying for marriage loans for those under the age of 15 in the last 2 years of a serious economic crisis indicates that there is a strong causal relation between economic deprivation and child marriages. In fact, Farzanegan and Gholipour (2020) in their rare research on socio-economic determinants of child marriage in Iran showed “lower levels of income per capita, higher levels of inflation and income inequality are the main drivers of child marriage across Iran”. They also found that “Child marriage is more rooted in economic deprivation than in religiosity of households” (Farzanegan & Gholipour, 2020). In another recent research, Ahmady (2018) concluded “poverty is inextricably linked to prevalence of child marriage in Iran”. It goes without saying that child marriage is, if not exclusively, alarmingly high for girls in Iran.

Increase in child marriage shows how sanctions deeply affected family and put extra burden on them economically that the family members try to make their children to marry in exchange of money. But this is only one face of the coin. Child marriage whose underlying factor is poverty has reproduced poverty and inequality in a society by mainly preventing empowerment of women in any field.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis problematized the economic sanctions against Iran implemented after 2010; and looked more closely into their effects, firstly, on Iran and then on Iranian women. I developed a theoretical framework based on previous studies studying gender impacts of economic sanctions, and analysed how economic sanctions adversely affected Iranian women through sanctions' negative effects on the Iran's economy and the government repressive policies. The last chapter aims to draw conclusions from this theoretical framework. However, before delving into these conclusions; I will give a summary of what the findings indicated.

I firstly looked into the consequences of economic sanctions on the target societies in general. It was discussed although economic sanctions were seen as non-violent and almost innocuous foreign policy tools over military intervention, their dramatic humanitarian effects proved to be wrong. It was proven the full-fledged and aggressive economic sanctions were harmful to the well-being of the country as a whole. Moreover, it was shown while they negatively damage the conditions of people, they could not reach intended goals that were set by sender states. The impacts of sanctions on target states were explored under three headings: economic, social and gendered effects. Economic sanctions, as was shown, disrupted the economy of the targeted states through trade and financial sanctions. Prohibition of commercial and financial activities negatively influenced imports and exports of the states. I found out that economic contraction signified the beginning of the problems for both governments and civilians. As was shown, the sanctions reduced the embargoed countries' GDP significantly, up to the 25 per cent. GDP reduced as a result of broke in the business investment (production) and consumption. This would inevitably led to the unemployment, high inflation and poverty in the end. It was

underlined and exemplified from the implications of case studies that sanction-induced economically damaged societies encountered multifaceted and multi-layered consequences. It was visible that those consequences were not apart from each other; on the contrary they reinforced each other. Accordingly, economic sanctions could decrease life expectancy through worsening the level of social services; could lead to increase in violation of human rights and increase in unlawfulness and insecurity in a society through the breakdown of normal functioning of the targeted states. Moreover, I went beyond what conventional study mostly focused on, and gave additional insight regarding the gender-specific impacts of economic sanctions. Economic sanctions induced breakdown in the state's mechanism from executive to the judiciary. In this highly disrupted atmosphere, women, because of their relatively vulnerable economic, political and cultural positions in a society, were disproportionately affected. The causal chain of how economic disruption resulted from sanctions affected women's economic, social and personal lives were revealed. It was shown this casual chain was not a linear or one-way road; rather the expected negative impacts of sanctions on women's lives seemed to reinforced each other in a mutual and complex way. Still, it was seen in all sanctions regime that economic downturn often exacerbated the disparities faced by women. Accordingly, it was firstly concluded sanctions most likely to hurt the types of jobs and industry in which women were employed to a large extent such as textiles, apparel and electronic assemblies which were mostly export-oriented industries. Secondly, women could predominantly face more firings and layoffs in times of economic crisis. This way of behaviour primarily based on the belief that men, who are the 'breadwinner', should be the prime beneficiaries if employment is scarce. Thus, women unemployment could drastically rise. Thirdly, it was encountered in case studies women employment could conversely increase in informal sectors, and they obliged to occupy mostly low waged jobs since they were considered cheap and unskilled labour in times of economic downturn. Furthermore, it was underlined, following an economic destruction, women not only could lose their waged and safe jobs but could devoid of any type of autonomy on their lives. As a result, they were left with fewer choices. They were push back into their homes in which negative atmosphere were created through sanctions induced economic and social insecurity.

I secondly moved on the specific effects of economic sanctions on Iran from general discussion of economic sanctions and its collective effects. I tried to understand how economic sanctions made themselves felt within the Iranian society. In order to answer this question, I tried to comprehend the nature of sanctions regime implemented against Iran by looking at the historical background, the types and the duration of sanctions. In this way, it was shown that Iran, especially after 2010, faced comprehensive and full-fledged sanctions which reverberated through the state's economy, political sphere, and civilians. It was shown that Iranian economy was vulnerable to the economic sanctions since oil embargoes dramatically disturb Iran's oil exports which were the main source of state's revenue. Therefore, disruptions in state revenue were seen on macroeconomic variables of Iran. Accordingly, Iran's economy contracted approximately 20 per cent over the period of 2011-2015; and declined by about 8 per cent from March 2019 to March 2020. Secondly, Iranian economy experienced negative growth which did not occurred since the Iran-Iraq War. Unemployment rate rose to over 20 per cent. The market value of Iranian rial dreadfully declined. It caused inflation to increase about 60 per cent which was high above the government officially acknowledged. That is to say, Iran was isolated through international sanctions regime implemented during Obama administration and then Trump's sanctions regime. It was the society undertook most of the burden. High inflation, widespread unemployment hit most of the Iranians. As a result, poverty drastically increased from 2010 to these days. Iranians health was also adversely influenced. Despite the fact that the U.S. supposedly exempted humanitarian items such as medicines from sanctions, they reportedly caused to damage the Iranian's ability to access and purchase them during 2010-2016 and after 2018. Financial sanctions even halted the global food traders from supplying Iran being mainly concerned with unclear payments. Some experts argued it induced the rise of the medication black market. Moreover, there occurred collateral damages which were mostly underrated. Sanctions cemented authoritarian and national security state in Iran through enriching the IRGC, who was capable of taking advantage sanctions-created insecure and corrupt environment. As was underlined, I problematized the sanctions implemented after 2010; however, I also discussed and argued moderate sanctions before 2010 in terms of their effects has also profound impact on political sphere of Iran. Accordingly, I argued sanctions, like the Iran-Iraq

