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The Humanitarian Consequences Of Western Unilateral Coercive Measures On Syria

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□ ABSTRACT □

This research aims to investigate and answer these questions: are western unilateral coercive measures effective in changing state behavior, or do they harm civilian populations more than governments? Prior studies on sanctions have almost exclusively focused on the economic impact that sanctions have on target states, whilst few have considered the consequences that they have on humanitarian conditions. This paper uses the case of Syria to evaluate the impact of sanctions on humanitarian conditions. we employ a process tracing methodology, and select three indicators (Economic Growth, Unemployment and Food Security) to chart changes in humanitarian conditions to determine whether the changes in the indicators may be due to sanctions. By examining humanitarian conditions in Syria five years before being sanctioned (2006-2011) to the sanction period of 2011-2020, this study unearths evidence that humanitarian conditions deteriorated because of sanctions in areas including: economic growth and reflections that on employments and food security.

Key Words: Humanitarian Conditions, Unilateral Coercive Measures, Civilian Populations, Economic Growth, Food Security.

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التداعيات الإنسانية للتدابير الغربية القسرية أحادية الجانب على سوريا

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□ ملخّص □

يهدف هذا البحث إلى التحقيق والإجابة على هذه الأسئلة: هل التدابير القسرية الغربية أحادية الجانب فعالة في تغيير سلوك الدولة ، أم أنها تضر بالسكان المدنيين أكثر من الحكومات؟ ركزت الدراسات السابقة حول العقوبات بشكل شبه حصري على التأثير الاقتصادي للعقوبات على الدول المستهدفة ، في حين أن قلة منهم فكرت في عواقبها على الظروف الإنسانية. تستخدم هذه الورقة حالة سوريا لتقييم أثر العقوبات على الأوضاع الإنسانية. نحن نستخدم منهجية تتبع العمليات ، ونختار ثلاثة مؤشرات (النمو الاقتصادي والبطالة والأمن الغذائي) لرسم التغييرات في الظروف الإنسانية لتحديد ما إذا كانت التغييرات في المؤشرات قد تكون بسبب العقوبات. من خلال فحص الأوضاع الإنسانية في سوريا قبل خمس سنوات من العقوبات (2006–2011) حتى فترة العقوبات 2011–2020 ، تكشف هذه الدراسة عن أدلة على تدهور الأوضاع الإنسانية بسبب العقوبات في مجالات منها: النمو الاقتصادي وانعكاسات ذلك على التوظيف والأمن الغذائي. .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأوضاع الإنسانية ، الإجراءات القسرية أحادية الجانب ، السكان المدنيون ، النمو الاقتصادي ، الأمن الغذائي.

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Introduction

one of Syrian state's challenges today is the problems caused by unilateral coercive measures and their effects on food security. Since 2011, There have been various sanctions on Syrian Arab Republic by the US and the EU. The US sanctions on Syria date to 1979, Under the pretext that United States designated Syria a "state sponsor of terrorism". Also, it imposed a successive round of sanctions in the mid-2000s in response to Syrian activities in Lebanon especially after the assassination of lebanis prime minister, as well as pretension Syria's weapons of mass destruction program. Then starting in 2011 in response to the to the so called emerging the war Syria. As well as, the EU has unilateral coercive measures against Syria since 2011. However, the EU measures have less effects than the US's measures.

This study endeavor to give look at examples close to how Syria is today and to answer questions in this area. The main question that this paper seeks to address is: To what extent have sanctions impacted the humanitarian crisis in Syria? Whereas sub-questions are: first, what are the signs of the US and EU sanctions on food security in Syria? Second, what are the process through which sanctions have affected humanitarian conditions. Third, do unilateral coercive measures affect the food security.

This paper argues that sanctions against Syria have negatively impacted humanitarian conditions, and have caused catastrophic harm to the civilian population. furthermore, several reasons justify analyzing the sanctions imposed on Syria since 2011.

Firstly, the unilateral coercive measures against Syria have caused widespread controversy worldwide, and many have claimed that the imposed sanctions have damaged the lives of ordinary citizens more than what the US and EU claim. Secondly, the Syrian case is unique because it is being sanctioned during a complex war. Finally, understanding the impact that economic sanctions affect food security in Syria.

Research background:

At the 1996 FAO Rome World Food Summit, food security was defined as a condition that exists when "all people, always have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". Therefore, the key dimensions of the household food security construct are as follows: physical availability of food, economic and physical access to food, and adequate food utilization that is a function of the ability of the body to process and use nutrients as well as of the dietary quality and the safety of the foods consumed. Because of the central role that food security plays in human development, it is recognized as a universal human right that is currently unmet for billions of individuals globally.

The conception of sanctions; (Pape, 1997) argued that the use of military force was once thought of to be the only effective way for governments to achieve demanding foreign policy objectives such as changing a state's behavior, altering a state's regime or internal political structure, and defending territory. However, since the post-Cold War period, the use of sanctions has become a popular coercive tool in international relations for governments and multinational organizations to gain foreign policy objectives, without applying military force (Peksen, 2009). Many scholars argue that the use of sanctions has become more frequent, as they are a less destructive method of invoking change in domestic or foreign policy (Hufbauer et al., 2007). Furthermore, while sanctions can negatively impact sectors domestically, they are relatively cheap in relation to the financial cost associated with using military force (Pape, 1997). While the reluctance to use military

force to obtain a certain objective is a key motivation for why the use of sanctions has risen, their use also serves as a form of symbolic diplomacy. Sanctions can be a visible diplomatic initiative that serves to signal "official displeasure" of a certain behavior (Haass, 1998). In addition, "they serve the purpose of reinforcing a commitment to a behavioral norm, such as respect for human rights or opposition to proliferation" (Haass, 1998). The traditional narrative amongst the international community is that applying sanctions does not have the same negative influence on the reputation of the sender country, as the use of military intervention does.

Conceptually, sanctions are grounded in coercive diplomacy and are considered a form of hard power. This form of political power is often imposed by one or many states upon another of "lesser and/ or equal economic power" (Peksen, 2009). Sanctions have been defined by scholars in a variety of different ways. Scholars who are regarded as authorities on sanctions such as Hufbauer, Schott, and Elliot, define sanctions as "the deliberate, government inspired withdrawal, or threat of withdrawal, of customary or financial relations" (Hufbauer et al., 1990). Other scholars such as Koutrakos refer to sanctions as political actions that "connote the exercise of pressure by one state or coalition of states to produce a change in the political behavior of another state or group of states" (Koutrakos, 2001). This study follows Brooks' definition of sanctions which is "the imposition of punitive measures on a target state, measures which seek to limit the state's access to economic resources or cultural and social engagement, and limit movements of its nationals in order to elicit a change in the target's policies consistent with the imposer(s) preferences" (Brooks, 2002).

Sanctions can take on a variety of forms including restrictions on financial transactions, tariffs, and trade barrier. Other types of sanctions include travel sanctions, military sanctions, diplomatic sanctions, and cultural sanctions. Although there are different forms of sanctions that can be used as a foreign policy tool, their basic purpose is the same: influence the behavior of another state (Drezner, 1999). Sanction can be imposed unilaterally or multilaterally. Unilateral sanctions are imposed by only one country on one other country (Kaempfer and Lowenberg, 1999). Multilateral sanctions are imposed by one or more countries on several different countries (Hovi et al., 2005). According to Haass, multilateral sanctions are more prolific than unilateral sanctions, and "unilateral sanctions are rarely effective" (Haass, 1998). A possible explanation for this phenomenon may be that multilateral sanctions involve actions taken by a variety of states, and that, collectively, states can generate more pressure against a target state. Sanctions have historically been used by governments for a variety of reasons to achieve certain objectives. Some of the most common purposes for imposing sanctions are to: promote human rights, change the target nation's policies in a major way, end support for terrorism, discourage armed aggression, replace governments, and protect the environment (Addis, 2003). However, it is highly disputed amongst scholars whether sanctions achieve their desired results.

(Kumar, et.al 2016) show that India is home to the largest number of hungry people in the world with over 200 million people. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2013 ranks India at the bottom with 63rd position (out of 84 countries) with a GHI of 23.90, which the index characterizes as "alarming" food security situation. Major issues of food security in India are what will be the impact of such large government food grain procurement on the open market prices. Given the inefficiencies and leakages in the current distribution system, identify the principal areas of reform of the PDS and the alternative mechanisms of

reaching the food grain/subsidy to the entitled households. Ways to forward is go for a universal right to food under which everyone is entitled to get subsidised food grains from the PDS. It is also suggested that instead of identifying the poor, it would be much easier to identify the rich to exclude them. Systems of storage, distribution, accountability and monitoring have to be put in place to ensure that there is minimal leakage. Provision of decentralized procurement need to be implemented. More states need to be brought under the procurement net and the procurement of coarse cereals increased. The food coupon or Aadhaar card-linked entitlement would eliminate the problem of having to procure and distribute more than 500 lakh tonnes of food grains every year as also the problem of diversion.

There is an opinion that ensuring food security is an integrated task of agriculture and political will, combined with the logistics of product delivery. Despite joint efforts and various UN programs to combat hunger, only short-term local results have been achieved. Food security, especially in the global sense, has not yet been implemented, and there are reasons for this. The analytical review presents evaluation of the achieved result and points out the activities that require adjustments (Prosekov and Ivanova, 2018).

(Hejazi and Emamgholipour, 2022) shows that the re-imposition of US sanctions against Iran in 2018, unprecedented inflation has occurred in Iran's food market that will undoubtedly affect the food security of the Iranian people. The present study aims to determine the effects of the sanctions on food prices and food security of Iranian households.

Methods: Interrupted time series (ITS) analysis was applied to assess the effects of sanctions on the average retail price of food products in Iran. Household food security was estimated by calculating the share of household food expenditure. Costs of following a healthy diet based on the food pyramid were estimated.

Results: The import dependency ratio of Iran's food market was about 25%. After sanctions due to the limitations in international financial exchanges a significant increase in the prices of all food groups occurred in 2018, the year after the re-imposition of sanctions. The highest inflation rate was observed in vegetable, meat, and fruit groups. The percentage of urban and rural households in Iran that were prone to food insecurity increased from 8.84% and 25.17% to 11.2% and 29.2%, respectively, from 2017 to 2019. The annual average cost of a healthy diet for a sample Iranian family of 3.3, based on the current prices, is 341 866 008 IRR (US$2849) which is 3.6 times greater than the average amount Iranian families spent on food last year (94 505 000 IRR or US$788).

Conclusion: After the re-imposition of US sanctions against Iran, food insecurity as a result of economic vulnerability, has increased and due to the current status of food prices and incomes, following a healthy diet has become more difficult for most Iranians. This makes the Iranian population more prone to chronic diseases in the near future and if this trend persists, it places the country in danger of food crisis and political instability.

Let's show the contradiction of Sanctions by answering this question. Are sanctions a useful tool for changing state behavior? Since the inception of the use of sanctions as a foreign policy tool, there has been a variety of studies conducted by political scientists and other academics regarding their effectiveness (Drezner, 1999). There is much debate amongst scholars regarding the success that sanctions have in achieving their desired results, and the impact they have on the targeted states. In a large amount of empirical research on sanctions, there is little evidence that they are ever effective. In a quantitative research study conducted by Hufbauer, Schott, and Elliot that examined the effectiveness

of sanctions, the authors reviewed 115 cases where sanctions had been used from the period of 1900 to 1990. The study found that the use of economic sanctions as a foreign policy tool had very limited success, and only a 24% chance at reaching their stated goals (Hufbauer et al., 2007). In a similar study, Pape found that sanctions are only effective 5% of the time (Pape, 1997). The review of the literature on sanctions as a foreign policy tool shows that scholarship is divided between studies that support sanctions, and studies that oppose them. Some scholarship suggests that in some cases sanctions may end up having a paradoxical effect on the target state (Cortight and Lopez, 2000). For example, sanctions may be imposed upon a state for reasons such as human rights abuse, however, because of the imposed sanctions, human rights conditions in the target state may get worse. In literature those that advocate the use of sanctions state that they can be effective in altering the target states' policies without military intervention. Scholars that are proponents of sanctions argue that the success of a given sanction is more likely when sanctions incur severe economic damage to the target state (Baldwin, 1985). Additionally, a sanction can be more successful when the target state is economically dependent on the state that implements the sanction (Hufbauer et al. 2007). Other scholars argue that sanctions are more likely to succeed when they are aimed at the political elites of the target countries (Garfield, 1999).