War, shaped and reinforced the mainstream political discourse of ruling elite since the first years. The Iranian elites used sanctions discursively. In other words, the administration used sanctions as scapegoat for their mismanagement and corruption. What we learned from Iran sanctions regime was that economic sanctions did not produced any exceptional results for Iran, like many other countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, Iraq. Economic sanctions functioned in its own natural course and demolished the lives of average Iranian people.

I thirdly revealed that the effects of economic sanctions on Iranian women's lives. It was found out that those effects closely resembled the findings from Iraq, Cuba and Myanmar cases in many ways. In the economic domain, the findings were four-folds. First of all, female unemployment rose in the face of economic deterioration and high rates of unemployment due to sanctions in Iran. Secondly, women who did not lose their waged jobs faced a decline in earned income because of unequal wages that diminished under sanctions regime even more. The another important finding was that the number of women working in the informal sector greatly increased in the last decade as sanction-induced economic crisis narrowed the demand for women's labour in the formal sector. Moreover, this study uncovered that female headed households in Iran had more serious experiences under economic sanctions. The burden of economic sanctions fell particularly on women who were the head of households since they had to compensate for withdrawal of the social supports provided by different religious foundations in Iran, which completely depended upon government's financial assistance. Also, they felt more pressured to find jobs out of the desperate need of an income. Unsurprisingly, these women ended up in informal jobs with inadequate social and health conditions. Further, there were social prices of being female headed households in an economically damaged society. It was unveiled those women were more likely to experience different forms of abuse in Iran. They were stigmatized, harassed, assaulted, and perceived as a threat to the morals of the society. These women faced multidimensional challenges under economic sanctions. All in all, sanctions had an effect on Iranian women's access to workforce, their income earnings, working conditions and the types of employment or sector. This situation probably resulted in deterioration of women's participation in public life as they were marginalized from productive employment. Thus, there

were some different and disproportionate economic challenges between men and women in Iran following an economic downturn. Women faced more arbitrary firings and lay-offs, and unequal wages. Thus, it can be argued from the findings that sanctions unequivocally created poverty; retrogression outcomes mostly remained gendered. Women and men have not been sharing equally the challenges of the economic crisis induced as a result of sanctions.

This thesis also traced the implication of sanctions on political domain of Iranian women. It was revealed that women movements in Iran was hampered due to economic sanctions. I traced this phenomenon and found that economic sanctions damaged it in four ways. Firstly, women's work, campaign and struggle were ideologically charged to the point of being immoral, propagandistic and comprador by the Iranian government, thereby repressing and discrediting their work. The government could accomplish it since sanctions signified hostility and differences between the West and the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was shown that the ruling religious elite used sanctions to underpin this hostility and difference since from the perspective of Iranian regime, sanctions, at best, was there to keep Iranians and the government weak; at worst, was there to overthrow the Islamic regime. Thus, any phenomena came from the West stigmatized as immoral and unacceptable. Secondly, as economic sanctions induced structural violence and disorder, which was proven to be as much devastating as of war's, there emerged social, political and economic impasse in Iran. In this impasse, interruptions arose in mental, social and political interactions between Iranian women inside Iran. This interruption damaged the feminist consciousness and self-confidence of Iranian women. In turn, their progress to carve out the change in women's places, roles, positions and status was brought to a halt. Thirdly, economic sanctions disconnected women's movement existing inside Iran from international/transnational linkages. This disconnection was particularly practical challenges. It was observed that because of sanctions applied to banking system, transnational level funding became more and more difficult. Additionally, because of the same sanctions, women's rights activists mentioned their concerns not being able to participate in international events since they could not use banks to transfer their money required for the hotels and events. As a result, women's civil society organizations faced severe difficulty to meet the economic demands to

remain their work in Iran or for doing business in international level. Last but not least, as it was expected and observed in other case studies, economic sanctions and its daily and urgent problems it caused overshadowed and trivialized the women's demands and debate regarding their rights.

The other crucial finding was that divorced women, along with the women-headed households, were the one who were disproportionately influenced among other categories of women. The economic and social life under sanctions for widowed women were tremendously hard. They were the prime victims both through economic and social disempowerment as they were portrayed and stigmatized as a potential risks to family and public morals. As a result, if they were living with their family, they were increasingly subjected to intensified male domination. If they were living alone, they were subjected to patriarchal influence in public space this time, along with the sexual harassment. Another important point was that Iranian women increasingly chose temporary marriage (*sigheh*) with the tightening of economic sanctions after 2017. Although temporary marriage was officially supported by Iranian authorities for a solution to sexual desires for young people, its form and scope has been altered. It was argued that temporary marriage turned into a sex work which became a serious source of livelihood for Iranian women who undertook a considerable economic burden due to sanctions induced economic crisis. It was tracked in this study that temporary marriage became a circumvention for Iranian women of the practice of prostitution which was punished under the rule of Islamic Republic of Iran. This fact was also acknowledged by the Iranian authorities.