Those that oppose sanctions argue that they cause human suffering, and are blunt instruments that often produce unintended and undesirable consequences on the targeted state and the civilian population (Baldwin, 1985). In addition, opponents of sanctions state that sanctions rarely achieve their intended goals, and the terms that define a successful sanction are too ambiguous (Pape, 1997). Perksen argues, "economic coercion is still a detrimental and counterproductive policy tool, even when sanctions are imposed with the specific goal of promoting human rights conditions" (Perksen, 2009). The paradox surrounding the implementation of sanctions is that they are employed to condone a certain behavior such as human rights abuses, however, their severe humanitarian impact can further hurt the population that they intended to protect (Seiden, 1999). Studies conducted on sanctions that were placed against Iraq during the Gulf War (1990- 1991) found that sanctions caused more

damage to the civilian population in the country, than it did to the Saddam Hussein regime (Halliday, 1999). In the case of Iraq, scholars state that sanctions and trade embargos that restricted food and aid supply into the country had a direct impact on the civilian population causing malnutrition, famine, and death (Buck et al., 1998). While there is much disagreement surrounding the effectiveness of sanctions, they remain a popular international policy tool even if they are known to be ineffective. Greenstock states, whether sanctions are effective or not, "there is nothing else between words and military action if you want to bring pressure upon a government" (Marcus, 2010). It is important to note that regardless of the reason for why economic sanctions are imposed upon a target country, rarely do they not entail unintended consequences.

Humanitarian Consequences of unilateral coercive measures:

Early research on sanctions predominantly focused on the direct economic effects that sanctions had on a target state. In much of the early research, scholars used quantitative research methods to analyze the impact that sanctions had on the economic welfare of a target state, whilst rarely considering the indirect impacts of sanctions. Prior to studies conducted on the impacts of sanctions in Iraq during the Gulf War (1990- 1991), there was very little information on the indirect effects of sanctions and how they impacted

humanitarian conditions. According to Bessler et al., humanitarian conditions are defined as "those conditions of life that relate most directly to physical survival, health and well-being, and critical aspects of human development" (Bessler et al., 2004). Humanitarian implications of sanctions refer to "impact of sanctions on humanitarian conditions (separate from other causes)" (Bessler et al., 2004). Sanctions placed against Iraq during the Gulf War gained much attention amongst the international community, as many people blamed the imposition of the sanctions for the pain and suffering that the civilian population endured (Halliday, 1999). The negative effects that sanctions placed against Iraq had prompted the United Nations to intervene. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 688 (1991) can be accredited for bringing awareness to the international community about the negative impacts that sanctions have on humanitarian conditions (Halliday, 1999). The awareness that was brought to the global stage in 1991 on the humanitarian consequences of sanctions, has shifted the focus of recent scholarship conducted on sanctions (Von Sponeck, 2017).

There has been an increased focus on the consequences that sanctions have on the civilian population in the target state. Literature illustrates that the extent to which sanctions effect humanitarian conditions in a state depends on a variety of factors. Garfield states that countries that are more likely to be affected by sanctions are those with: geographic and political isolation, weak information systems, import dependency, poor health infrastructure, and small financial reserves to import necessary goods (Garfield, 1999). Research conducted by Marinov found that sanctions can have unintended consequences on humanitarian conditions, because oppressive leaders react by engaging in further repression on the civilian population (Marinov, 2005). One of the many unintended consequences of sanctions is that they can result in strengthening an authoritarian regime (Halliday, 2000). This occurrence is prevalent in cases where sanctions have been placed against states that have weak political institutions. Pape states that "even in the weakest and most fractured states, external pressure is more likely to enhance the nationalist legitimacy of rulers than to undermine it" (Pape, 1997). This phenomenon has occurred when sanctions have been placed against repressive regimes such as Cuba, Iraq, and Iran, and researchers have found that in these cases sanctions have had a perverse effect of bolstering authoritarian regimes (Alnasrawi, 2001). These cases indicate that sanctions create scarcity, and thus the targeted states gain more control over the distribution of goods and services.

Research suggests that the use of economic coercion to achieve policy goals inadvertently harms the civilian population in the target state, and further destabilizes economic conditions, education, public health, and human rights conditions (Halliday, 2000). An expanding body of research supports this claim, in particular studies that have analyzed the humanitarian and political consequences caused by sanctions against Cuba and Iraq (Petrescu, 2007). In a variety of case studies on the impact of sanctions against Cuba, researchers found that the sanctions led to a decrease in access to health technology and drugs, and this resulted in shortages in medicine and increases in diseases (Garfield, 1999). In addition, food and nutrition significantly declined due to the lack of trade with the U.S. Studies conducted on the impact of sanctions on the population of Iraq during the Gulf War (1990- 1991), found that sanctions had adverse effects on public services, health and human conditions, infrastructure, and humanitarian assistance programs (Popal, 2000). Perksen argues that sanctions cause target states to increase human rights abuses, and result in worsening measures of freedom, political imprisonment, and torture (Perksen, 2009). There is an increasing level of evidence that suggests that sanctions decrease the level of

democratic freedoms in the target states and cause more political violence (Perksen, 2009). In cases where sanctions are imposed to promote democracy, the target states become less democratic (Marinov, 2005). Many scholars attribute this to the idea that sanctions destabilize political leaders in the target state, and increase the level of repression. Sanctions can be a double-edged sword; they may harm the exact same institutions that that they are trying to protect.

Measuring the Efficacy of unilateral coercive measures

Determining the "success" of sanctions and how their use is effective sparks a continuing debate among politicians and scholars. In part, this is since in many cases the measures for determining the success of a given sanction are not always clear and well defined. Did an economic sanction cause a target state to invoke change, or was it the result a natural occurrence in the target states political objectives? This question raises a difficult yet important step for scholars to consider when analyzing the relationship between sanctions and outcomes. One of the key disagreements amongst academics is, "what is the benchmark for the success of a sanction?" Scholars argue that there is a methodological problem in measuring the effect of a sanction in any given case (Garfield, 1999). The problem with measuring the success of a sanction occurs because it is difficult to isolate the effects of a given sanction directly to a given case. In contrast, it is also difficult to measure the negative effects of a sanction, and directly link it to a negative consequence(s). The reason for this can be attributed to the fact that present conditions in a given state such as war, human rights violations, and various socioeconomic problems make it difficult to separate the negative effects of a sanction from present conditions in a state (Garfield, 1999). It is important to note that measuring purely the outcome of sanctions is not sufficient.

When measuring the outcome, it must be determined which portion of the humanitarian outcome can be linked to the given sanctions. Cortright and Lopez state, when analyzing the success of a given sanction, it is important to consider questions such as, "(1) Did sanctions help to convince the targeted regime to comply at least partially with the senders' demands?

(2) Did sanctions contribute to an enduring, successful bargaining process leading to a negotiated settlement?, and (3) Did sanctions help to isolate or weaken the military power of an abusive regime?"(Cortright and Lopez, 2002). Following this interpretation, determining the success and/or effectiveness of a sanction can depend on what goals it is measured against. For example, if the goal of a given sanction was to invoke political change in the targeted state, a researcher could analyze this by comparing a set of variables that would influence the political process (such as voting activity or regime change) in a period before and after the sanction was placed. Thus, in a research study on the impact of sanctions it is important to explicitly state the variables being used, and what they are being measured against.

Assessing the Humanitarian Consequences of unilateral coercive measures

What is present in the vast amount of literature that analyzes the effects of sanctions is that different scholars use different methods to analyze their effects. For this paper, I will specifically focus on the humanitarian impacts of sanctions. In much of the research that has been conducted on the humanitarian consequences that arise from sanctions, a major flaw has been that scholars have tried to cross-compare unrelated cases to one another using a different set of assessment standards for each case. In addition, scholars have tried to use results from these studies to generate hypotheses based upon cases where sanctions

were placed against states for completely unrelated purposes, and in different periods of time (Minear et al., 1998). For example, prior studies have compared the humanitarian impact of sanctions placed upon Cuba to sanctions placed against Iran, and scholars have used different humanitarian indicators to measure each case (Garfield, 1999). For this reason, the credibility of past research that has attempted to carefully document and analyze the humanitarian impact of sanctions has been highly disputed and scrutinized.

To curb this dilemma, I will use a specific set of guidelines outlined in the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for "Assessing the Humanitarian Implications of Sanctions" (Bessler et al., 2004). Bessler et al. state, "good assessments are needed to evaluate humanitarian conditions, to identify whether and how sanctions cause harm, to improve the quality of people's lives by anticipating potential negative consequences, and to get maximum humanitarian benefit from available resources" (Bessler et. al, 2004). In this study, I will use a single case study analysis that adopts the IASC guidelines as a benchmark for assessment, and specifically indicate the humanitarian indicators that I will use. I will focus on humanitarian indicators that measure people's life conditions, and examine areas such as economic growth, and food security. I will later elaborate on this in more detail in the methodology section of this paper. To conclude, empirical research indicates that sanctions are not always effective at achieving their intended goals, and more often than not, can be detrimental to the civilian population in the target state. A reliable assessment methodology is needed to analyze the humanitarian consequences of sanctions. This study hopefully offers several improvements to literature that has been previously conducted on the humanitarian consequences of sanctions.

Research Methodology:

This section outlines the research design used in this paper, and discusses the selection and the limitations of the applied method and data.

Case Study and Method

To investigate the humanitarian impact of sanctions in Syria, this paper adopts a qualitative case study methodology. According to (Yin,2009) case study analysis is useful when "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2009). A single case study analysis was chosen as the most appropriate method for a few reasons. First, there is not a suitable country to compare the Syria case with. Comparing multiple cases where sanctions have been placed against countries for different reasons and different circumstances will provide conflicting evidence and less accuracy. Secondly, focusing on Syria as a single case study will present a deeper and more detailed investigation into the relationship between sanctions and humanitarian consequences. Case studies can give high levels of conceptual validity, as they allow the researcher to identify indicators (units of analysis) that best represent the theoretical concepts of the study (Gerring, 2004). A case study approach allows researchers to explore how variation in the independent variable impacts the dependent variable, in a way that a large-n study does not (Gerring, 2004).

This paper will use a qualitative research method called process tracing to analyze data. Process tracing is a technique that monitors changes that occur over time in a baseline data against certain specified change indicators (Collier, 2011). In addition, process tracing is a method for tracing causal mechanisms that provides a way of establishing relationships of causality in case study research (Collier, 2011). Mechanisms can be explained as "a

delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations" (McAdam et al., 2001). In other words, mechanisms determine the relationship between two or more variables, in this case sanctions and humanitarian conditions. According to George and Bennett, "[process tracing] converts a historical narrative into an analytical causal explanation... [which] may be deliberately selective, focusing on... particularly important parts of an adequate or parsimonious explanation" (George and Bennett, 2005).

This study is specifically focused on the sanctions that were placed against Syria starting in 2011 when the war on Syria broke out. As of 2017, the war on Syria is still occurring, therefore this study will look at the impact that sanctions had on humanitarian conditions from a five-year sample period of 2011-2020. Understanding the impact that sanctions have had on the civilian population in Syria during these first five years is important, as this case can present further insight for anticipating potential negative consequences. This study will follow the guidelines for sanctions assessment outlined in "Assessing the Humanitarian Implications of Sanctions" by the IASC (Bessler et al., 2004). (Figure 1) illustrates these guidelines for sanctions assessment that I will adopt for this study.

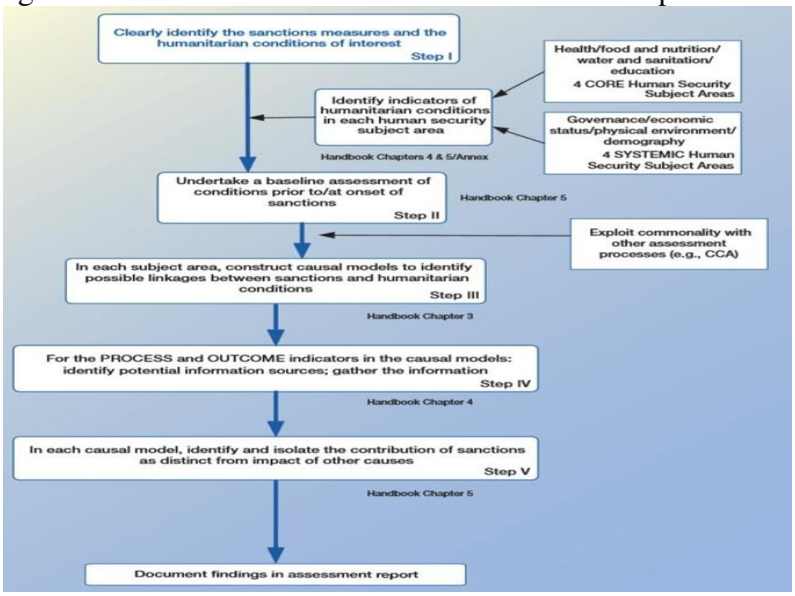


Figure 1: Sanctions Assessment Methodology

Source: Bessler, M., Garfield, R. and McHugh, G. (2004). Sanctions Assessment Handbook: Assessing the Humanitarian Implications of Sanctions. New York: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA and the Policy Development and Studies Branch.