The last important point was that child marriage in Iran became increasingly common socio-economic problems under economic sanctions. Although it was very hard to track the number and the scale of the child marriages in Iran because of the lack of any official survey on this problem, marital status reports and marriage loans applications gave the hint regarding the issue. According to these resources, there seemed to be a strong relations between economic deprivation and child marriage in Iran. In the last years, in 2018 and 2019, it was observed there was an increase in the application for marriage loans of those girls under the age of 15. As reported by Iranian sociologists, these figures could be even denominated as marketing children

for the economic ends of the family. It was found out the realities of child/early marriages in Iran perpetuated by lower levels of income and income inequality. Child marriage, in turn, reproduced poverty and inequality by preventing girls and women from personal empowerment which could entail a change towards in Iranian society.

This thesis aimed to explore the conditions of Iranian women under the international sanctions that targeted Islamic Republic of Iran with a number of reasons. The argument was that economic sanctions have specific and 'private' gendered effects on women and girls since already subordinated, unequal, vulnerable people within a society (in our case women) are more fragile to the distressing circumstances of the political, economic and humanitarian situation. The findings were in line with the original argument. The assessment of Iranian women's economic, political, and social status substantiated that sanctions are the tools deteriorating their already fragile life setting.

Iranian women experienced devastating impacts of economic sanctions, especially for 2 years with the implications of maximum pressure by Trump administration. The pandemic doubled their misery. Biden's electoral win gives some hope for diplomatic re-engaging with Iran as Biden has vowed to restore the Iran deal. However, a sudden breakthrough for a relief of economic sanctions cannot be achieved for a number of reasons. First of all, in the parliamentary elections in February, hard-liners got the victory who are not historically inclined to reconcile with the West. Second of all, Iranian parliament has recently passed a strategic action plan which would definitely kill the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). According to this strategic action plan, Iran will install and advance uranium enrichment centrifuges; and will leave the Additional Protocol of Non-Proliferation Treaty. The move, if ever realised, will hinder the future diplomatic engagement between the West and Iran, and even worse will trigger the United Nations sanctions back. Thirdly, even if Biden promised to end Trump's sanctions on Iran, he would be tough on Iran because of Iran's aggressive behaviour across the Middle East. Fourthly, compensation of the sanctions that was being implemented for two and a half years would not easy. Thus, the sanctions pattern and the historical nature of

Iran-the U.S. relations seem to continue. The effects of economic sanctions' damage seem to endure for Iranian people and for women specifically.



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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

1979 yılının başında dünyanın gözü İran'ın üzerindeydi. Daha sonra 20. Yüzyılın en önemli gelişmelerinden biri olarak kabul edilecek İran İslam Devrimi Tahran sokaklarında başlamıştı. Kimi kaynaklara göre öğrenci, işçi, esnaf, din adamları, tüccarlar ve memurlar gibi farklı kesimlerden oluşan 2 milyon İranlı refah, özgürlük ve eşitliği tesis edecek bir hükûmet için sokaklara dökülmüştü. Halk, şimdilerde İran uzmanlarının aşına olduğu “Merg ber Amrika” (Kahrolsun ABD) ve “Merg ber İsrail” (İsrail'e Ölüm) sloganlarıyla devrimin mahiyetini açıktan yansıtıyordu. Bu sloganlar, bir zamanlar dost/müttefik olan ABD ile İran arasındaki ilişkinin seyrinin değişeceğine işaret ediyordu. Şah Muhammed Rıza Pehlevi giderek şiddeti artan gösterilerin yarattığı baskıya dayanamayıp 16 Ocak'ta ülkeyi terk etti. İki hafta sonra devrime liderlik eden Ayetullah Humeyni 1 Şubat 1979 yılında, 15 yıllık sürgünden sonra, İran'a döndü. ABD dostu monarşi kısa sürede İran İslam Cumhuriyeti oldu. Ancak Şah'ın İran'dan kaçmasının ardından sokaklardaki çalkantı dinmedi. ABD'den Şah'ın İran'a talep edilmesini isteyen bir grup İranlı öğrenci Tahran'daki ABD Büyükelçiliğini bastı. Bu olay ABD-İran ilişkilerinin geleceğini temelden etkilemiştir. Dönemin ABD Başkanı Jimmy Carter İran rehine krizine yanıt olarak başkanlık kararnamesiyle İran'a yönelik tek taraflı ekonomik yaptırımları uygulamaya koydu. ABD'nin İran'a karşı uygulamaya koyduğu tek taraflı ekonomik yaptırımlar rehine krizi çözüldükten sonra da kaldırılmadı. Washington daha sonraları İran'ın terör faaliyetlerinde bulunduğu ve/veya terör faaliyetlerine destek verdiği, nükleer ve balistik füze programları ve insan hakları ihlali gibi çeşitli gerekçelerle yaptırımlara devam etti. ABD'nin tek taraflı yaptırımları 1979 yılından bu yana çok az kesintiye uğramıştır. 2005 yılından sonra başka etkili aktörler de, başta Birleşmiş Milletler ve Avrupa Birliği, İran'ın nükleer programının uluslararası nükleer silahsızlanma rejimine yönelik tehdit oluşturduğu gerekçesiyle ABD'nin

İran'a karşı uyguladığı yaptırım rejimine dâhil oldu. Ekonomik yaptırımların bir sonucu olarak, İran'ın ekonomisi gerçek potansiyeline hiçbir zaman ulaşamamış, dahası Obama dönemi ve Trump döneminde uygulanan agresif yaptırımlar sonucunda ekonomi hızla çöküşe geçmiştir. İran halkı da, özellikle çocuklar, kadınlar, yaşlılar ve hastalar gibi hassas gruplar, ekonomik yaptırımların kaskacında büyük zorluklar yaşamış, hâlihazırda Trump yönetiminin uyguladığı “maksimum baskı” politikası altında yaşamaya devam etmektedir.