The crisis in Syria began in March of 2011 as a part of the wider protests and demonstrations occurring throughout the Middle East, that would be known as the "Arab Spring" (Gobat and Kostial, 2016).

Analysis:

To empirically assess the possible changes in humanitarian conditions, I will use the period of 2006-2011 as a baseline reference point. The baseline point that I have selected represents a five-year period where no sanctions were placed against Syria. Data from the period where no sanctions occurred (2006-2011) will be compared against data during the sanction period (2011-2020). We chose the end of study period in 2020 because of covid-

19 pandemic. The indicators that I have selected to measure for change occurring over the time of sanctions include:

(1) Gross domestic product (GDP)
(2) Unemployment
(3) Food inflation

The indicators selected are based on the concept of human security, which provides insight to the current condition of an individual's welfare (Bessler et al., 2004). Tracing the changes in each of the selected indicators during the sanction period of 2011-2020 can help shed light on the association of change with the sanctions, and possibly infer a causality effect. The process in which sanctions impact humanitarian conditions occurs through a series of causal mechanisms (Minear et al., 1998). By identifying pathways from *actions* to *outcomes*, a causal inference can be made about the relationship between sanctions and humanitarian consequences. (Figure 2) offers a visual representation demonstrating the process and intermediate steps that form a causal chain, and link the *action* (sanctions) to the *outcome* (humanitarian impact).

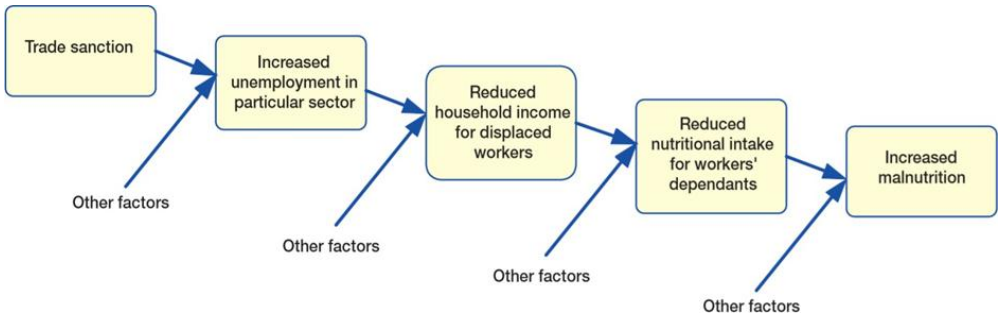


Figure 2: Example of the Process and Intermediate Steps Linking Sanctions to Impacts on Humanitarian Conditions

Source: Bessler, M., Garfield, R. and McHugh, G. (2004). *Sanctions Assessment Handbook: Assessing the Humanitarian Implications of Sanctions*. New York: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA and the Policy Development and Studies Branch.

The indicators that were selected are considered "the most desirable metrics for monitoring the status of humanitarian conditions", according to the IASC (Bessler et al., 2004). The indicators used in this study can be used in future research studies for monitoring the humanitarian conditions in Syria. In terms of data, this study relies on data from government documents, qualitative and quantitative studies, journals, annual reports, and newspaper articles. To limit subjectivity of the data, multiple sources were used when possible to measure each indicator.

The crisis in Syria began in March of 2011 as a part of the wider protests and demonstrations occurring throughout the Middle East, that would be known as the "Arab Spring" (Gobat and Kostial, 2016).

The War in Syria is highly complex and anything but straightforward. The factions fighting in the war include: the Syrian government and its allies, and the terrorist organizations like the Free Syrian Army, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and a variety of countries that support one faction or another.

Since the war erupted, the Syrian government has become tremendously unstable and weak, as much of its support base has significantly diminished in size, and its military has suffered heavily due to defections (Olanrewaju and Segun, 2015). The civilian population in Syria has experienced unparalleled suffering because of the conflict. This has resulted in over 6 million people internally displaced throughout the country, 85% of the population living in poverty, over half of the population in need of humanitarian assistance, 13 million people needing health assistance, and over two million children being out of school (UNOCHA, 2016).

The response from the international community to the violence that erupted in Syria in 2011 was mixed between those that called for the government to dissolve, and those that supported the Syrian government (USCRS, 2017). The United States, Arab League, United Nations, and various other states condemned the violence that the Syrian government inflicted upon protesters in the early stages of the Arab Spring, and described the actions as overly heavy-handed (Ferris and Kirişci, 2016). In April 2011, U.S. president Obama responded to the attacks against protesters by stating, "I call upon the Syrian authorities to refrain from any further violence against peaceful protesters…Furthermore, the arbitrary arrests, detention, and torture of prisoners that has been reported must end now" (Bull, 2011).

Table 1: Partial List of Sanctions against Syria by the US and EU, 2011-2020

Country/Organization	Type of Sanction
United States	• Trade Restrictions • Financial Sanctions • Anti-Boycott Concerns • Oil embargo • Restricted Trade in Defense Articles/Weapons • Targeted Sanctions on Government Officials • Comprehensive Sanctions
European Union	• Broad Sanctions • Targeted Sanctions • Investment Restrictions • Oil Embargo • Asset Freeze • Travel Restrictions • Arms and Related Material Embargo
Other countries including: Canada, Australia, Turkey, Japan, and the Arab League	• Financial Sanctions • Travel Restrictions • Arms Embargo
United Nations	As of August 2017, there are no UN sanctions in force against Syria

The United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon responded to the use of force by the Syrian government against protesters as "unacceptable behavior" (Walker, 2016). The U.S. was the first country to respond to the harsh government crackdown and human rights abuses in Syria by imposing sanctions against the state (Ferris and Kirisci, 2016). As violence and deaths began to increase as the war evolved, various other states began imposing sanctions against Syria. Although different states have placed different types of sanctions against Syria since 2011, there are four main goals of the sanctions: (1) force the Syrian government out of office and transition the state into a (democracy), (2) end human

rights abuses, and those related to repression, (3) eliminate state sponsored terrorism and the ability to aid terrorist organizations,
(4) restrict imports that could be used for arms programs (Olanrewaju and Segun, 2015). (Table 1) is a partial list of sanctions imposed against Syria from by the US and EU 2011 to 2020.