Bir dış politika aracı olarak yaptırımların tarihi çok eski dönemlere dayansa da modern anlamda yaptırımların kullanımının yaygınlaşmaya başlaması 20. Yüzyılda Milletler Cemiyeti'nin kurulmasına denk gelmektedir. Ancak uluslararası arenada 1990 yılından sonra yaptırımların bir baskı aracı olarak kullanılması tam anlamıyla zirve yapmıştır. Sayılarla açıklamak gerekirse, Birleşmiş Milletler (BM) 1990'dan önce iki ülkeye (Rodezya ve Güney Afrika) yaptırım kararı kabul ederken; Soğuk Savaş sonrası Irak, Eski Yugoslavya, Libya, Haiti, Ruanda ve Sierra Leone dâhil 15 ülke BM yaptırımlarıyla karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Soğuk savaş sonrası önem kazanan ekonomik yaptırımlar askeri olmayan bir müdahale olarak askeri güç kullanıma alternatif görülmüş, ülkeler ve Birleşmiş Milletler tarafından hızlıca benimsenmiştir. Askeri güç kullanımına göre yaptırım uygulamanın maliyetinin az olması da bu baskı aracının ulusal veya uluslararası aktörler tarafından hızlıca benimsenmesinde önemli bir etken olmuştur. Bu bağlamda, ekonomik yaptırımlar, askeri bir çatışmaya girmeden, hedef ülkede ekonomik istikrarsızlık yaratma yoluyla baskı kurarak hedef alınan devlet, örgüt, kişi ve kurumların cezalandırılması veya mevcut istenmeyen davranışlarının sonlandırılması amacı gütmektedir. Ekonomik yaptırım yazını da bu bakımdan çoğunlukla hedeflenen amaçların yaptırımlar yoluyla elde edilip edilmediği veya hangi koşullar altında söz konusu hedeflere ulaşmada başarılı olduğunu üzerinde yoğunlaşmaktadır. Özellikle 1990'lardan önce yazılmış olan bu çalışmaların bir kısmı, ekonomik yaptırımların faydaları ve kusurlarına odaklanmış ve yaptırımların başarıya ulaşmaları için nasıl formüle edilmesi ve uygulanması gerektiğine dair devletlere tavsiyelerde bulunmuştur. Bazı akademisyenler yaptırımların hangi koşullarda etkili bir şekilde başarıya ulaştığı gibi spesifik sorulara odaklanmaya devam etmektedir. Bu çalışmaların çoğu ekonomik yaptırımların başarı oranının düşük olduğunu altını çizmiştir. Yaptırım yazını

ayrıca, Birleşmiş Milletler'in Irak'a karşı uyguladığı yaptırım rejimi altında yaşanan kitlesel ölümlerin raporlaştırılmasından sonra yaptırımların hedef ülkede yarattığı insani etkiler üzerine yoğunlaşmaya başlamıştır. Başka bir deyişle, Irak'a karşı uygulanan kapsamlı yaptırım rejiminden elde edilen bulgular yaptırımların etliğini ve barışçıl doğasını tartışmaya açmıştır. Fakat ekonomik yaptırımların olumsuz etkilerinin ülke genelinde eşit olarak dağılmamaktadır. Gerçekte yaptırımlar, yaş, sınıf ve cinsiyet gibi farklı değişkenlere bağlı olarak bireyleri farklı şekillerde ve farklı boyutlarda etkileyebilir. Uluslararası kuruluşlar, özellikle toplumdaki hassas ve dezavantajlı kesimlerinin, çocukların, kadınların, hastaların ve yaşlıların yaptırımlardan orantısız bir şekilde etkilendiğine dair endişelerini her platformda giderek daha yüksek sesle dile getirmeye başlamışlardır. Yaptırımların farklı etkilerini inceleme eğilimi, özellikle 20. yüzyılın sonlarına doğru eleştirel teori, postmodernizm ve feminizm gibi yeni teorilerle birlikte giderek artış göstermiştir. Bahsi geçen teorilerin katkıları ve yeni saha araştırmaları sayesinde yaptırım yazınında yaptırımların zenginle fakiri, yönetenle yönetilenleri, güçlüyle zayıfı farklı şekilde etkilediği ortaya koyulmuştur. Yaptırımların toplumdaki farklı kesim ve sınıflar üzerindeki etkilerini araştıran literatür gelişse de, bu çalışmaların büyük ölçüde cinsiyet körü olduğu bilinmektedir. Yapılan literatür taramasının sonucunda İran'a karşı uygulanan yaptırım rejimine odaklanan çalışmaların da uluslararası yaptırım literatüründen içerik bağlamında çok da farklı olmadığı görülmüştür. İran'ın uzun süredir yaptırımların muhatabı olduğu dikkate alındığında bu literatürün kapsamı oldukça geniş olduğu söylenebilir. Bu çalışmaların büyük bir kısmı bu yaptırımların İran'a karşı etkili olup olmadığı konusu üzerine yoğunlaşmıştır. ABD'nin İran özelinde belirlediği amaç ve isteklerinin yaptırımlarla elde edemediği bu çalışmalarla gözlemlenmiştir. Dahası, İran'a yönelik yaptırımların siyasi, ekonomik ve insani etkilerini inceleyen geniş bir yazın mevcuttur. Bu yazın İran'daki siyasi rejimin yıllar içinde yaptırımlara kendini adapte ettiği ve yaptırımlar karşısında hayatta kaldığını; öte yandan, yaptırımların İran toplumuna ciddi maliyetler yüklediğini açıkça ifade etmiştir. Son dönemlerde özellikle yaptırımların İran halkının sağlık durumu üzerindeki etkileri, İranlı akademisyenler arasında yoğun bir şekilde mercek altına alınmıştır. Fakat yaptırımların İran üzerindeki etkilerinin inceleyen çalışmaların da büyük ölçüde cinsiyet körü olduğu söylenebilir.

Bu tezin amacı İran İslam Cumhuriyeti'ne yönelik uygulanan tek ve çok taraflı yaptırımların İranlı kadınların ekonomik, siyasi ve sosyal yaşantıları üzerindeki etkilerini tahlil etmektir. Bu çalışma yaptırımların literatürde çoğunlukla ele alınan devlet davranışı üzerindeki etkisi yerine toplumsal cinsiyet etkisine odaklanmıştır. Ekonomik yaptırımların kadınlar üzerindeki etkisini inceleyen önceki çalışmalardan yola çıkarak bu tezde iki ana argüman öne sürülmüştür. Birinci olarak yaptırımların İranlı kadınlara özgü etkilerinin olduğu; ikinci olarak İranlı kadınların cinsiyetleri nedeniyle ikincil ve eşitsiz konumlarının ekonomik yaptırımlar eliyle daha da kötüleştirildiği iddia edilmiştir. Yapılan literatür araştırmaları ve değerlendirmeler yaptırımların İran ekonomisi ve toplumun genel refahında neden olduğu hızlı çöküşün yarattığı dalgalanma etkisiyle İranlı kadınları ekonomik, siyasi ve sosyal yaşamlarında daha kırılgan ve savunmasız hale getirdiğini; ve İranlı kadınlara özgü etkilerinin bulunduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bu amaçla bu tez üç ana konu üzerine inşa edilmiştir: yaptırımların toplumsal ve cinsiyetçi etkileri, İran'a uygulanan ekonomik yaptırımların genel etkileri ve bu yaptırımların İranlı kadınlar üzerine etkileri.

İlk bölümde hedef toplumlara uygulanan ekonomik yaptırımların sonuçları konusunda genel bir araştırma yapılmıştır. Yapılan incelemeler doğrultusunda ekonomik yaptırımların dramatik insani etkileri dikkate alındığında askeri müdahaleye göre şiddet içermeyen ve neredeyse zararsız bir dış politika aracı olarak kabul edilen görüşün doğru olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Tam teşekküllü ve agresif ekonomik yaptırımlar hedef ülkenin genel refahını olumsuz etkilerken uygulayıcı devletler açısından da istenilen sonucu vermemektedir. Bu bölümde yaptırımların hedef ülkelere etkileri ekonomik, sosyal ve cinsiyete dayalı etkiler olmak üzere üç başlık altında incelenmiştir. Yaptırımlar ilk olarak ticaret ve finans sektörünü hedef aldığı için hedef ülkenin ekonomik dengesini bozmaktadır. Örneğin yaptırımlar kapsamında ticari ve finansal faaliyetlerin yasaklanması hedef ülkelerin ithalat ve ihracat rakamlarını olumsuz etkilemektedir. Bu durumun neden olduğu ekonomik daralma hem hükümetler hem siviller için sorunların başlangıcını oluşturduğu görülmüştür. Yaptırımların ekonomik etkileri üzerine odaklanan çalışmalar yaptırımların üretim, tüketim ve yatırım üzerindeki olumsuz sonuçları hedef ülkelerin GSYİH'sını yüzde 25'e kadar azalttığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu da

kaçınılmaz olarak işsizlik, yüksek enflasyon ve yoksulluğu tetiklemektedir. Bu doğrultuda yapılan incelemelerde yaptırımların kötü sonuçlarına maruz kalan toplumların karşılaştıkları çok katmanlı sorunlar vaka çalışmaları üzerinden örneklerle ortaya konulmuştur. Bu sorunlar birbirleriyle ayrı olmadıkları gibi çoğu zaman birbirlerinin türevidir. Örneğin ekonomik yaptırımlar sosyal hizmetleri kötüleştirerek yaşam beklentisini azaltmış; hedef ülkelerde normal işleyişin bozulması sonucu insan hakları ihlalleri ve toplumda hukuksuzluk ve güvensizliğin artmasına yol açmıştır. Bu bölümde geleneksel olarak çalışmaların çoğunlukla odaklandığı sınırların ötesine geçilerek ekonomik yaptırımların cinsiyete dayalı özel etkileri de araştırılmıştır. Bölüm, Haiti, Burma, Eski Yugoslavya, Küba ve Irak vakalarından cinsiyete dayalı belirli etkiler tahlil edilmiş ve böylece yaptırımların İranlı kadınlar üzerindeki etkisinin araştırılması adına bir başlangıç çerçevesi çizilmiştir. Ekonomik yaptırımlar hedef devletlerin yürütmeden yargıya yönetim mekanizmasını olumsuz etkileyebilmektedir. Kadınlar nispeten kırılan ekonomik, kültürel ve siyasi konumları nedeniyle bu ortamdan en çok etkilenenlerin başında gelmektedir. Bu çerçevede yaptırımların neden olduğu ekonomik kötüleşmenin kadınların sosyal, ekonomik ve kişisel yaşamları üzerindeki etkileri ortaya konulmuştur. Yaptırımların kadınlar üzerindeki olumsuz etkileri birbirini tetikleyen oldukça karmaşık bir yapıya sahiptir. Öncelikle yaptırımların neden olduğu ekonomik daralmanın kadınların karşı karşıya oldukları eşitsizliklerin şiddetini artırıcı etkisi bulunmaktadır. Örneğin kadınların yaygın olarak istihdam edildiği çoğunlukla ihracata dayalı olan tekstil, hazır giyim ve elektronik montaj gibi sektörler yaptırımlardan etkilenen sektörlerin başında gelmektedir. İkinci olarak kadınlar ekonomik kriz dönemlerinde erkeklere göre daha fazla işten çıkarmayla karşı karşıya kalabilmektedir. Bu davranış biçimi istihdamın az olduğu durumlarda “eve ekmek getiren” erkeklere öncelik tanınması gerektiği inancına dayanmakta ve böylece kadınların işsizlik oranında dramatik artışlar yaşanabilmektedir. Üçüncü olarak istihdamın azaldığı ekonomik kriz ortamlarında kadın istihdamı kayıt dışı sektörlerde arttığı gözlemlenmiştir. Bunun sebebi ise genellikle ucuz ve vasıfsız iş gücü olarak kabul gören düşük ücretli işlerde çoğunlukla kadınların çalışıyor olmasıdır. Buna ek olarak ekonomik buhran ortamlarında kadınlar sadece işlerini kaybetmekle kalmamakta, aynı zamanda işsiz kalmalarına bağlı olarak yaşamlarında her türlü özerklikten de yoksun kalmaktadır. Böylece az seçeneği kalan kadınlar

yapırımların yol açtıđı ekonomik ve sosyal güvensizliđin yarattıđı olumsuzluklarla birlikte evlerine kapanmaktadır.