Economic Growth

In this section, gross domestic product (GDP) is used as an indicator to measure changes in economic growth over the sanction period. I will look at possible areas in which sanctions may have impacted GDP. To understand the impact that sanctions and the war had on the Syrian economy from 2011 to 2020, it is essential to examine what the economy of Syria was like prior to the war. Before the outbreak of the war in Syria in 2011, many economists considered Syria to be a fast-growing country, with the civilian population primarily lower-middle income. The economy was mainly driven by agriculture and oil production. These two sectors were responsible for over a half of the GDP, and around 40 percent of the labor force was employed in one of these sectors (Gobat and Kostial, 2016). In 2009, the Syrian government reported that the unemployment rate in the state was around 8%, and between 2006 and 2009 the unemployment rate did not go higher than 11% (World Bank, 2017). In comparison to other states in the Middle East such as Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, and Egypt, the unemployment rate in Syria was relatively low (World Bank, 2017). The main exports in Syria between 2006 and 2011 were petroleum products, cotton fiber, wheat, crude oil, and minerals (Gobat and Kostial, 2016). In terms of imports, the Syrian economy depended on import goods such as electric power machinery, chemicals and chemical products, metal and metal products, food, and plastics (UNOCHA, 2016).
In 2010, Syria's GDP was 60 billion US dollars (USD), and represented about 0.12 percent of the world economy (Almohamad and Dittman, 2016). Between 2006 and 2010, the GDP annual growth rate averaged at 5%, and rose as high as 5.9% in 2009. Figure 2 shows that the GDP annual growth rate was relatively stable and positive from 2006 to 2010, and during the years (2019-2020). However, during the war and sanction period of 2011-2018 the growth rate was negative.
The GDP per capita in Syria slowly increased from 1637.36 USD in 2006 to 1700.39 USD in 2011. The GDP between 2006 and 2011 indicates that the economic performance gradually rose prior to the war and sanction period, and the standard of living was increasing from 2006 to 2011. The GDP per capita significantly dropped beginning in 2011, and the overall economic performance and standard of living drastically declined (World Bank, 2017). It is estimated that the GDP per capita declined by about half between 2011 and 2016, however, there are no accurate reports of this (Keatinge and Keen, 2017).

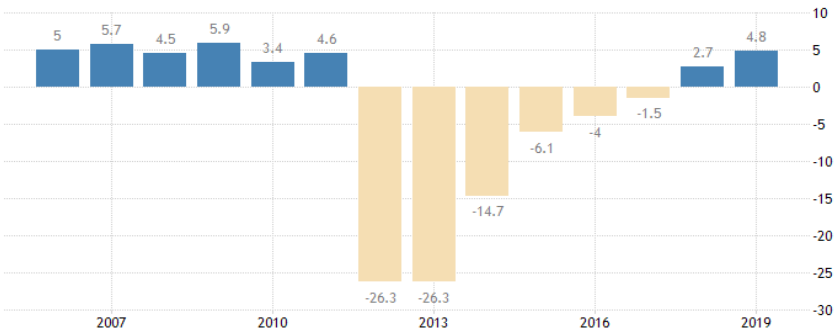


Figure 2: Syria GDP Annual Growth Rate

Source: Trading Economics (2022). Syria GDP Annual Growth Rate 2006-2020 | Data | Chart Calendar Forecast. Online.

Starting in 2011, the U.S. and the EU began to heavily sanction Syria in response to the war. The economic sanctions imposed on Syria alongside with the war had devastating effects on the economy (World Bank, 2017). The sanctions imposed and the instability caused by the war reversed ten years of economic growth in Syria (Almohamad and Dittman, 2016). The U.S. issued Executive Order 13582 under the Obama administration in August 2011, which placed a variety of sanctions on Syria (UNCRS, 2017). The U.S. sanctions on Syria prohibited: investment in Syria, direct and indirect exportation, re-exportation, sale and supply of any services to the U.S., imports of petroleum or petroleum products from Syria, and financial transactions (OFAC, 2017). In May 2011, the EU imposed sanctions on Syria under Council Regulation 878/2011, including asset freezes, embargoes, and financial restrictions (Gobat and Kostial, 2016). There were various different kinds of sanctions imposed against Syria from 2011 to 2020, however targeted trade sanctions on crude oil had the most significant impact on economic growth (World Bank, 2017). In 2011, the U.S. and the EU both placed targeted trade sanctions and embargoes against Syria on the import of crude oil (UNCRS, 2017). Targeted trade sanctions can have both direct and indirect impacts on economic growth, and create a snowball effect where the decline in the targeted sectors leads to a decline in various supporting sectors (Haass, 1998). (Figure 3) shows possible direct and indirect effects of targeted trade sanctions.

The U.S. and the EU imposed targeted trade sanctions specifically on the import of crude oil because the oil industry was one of the largest sectors of the Syrian economy, and Syria exported oil primarily to countries in Europe (Gobat and Kostial, 2016). The rationale behind targeting the oil industry was that it would have the most devastating impact on the Syrian economy, and the Syrian government would be more responsive to sanctions that had damaging effects. Prior to the ban on crude oil, Syria produced about 400,000 barrels of crude oil a day, and exported around 150,000 barrels per day, mainly to states in the EU including: Germany, Italy, France, Spain, and the Netherlands (World Bank, 2017). Syria exported very little crude oil to the U.S. from 2006 to 2011 compared to the amount that was exported to the EU, and in this regard the EU oil ban had much more of an impact on Syria's oil industry.

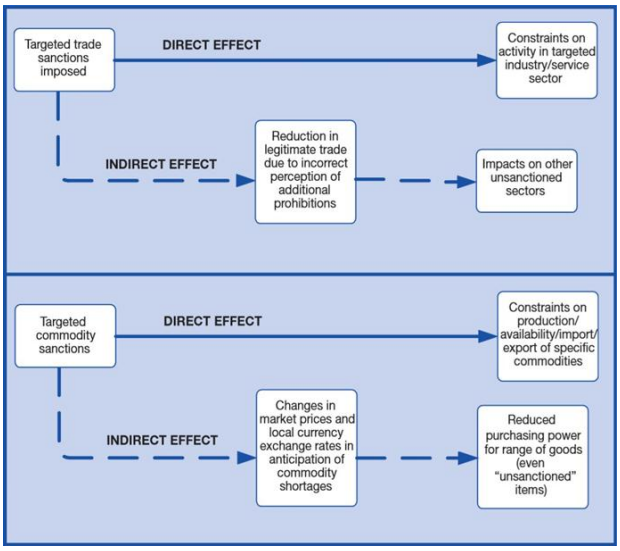


Figure 3: Possible Direct and Indirect Effects of Targeted Trade Sanctions

Source: Bessler, M., Garfield, R. and McHugh, G. (2004). *Sanctions Assessment Handbook: Assessing the Humanitarian Implications of Sanctions.* New York: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA and the Policy Development and Studies Branch.

The production of crude oil significantly declined after the EU and U.S. placed sanctions on oil imports, as Syria had difficulties in finding other states to export to. Per the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA), since the onset of the conflict, crude oil production in government controlled areas has fallen sharply (97 percent decline), from 386,000 bpd in 2010 to 10,000 bpd in 2015 and 2016" (World Bank, 2017). (Figure 4) shows that oil production rose between 2006 and 2010, and dropped significantly after being sanctioned. As (Figure 4) illustrates, while oil production declined between 2010 and 2015, consumption remained relatively stable. When Syria produced most of its own oil from 2006 to 2010, petrol was readily available and the price of petrol per liter was around 50 Syrian pounds (SYP) (1.00 USD) (Almohamad and Dittmann, 2016). The price of petrol began to skyrocket in 2011 as oil production dwindled down because of the oil ban. The price of petrol increased by 450 percent between 2011 and 2016, and at the end of 2016, the price of petrol per liter was 225 SYP (1.05 USD) (Almohamad and Dittmann, 2016).

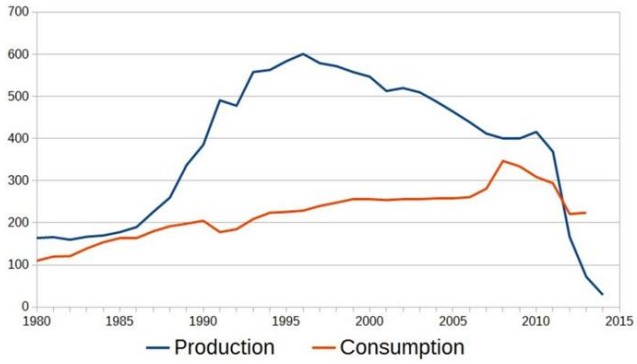


Figure 4: Syrian Oil Production and Consumption

Source: Trading Economics (2020). Syrian oil production and consumption 1980-2015 | Data Chart | Calendar | Forecast. Online.

Analysts from the World Bank state that oil exports dropped from 4.7 billion USD in 2011 to 0.14 billion USD in 2015 (World Bank, 2017). The decline in the oil industry had a major impact on the heating industry and oil products used for home cooking. Between 2006 and 2010, the average price of diesel used for heating averaged at 145 SYP per liter (0.28 USD), and rose to 170 SYP per liter (0.33 USD) in 2011 (Gobat and Kostial, 2016). The price of diesel slowly increased to 180 SYP in 2016 (0.35 USD), and the increased price of diesel resulted in a large increase of the number of households without heating (UNOCHA, 2016).

A large majority of the workforce in Syria prior to 2011 was involved in the oil industry. The largest revenue producer for Syria was from crude oil exports, and over a quarter of its government revenue came from the oil industry (Almohamad and Dittman, 2016). The production of oil began to drop heavily after being sanctioned, and the unemployment rate significantly increased at a similar rate. Prior to sanctions and the war, from 2006 to 2010, the unemployment rate averaged at 8.9%. The unemployment rate spiked from 8.4% in 2010 to 14.9% in 2011, and remained above 14% from 2011 to 2016 (see Figure 5) (World Bank, 2017).

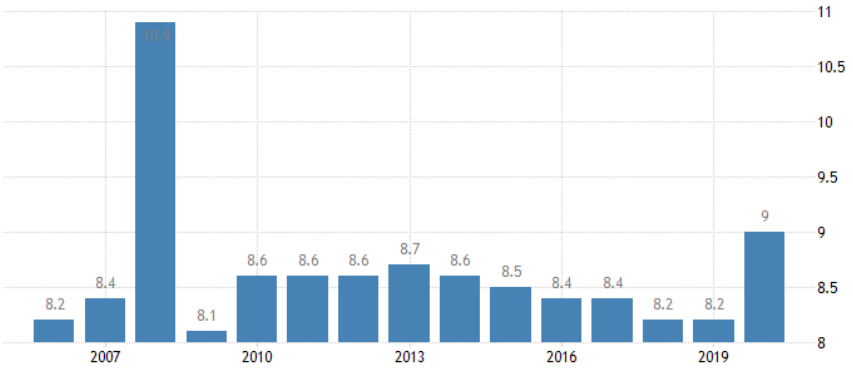


Figure 5: Unemployment Rate in Syria, 2012-2020

Source: Trading Economics (2020). Syrian unemployment rate 2012-2020 | Data | Chart | Calendar | Forecast. Online.

Food Security

To assess changes in food security, we will use food inflation as an indicator, and examine factors that contributed to changes in food security. According to a survey that was conducted by the UNFAO, there is a strong correlation between sanctions, increases in malnutrition rates, child mortality, and food inflation (Palaniappa, 2013). The World Food Program (WFP) states, "food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (WFP, 2016). Local food production from 2006 to 2011 was relatively stable, and Syria was the only country in the Middle East region to be self- sufficient in food production. From 2006 to 2011, Syria had a thriving agricultural sector that contributed about 21% to the GDP, and employed 17% of the labor force (FAO and WFP, 2016). The food production market was controlled by the Syrian government, the prices of food were affordable, and the daily caloric intake was on par with many Western countries (UNOCHA, 2016). However, beginning in 2011, food production declined because of the war, and Syria heavily relied on food imports. After sanctions were imposed, Syria was unable to import enough food to provide people with necessary nutrition. The U.S. and EU sanctions imposed in 2011 on the oil industry

contributed to inflation in the Syrian economy, which resulted in increased unemployment rates, lowered salaries, and a decline in purchasing power.