İkinci bölümde ekonomik yapıtımlar ve kolektif etkileriyle ilgili genel tartışmalardan yola çıkarak yapıtımların İran'a özel etkilerini araştırılmıştır. Bu kapsamda yapıtımların İran toplumunda kendini nasıl hissettirdiđi, etkilerinin insanların yaşamlarına nasıl sızdıđı anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. İran'a uygulanan yapıtımların niteliđini anlamak için tarihsel arka plan, yapıtımların türü ve uygulandıđı süreyi inceledim. Bu araştırmaların dođrultusunda İran'ın ekonomik, siyasi ve toplumsal hayatını sarsan kapsamlı yapıtımların özellikle 2010'dan sonra uygulanan yapıtımlar olduđu sonucuna ulaştım. İran ekonomisi ülkenin en büyük gelir kaynađı petrol olması nedeniyle petrol ihracatına uygulanan yapıtımlara karşı oldukça kırılgandır. Dolayısıyla yapıtımlara bađlı olarak petrol gelirlerinde görülen azalmalar İran'ın makroekonomik deđişkenlerinde önemli yer tutmaktadır. Petrol sektörüne uygulanan yapıtımlara bađlı olarak İran ekonomisi 2011-2015 arasında yüzde 20 ve Mart 2019'dan Mart 2020'ye kadar da yaklaşık yüzde 8 oranında daralma yaşamıştır. Bu İran ekonomisinin İran-Irak Savaşından bu yana yaşadığı en büyük daralmadır. Bu süreçte işsizlik oranları yüzde 20'lerde seyrederken İran riyali dramatik bir deđer kaybı yaşamıştır. Bu durum hükümetin de resmî olarak kabul ettiđi enflasyonun yüzde 60'lara fırlamasını da beraberinde getirmiştir. Kısacası İran Obama yönetimi sırasında uygulanan ve Trump döneminde devam ettirilen sert yapıtımlarla uluslararası toplumdan izole edilmiştir. Yapıtımların olumsuz sonuçlarının yükünün çođunu halk sırtlamış, İranlıların çođu yüksek enflasyon, yaygın işsizlik gibi sorunlarla bođuşmuştur. İran'da yoksulluk verileri 2010'den günümüze büyük bir artış göstermiştir. Bütün bu süreçten İran'da sađlık sektörü de olumsuz etkilenmiştir. ABD'nin ilaç gibi insanî maddeleri yapıtımlar dışında tutma sözüne rađmen İranlıların 2010-2016 ve 2018'den sonra bazı kritik ilaçlara yapıtımlar dolayısıyla erişim sađlayamadığı görülmektedir. Finans sektörüne uygulanan yapıtımlar nedeniyle küresel gıda üretici firmaların ödemelerdeki belirsizliklerden ötürü İran'a gıda ihraç etmek istemedikleri gözlemlenmiştir. Bazı uzmanlara göre bu durum İran'da ilaç karaborsasını artırmıştır. Yapıtımların neden olduđu yolsuzluk ve yozlaşma ortamı Devrim Muhafızları Ordusu gibi örgütlerin güçlenmesine ve İran'da otoriter ve güvenlikçi devlet anlayışının daha da

pekişmesine zemin hazırlamıştır. Yukarıda da belirtildiği gibi çalışmada büyük ölçüde 2010 sonrası yaptırımlara odaklanılmıştır. Fakat özellikle İran'daki siyasi atmosfere etkisi bakımından nispeten yumuşak olan 2010 öncesi yaptırımlar da incelenmiştir. Bu kapsamda yaptırımların ilk yıllarından beri İran-İrak Savaşı gibi İran'da egemen elitin siyasi söylemini şekillendirdiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. İranlı yöneticiler yaptırımları kötü idareleri ve yolsuzluklar kapatmak için bir günah keçisi olarak kullanmışlardır. İran'a uygulanan yaptırımlardan öğrendiğim yaptırımların İran açısından tıpkı Küba, Venezuela, Irak gibi ülkelerde olduğundan istisnai sonuç doğurmadığıdır. Tıpkı bu ülkelerde olduğu gibi yaptırımlar kendi doğal seyrinde ilerlemiş ve ortalama İranlının hayatını dramatik şekilde etkilemiştir.