The decline in purchasing power significantly began in 2011, and eroded access to food across the country (Friberg Lyme, 2012). The inflation rate in Syria from 2000 to 2009 was low and averaged at 4.4%. Inflation rates increased significantly, starting in 2011, and the consumer price index (CPI) increased by over 300% between 2011 and 2020. The increase in CPI from 2011 to 2016 was due to a combination of supply shortages in basic goods caused by trade sanctions, rapid exchange rate depreciation, lack of medicine, fuel supplies, and cuts in government subsidies (World Bank, 2017). Between 2008 and 2011, the food inflation rate in Syria averaged at 12%. Beginning in 2012, the inflation rate sharply increased to 25%, reached an all-time high of 169% in 2013, and dropped to 61% in 2016 (see Figure 6). At the end of 2016, Syria's food inflation rate was the third highest in the world (Gobat and Kostial, 2016). Sanction-related inflation affected the price of a variety of goods, including foodstuff, medical supplies, and household items (UNOCHA, 2016). The prices of food for meat, poultry, and dairy products had the highest inflation of all consumer goods from 2011 to 2016. The price of meat and poultry increased from 105 SYP (0.70 USD) per kilo in 2011, to 615 SYP (1.18 USD) in 2016 (WFP, 2016). The price of dairy products such as milk and cheese increased from 80 SYP (0.15 USD) in 2011, to 500 SYP (0.96 USD) in 2016 (WFP, 2016).



Figure 6: Syria Food Inflation, 2008-2020

Source: Trading Economics (2022). Syria Food inflation 2008-2020 | Data | Chart | Calendar | Forecast. Online.

From 2011 to 2016, the price of food products increased to an amount that became unaffordable for Syrian families. The cost of a week of basic food supplies was 8 times more expensive in 2016 than it was in 2011 (World Bank, 2017). At the end of 2016, the World Food Program reported that 4 in 5 Syrians lived in poverty, and had difficulties buying enough food to eat everyday (WFP, 2016). The overall poverty rate rose from 12.4% in 2007 to 83% in 2014 (World Bank, 2017). Those affected the most by the drastic increase in the price of staple goods were children under five years of age, pregnant women, and people with chronic diseases (UNOCHA, 2016). In 2015, UNICEF stated, "decreased purchasing power coupled with rising food prices is undermining the nutritional health of affected communities with children being particularly vulnerable" (UNICEF, 2015). Prior to the conflict, it was estimated that around 1 million people in Syria struggled to meet their daily food needs (Friberg Lyme, 2012). At the end of 2016, over 9 million people in Syria were in need of food assistance, 2 million people were at

risk of food insecurity, and 7 million people were food insecure. Food security in Syria drastically declined from 2011 to 2016 due to a variety of factors such as war- related conflict, trade sanctions, hyperinflation, and reductions in domestic food production (Gobat and Kostial, 2016). The number of children under five that were diagnosed with acute malnutrition skyrocketed between 2011 and 2016. Approximately 555,000 children under five years of age were screened for acute malnutrition at the end of 2016 (UNOCHA, 2016).

The Global Food Security Index reported in 2016 that Syria was placed 96 out of 113 index countries, had the second lowest food security ranking in the Middle East, and that affordability, availability, and quality and safety of food averaged at negative 20 percent (% difference from the average) (GFSI, 2016). To put this in perspective, neighboring country Jordan was ranked 60 out of 113 index countries in 2016, and affordability, availability, and quality and safety of food averaged at positive 25 percent (% difference from average) (GFSI, 2016). Foodstuffs and related supplies accounted for one third of the humanitarian assistance items sent to Syria between 2011 and 2016 (UNOCHA, 2016). Since 2011, over 3 billion USD, which represent 32% of the official aid flow to Syria, were assigned to the food security sector, and the overall aid provided to the food sector in Syria between 2012 and 2016 averaged at around 33% of the yearly aid flow (World Bank, 2017).

Conclusions And Recommendations:

This paper set out to examine the extent to which sanctions impacted the humanitarian crisis in Syria from 2011 to 2020, and uncover the mechanisms through which humanitarian conditions change. It is apparent that there is a causal relationship between sanctions and humanitarian consequences. This paper supports other scholars who have argued that sanctions are an ineffective means to achieve change, and that they cause more harm to the civilian population than they put pressure on the Syrian government in the target state. In addition, sanctions rarely achieve their intended goals without incurring sizeable damage upon the civilian population of the target country. From 2011 to 2016, sanctions had a tragic impact on humanitarian conditions and living conditions of the Syrian people deteriorated throughout the state. The collapse in the economy contributed to the unravelling of the Syrian society. Sanctions imposed on Syria had the most significant effect on the most vulnerable people.

I chose three indications including: gross domestic product (GDP), unemployment and food inflation because they provide great insight into the current condition of an individual's welfare. Due to the methodological approach that was adopted in this study, this study is somewhat restricted in drawing generalized conclusions. However, from 2011 to 2020, all three indicators were in one way or another affected by sanctions to a degree. The findings in this paper suggest that changes in the indicators occurred through a series of causal mechanisms. This paper does not argue that sanctions were the sole cause of changes in the indicators, rather they were a contributing factor. The U.S. and EU sanctions had a devastating effect on the Syrian oil industry, and the targeted oil ban prevented Syria to export oil to its main trading partners. Syria heavily relied on exporting oil to the EU, and after the oil ban was placed exports drastically declined, as did production, employment, and household income. The decline in the economy had a profound impact on the Syrian society, and led to high levels of unemployment and poverty .

Food security in Syria sharply dropped as production of foodstuffs decreased and Syria began to heavily rely on imports. Targeted sanctions destroyed the economy in Syria which led to high levels of inflation. Food inflation in Syria became the third highest in the world, and over 9 million people were unable to afford basic food products. Syria became dependent on humanitarian assistance for foodstuffs, and foodstuffs and related supplies accounted for one third of the humanitarian assistance items that Syria received between 2011 and 2016.

Syria was transformed into an aid dependent state due to a combination of sanctions and the war.

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