Üçüncü ve son bölümde ekonomik yaptırımların İranlı kadınların ekonomik, siyasi ve sosyal yaşamları üzerindeki etkileri araştırılmıştır. Bu etkilerin birçok yönden Irak, Küba ve Myanmar vaka çalışmalarından elde edilen bulgulara benzediği görülmüştür. Ekonomik alanda, dört adet bulgu ortaya koyulmuştur. İlk olarak, yaptırımların sebep olduğu ekonomik kriz ve işsizlik kadın istihdamını ciddi bir biçimde etkilemiştir. İranlı kadın hakları aktivistleri muhafazakar yönetici kesimin ekonomik krizi bir bahane/mazeret olarak sunup, kadınları formel iş gücünün dışına itmeye çalıştıklarını iddia etmektedirler. Bu düşünce biçimi, yaptırımların yarattığı işsizlikte kadınların değil erkeklerin öncelikli olarak istihdam edilmesi gerektiği görüşünden doğmaktadır. Bunu sağlamak adına İran 2012 yılında kadınların 36 üniversitede 77 teknik, fen ve mühendislik lisans programlarına başvuruları engellenmiştir. Böylelikle artan işsizlik döneminde kadınların bazı alanlarda iş aramaları engellenmiştir. Ayrıca, diğer vaka çalışmalarında da görüldüğü gibi yaptırımlar İran'da da kadınların en çok istihdam edildiği alanları, tarım, hizmet ve imalat sektörünü, etkilediği gözlemlenmiştir. İkinci olarak, kadınların formel iş gücüne katılımı keskin bir düşüş yaşarken, erkeklerin ekonomik katılım oranı neredeyse aynı seyrinde devam etmiştir. Yapılan araştırmalar İran'da 2012 yılının kadınların iş gücüne katılma oranlarında bir kırılma noktası olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bu yılda kadınların iş gücüne katılım oranlarında yüzde 15'lik bir düşüş yaşadığı ve bu oranın tekrar iyileşmediği görülmüştür. Bu düşüşle İran son 10 yılda işgücüne katılım oranında cinsiyet farkını yüzde 30 artırarak, genel cinsiyet eşitsizliği sıralamasında en kötü üç ülke içine girmiştir (World Economic Forum,

2016). Üçüncü olarak, ücretli işlerini kaybetmeyen kadınlarsa yaptırım rejimi altında gelirlerinde düşüş yaşandığı, erkeklerin gelirlerinde ise küçük artışlar olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Bunun sonucunda erkekler ve kadınlar arasındaki tahmini kazanılan gelir miktarı farkı da yıllar içinde artmıştır. Dördüncü olarak, yaptırımların neden olduğu ekonomik krizin kayıtlı sektördeki kadın emeğine olan talebi daraltması sebebiyle kayıt dışı sektöre çalışan kadın sayısı son on yılda büyük ölçüde artmıştır. Sonuç olarak, yaptırımların İranlı kadınların işgücüne erişimi, geliri/kazancını, çalışma koşulları ve istihdam edildiği sektör türleri üzerinde olumsuz etkileri olduğu görülmüştür. Bu durum İranlı kadınların tam ve üretken istihdamdan uzaklaştırılacaktır. Bunun sonucunda İranlı kadınların ya 1) kamusal hayata katılmak adına daha çok bedel ödemesi ve daha fazla çaba göstermesi gerekecek ya da 2) bu kadınlar kamusal hayattan büyük ölçüde uzaklaşmak zorunda kalacaktır. Sonuç olarak yaptırım eliyle yaratılan ekonomik kriz ortamında İranlı kadın ve erkekler farklı ölçekte zorluklar yaşamıştır. İranlı kadınların istihdamı, işgücüne katılım oranları ve tahmini kazanılan gelir miktarı, zaten yapısal zayıflık ve cinsiyet eşitsizliğine dayalı ayrımcı politikalar nedeniyle potansiyelini gerçekleştiremezken, ekonomik yaptırımlar durumu daha da vahim hale getirmektedir. Öte yandan erkeklerin ekonomik statüsünün yaptırımlar karşısında kadınlarınki kadar kırılğan olmadığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu bölümde ayrıca yaptırımların İran kadın hareketleri üzerine etkisi incelenmiş ve ekonomik yaptırımların kadın hareketlerini sekteye uğrattığı gözlemlenmiştir. Kadınların çalışmaları, kampanyaları ve mücadeleleri muhafazakâr hükûmet tarafından ahlaksız, casusluk ve propaganda faaliyeti olarak suçlanmış; böylece kadın mücadelesi baskı altına alınarak, bu aktivizme katılanların itibarları zedelenmiştir. Muhafazakâr kesim tarafından yürütülen bu baskı kampanyası yaptırımlarla birlikte körüklenmiştir çünkü yaptırımlar Batı karşıtlığı, anti-emperyalist söylemenin güçlenmesi için kullanılmıştır. Batı'dan ihraç edildiği söylenen feminizm de bu açıdan İran İslam Cumhuriyeti'nde ahlaksız ve kabul edilemez olarak damgalanmıştır. Bunun sonucunda İranlı feminist aktivistler giderek daha çok baskı görmeye başlamıştır. Dahası, ekonomik yaptırımlar savaşlar kadar yıkıcı olduğu kanıtlanan yapısal şiddeti ve düzensizliği İran'da da tetiklemiştir. Devletin beka sorunu, yaptırımların yarattığı yoksulluk ve sağlık sorunları gibi sorunlar kadınların haklarına ilişkin talep ve tartışmalarını gündem dışına itmiş, bu

konular önemsizleştirilmiştir. Bunun sonucunda İranlı feminist kadınlar arasındaki etkileşim, işbirliği ve dayanışmanın kesintiye uğradığı söylenebilir.

Tezde ayrıca yaptırımların İran'da kadın aile reisleri ve dul/boşanmış kadınlar olmak üzere iki farklı kadın kategorisi üzerindeki etkileri spesifik olarak incelenmiştir. Bu ekonomik kriz ortamında İran'da kadın aile reisleri, dul ve boşanmış kadınların çok daha ciddi ve ağır deneyimler yaşadığı ortaya konulmuştur. Büyük ölçüde hükûmetin ve İran'daki dini vakıfların sosyal yardımlarına bağlı olan kadın aile reisleri, bu yardımların yaptırımlar dolayısıyla azaltılması veya tamamen kesilmesiyle yoksulluğu daha fazla deneyimlemişlerdir. Yaptırımlar eliyle toplumda yaratılan ekonomik istikrarsızlık, yüksek işsizlik ve enflasyon oranlarının aile reisi kadın olan haneleri şiddetli maddi yoksulluğa sürüklemiştir. Bu ortamda bir gelir ihtiyacı duyan kadınlar çoğunlukla kayıt dışı işlerde istihdam edilmektedir. Öte yandan dul ve boşanmış kadınların yaptırım rejimin altında yaşadığı ekonomik ve sosyal zorlukların çok katmanlı olduğu karşımıza çıkmıştır. Vaka çalışmalarından elde edilen bulgulardan anlaşıldığı gibi İran'da kendi başına yaşayan dul ya da boşanmış kadınlık durumu hala tabu ve hoş görülmeleyen bir olgu olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. 2015-2017 yılları arasında Tahran'da yapılan saha çalışmaları bu kategorideki kadınların yaşadığı zorlukları toplumsal baskı, bir yandan seks objesi olarak görülüp diğer yandan toplumun genel ahlakına bir tehdit olarak algılanma, aleyhte ayrımcılık, cinsel taciz, ruhsal ve psikolojik rahatsızlıklar olarak sıralamıştır. Dezavantajlı statüleri onları yaptırımların yarattığı güçlükler karşısında ana kurban haline getirmiştir.

İran'a yönelik yaptırımların 2010'dan sonra kapsamının ve şiddetinin artmasına paralel olarak geçici evlilik sayısında da dikkat çekici bir artış yaşandığı gözlemlenmiştir. Geçici evlilik, *sigheh*, İran medeni hukukuna göre tanınan iki evlilik türünden biridir. Geçici evlilik Arap Yarımadası'nda İslam'ın ortaya çıkışından önce uygulanan bir olgudur. Süresi önceden belirlenen bu evlilik türünde boşanma yoktur, bu evlilik önceden belirlendiği tarihte otomatik olarak sona erer. Bu evlilikte zaman anlaşmasının yanında erkeğin kadına vereceği para konusunda da anlaşılması gerekmektedir. Geçici evlilik İran toplumunda bir seks işçiliği olarak görülmektedir. Medeni hukuka göre yasal olan bu evlilik türü, İran'da fuhuş/seks

işçiliğinin bir kılıfı olduğuna inanılmaktadır. İran'da geçici evliliğin artmasının yanında, Irak'tan da İran'a geçici evlilik için gelen erkeklerin arttığı, bu erkeklerin "misafirhaneleri" (chastity house) sıklıkla ziyaret ettiği gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca İran'da geçici evliliklerin gerçekleştiği kayıt dışı "misafirhanelerin" son yıllarda arttığı ortaya koyulmuştur. İran'da fuhuş ve zinanın önüne geçmek için yetkililer tarafından da desteklenen geçici evliliğin formu ve kapsamı yaptırım rejimi altında özellikle kadınlar için değişmiş görünmektedir. En nihayetinde geçici evlilik ekonomik daralma, yoksulluk ve işsizlikten mustarip olan özellikle eğitimsiz ve alt sınıftan İranlı kadınlar için ciddi bir geçim kaynağı haline gelmiştir.

Çalışmada ele alınan son nokta ise ekonomik yaptırımlarla İran'da, özellikle kırsalda, son zamanlarda artış gösteren çocuk evliliği arasındaki ilişkidir. Çocuk evlilikleri, yoksulluk ve eşitsizliği yeniden üreten bir sosyoekonomik sorundur. İran'da çocuk evliliklerinin sayısını ve ölçeğini takip etmek çok zor olsa da, medeni durum raporları ve evlilik kredisi başvuruları konuya ilişkin ipucu vermiştir. Bu kaynaklara göre, İran'da ekonomik yoksunluk ile çocuk evliliği arasında güçlü bir ilişkinin varlığını ortaya koymaktadır. 2018 ve 2019 yıllarında 15 yaş altı kız çocuklarının evlilik kredisi başvurusunda artış olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. İranlı sosyologlar bu rakamları ailenin ekonomik amaçları için çocukları pazarlamak şeklinde yorumlamıştır. İran'da yapılan saha çalışmaları da çocuk evliliklerinin düşük gelir seviyesi ve gelir eşitsizliği gibi nedenlerle tetiklendiğini göstermiştir.

İranlı kadınlar, son 10 yıldır, fakat özellikle yakın süreçte ekonomik yaptırımların yıkıcı etkilerini hayatlarının her alanında hissetmişlerdir. Biden'ın seçim zaferi İran halkına ve kadınlara bir umut olarak gözüktü de birkaç sebepten dolayı yaşanan zorlukların kısa vadede ortadan kalkması beklenmemelidir. Öncelikle Trump'ın İran'a karşı izlediği maksimum baskı politikası İran'da muhafazakâr kesimi güçlendirmiş, parlamentoda reformculara karşı bir üstünlük kazanmışlardır. Bu kesim tarihsel olarak Batı/ ABD ile anlaşmaya yatkın olmayan kesimdir. Büyük çoğunluğunu muhafazakâr kanadın oluşturduğu İran meclisinin çıkardığı, İran'ın nükleer faaliyetlerinin hızlandırılmasını öngören kanun ABD-İran arasındaki ilişkilerini Biden döneminde de sekteye uğratabilir. Son olarak Ocak 2021 tarihinde başa geçecek olan Biden, İran Nükleer Anlaşması'na (JCPOA) dönme sözü vermiş

olsa da İran'a insan hakları ihlali ve bölgesel politikaları konusunda sert davranacağını sinyallerini vermiştir. Bu nedenle, İran-ABD ilişkilerinin tarihsel doğası devam edecek gibi görünmektedir. Ekonomik yaptırımların etkilerinin İran halkı ve özellikle kadınlar için en azından kısa vadede devam edeceği öngörülebilir.



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